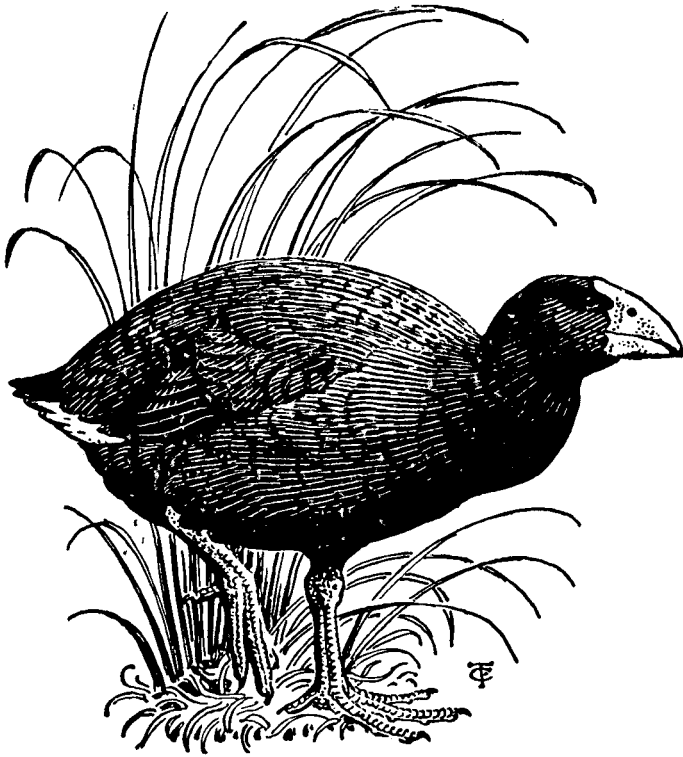


NOTORNIS

*Quarterly Bulletin of
The Ornithological Society of New Zealand*



Volume Seven, Number One : July 1956

NOTORNIS

In continuation of New Zealand Bird Notes

BULLETIN OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND
(Incorporated)

Registered with the G.P.O., Wellington, as a Magazine

Edited by R. B. SIBSON, King's College, Auckland S.E.7

Annual Subscription, 10/- (Juniors, 5/-); Endowment Membership, £1;
Life Membership, £10 (for members over thirty years of age).

OFFICERS, 1956-57

President—MR H. R. McKENZIE, Clevedon.

North Island Vice-President—MR P. C. BULL, Lower Hutt.

South Island Vice-President—MRS L. E. WALKER, Dunedin.

Editor—MR R. B. SIBSON, King's College, Auckland S.E.7.

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Secretary (acting)—MR E. G. TURBOTT, War Memorial Museum,
Auckland.

MRS O. SANSOM, Invercargill; DR R. A. FALLA, Wellington;
MR E. G. TURBOTT, Auckland.

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NOTORNIS

VOLUME SEVEN, NUMBER ONE : JULY NINETEEN FIFTY-SIX

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on the evening of 18 May in the Dominion Museum, Wellington. About forty-seven members attended. Places as distant as Dunedin and Gisborne were represented. The President, Mr H. R. McKenzie, was in the chair.

The general report was read by the acting Secretary, Mr E. G. Turbott; and the Treasurer's report and statement were presented in her absence by Mr McKenzie. Reports were also read from the conveners of the Ringing Committee and Christmas Cards Committee, from the Librarian and from the organizer of the Nest Records Scheme. All these reports were adopted by the meeting.

In his address the President first enumerated the many activities in which members and groups of members are engaged in different parts of the country, and then went on to discuss the importance of the Regional Organizers.

Mr D. N. Chambers was thanked for his services and unanimously re-elected the Society's auditor.

The length of business and the interesting discussions which arose from it precluded the showing of films, and the meeting closed with supper.

Votes of Thanks

Special votes of thanks for outstanding services to the Society were passed to Mr R. H. D. Stidolph and Mr A. C. Hipwell.

Mr Stidolph retired last year from the position of Honorary Editor, and members took the opportunity of expressing their gratitude to him for his long period of notable service at an important stage in the development of the journal.

Mr Hipwell's drawings of the Christmas cards have already given members and friends much pleasure, and have been the subject of appreciation from both New Zealand and overseas. A vote of thanks to Mr Hipwell was carried with acclamation at the meeting.

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT, FOR THE YEAR 1955-6

OFFICERS:

President: Mr H. R. McKenzie

North Island Vice-President: Mr P. C. Bull

South Island Vice-President: Mrs L. E. Walker

Secretary: Mr F. M. Brookfield,

Treasurer: Miss N. Macdonald

Editor: Mr R. B. Sibson

Mrs O. Sansom, Dr R. A. Falla, Mr E. G. Turbott

Council members elected to fill the vacancies arising at this meeting were Mr P. C. Bull (re-elected to the position of North Island Vice-President) and Mrs Sansom (elected as a new Council member). The Secretary, Mr F. M. Brookfield, left on a trip overseas in June, and Mr E. G. Turbott has continued as acting Secretary. Members will look forward to the Secretary's return, and are pleased to know that he will be resuming his position.

In the absence of the Secretary it has been necessary to divide further the now heavy secretarial duties of the Society (the position of Treasurer was separated earlier from the secretaryship). A large proportion of the Secretary's duties has been carried out during the past year by Mr J. C. Davenport, who has taken responsibility for the addressing and despatch of *Notornis*, and has dealt with all requests for back numbers and for any of the Society's other publications.

The Council can appropriately speak on the Society's behalf in expressing our appreciation of Mr Sibson's work as Editor during the past year. All members will wish to congratulate Mr Sibson on the continued high standard of *Notornis*.

MEMBERSHIP: The total at the end of the financial year was 713, including 55 overseas members. Details of membership are given in the Treasurer's report.

CARD COMMITTEE: The activities of this Committee form a separate report, but the Council wishes to take this opportunity of congratulating Mr B. S. Chambers, who has been so largely responsible for the outstanding success achieved, both in the appearance of the cards and in the satisfactory outcome financially. We are especially grateful to Mr A. C. Hipwell for giving us the drawings which have been a source of so much pleasure to ornithologists and artists alike. Appreciation of the cards has come to the Council from overseas as well as within New Zealand.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES: Local meetings of groups of members continue to be held, and tend to increase. Groups now meet regularly in Napier, Wellington and Dunedin, and more informal meetings are held in other centres. In Auckland, members have combined to do census work and field surveys. Mrs Walker and Mr Williamson have prepared an observer's schedule designed especially for Otago and Southland, but, it is hoped, useful also throughout the South Island.

All our members are reminded of the various special enquiries which give scope for the support of the Society's more scattered members. Reports which would help to develop these enquiries would be greatly appreciated by all organizers, and reports on the progress of the enquiries are to be found at intervals in *Notornis*.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: In order to make this more of a conference, and to enable members from all parts of New Zealand to join in the discussion of ornithological topics, a discussion session has been instituted this year. The Council is grateful to the Wellington Regional Organizer, Dr K. Westerskov, for suggesting this activity and helping to further plans up to his departure on an overseas visit. Mr K. Miers, who is acting Regional Organizer in Dr Westerskov's absence, has continued with arrangements for the present meeting and discussion programme. The speakers on this year's topic, 'Bird Behaviour', are Dr R. W. Balham and Mr L. Gurr, and the Council is especially grateful to them for assisting to start this scheme. It is hoped that this new feature of the Annual General Meeting will be a success, and will be expanded to include papers by members at future annual meetings.

COUNCIL BUSINESS: The business of the Council continued to be carried out by circular, five circulars having been sent out and discussed.

TREASURER'S REPORT, 1956

Membership of the Society now stands at 713, 61 of these being life members, 354 ordinary members, 44 junior and 178 endowment members. Seventy-six members were unfinancial on 31 March and there were eighty resignations during the year.

As shown in the accounts for this year, the Society suffered a small loss. This loss was governed by many factors, the first being that all stocks on hand have been written down to cost instead of selling price as in previous years, and since sales did not exceed the amounts written off minor losses were incurred.

Had the printing of *Notornis* been the usual cost the loss would have been considerably greater.

In actual cash the cost was much greater, but as some magazines are placed in stock as back numbers and others at the Dominion Museum special stock, these proportionate figures are not charged to the *Notornis* printing account but to stock, since these can be sold later. The *Notornis* printing figure

in the expenditure account shows the cost only of the four magazines sent to each member.

Donations increased by approximately £3 to a total of £19 1/6, which has helped greatly on the financial side. Due to the revaluation of stock the sale figures of stocks cannot be compared. The ringing scheme also benefited by donations and by a Government grant, and made a £17 11/1 gain, but this should be lower and made to pay for itself by the convener and the others controlling it collecting all the expenses incurred by them and not just the small portion they do. This should apply to the Society's organizers as a whole.

The price of envelopes doubled itself by changing from £12 9/9 to £29 16/- and postages dropped by £6 to £36 13/1. Sundry printing and stationery rose from £19 to £42 10/-, a substantial increase, but general expenses fell from £6 12/- to £1 8/-. The free brochure on bird study cost the Society £13 this year. This was half the total cost.

Subscriptions in arrears are lower this year, which is promising, but they are still too high, and efforts are to be made to lower them further. Stocks on hand have increased greatly. An account has been opened for library purchases which in later years will help in the library valuation. The loan of £50 to the Card Committee was the Society's interest in the undertaking and will be explained later in its report.

Unfortunately the cash position is getting much lower, but it is hoped that the increase in subscription rates will check this fall and enable the larger magazine to continue being issued.

The Society's thanks are due to Messrs Chambers, Worth and Chambers for auditing the books, and to Mr B. S. Chambers for his help to the Treasurer.

NOELLE MACDONALD,
Hon. Treasurer

ANNUAL REPORT — CARD COMMITTEE

It is with pleasure that I present the accounts for the Card Committee after their first year's trading. A total of 3200 cards were dispatched to members and friends, mainly in the Auckland Province. The Committee's thanks go to all those who helped make it a success.

Our thanks are also due to Mr A. C. Hipwell for the great job he did in painting eight birds, four for Christmas 1955 and four for the coming Christmas. We are deeply indebted to Mr Hipwell, and as a token of gratitude we presented Mr Hipwell with cards on behalf of the Society. Without his generosity such a project could not have been a success.

Unfortunately we left everything too late last year and we apologise to those who missed the overseas Christmas mails because we did not keep our obligations. This year, however, the cards will be ready on 20 August and all members will receive an order card early in September. We would ask that these be returned promptly with the necessary remittance to enable packing to be completed as early as possible.

Recently commercial travellers have been travelling parts of the North Island and to date have sold more than 60 dozen cards. To enable the Committee to operate efficiently 5500 cards must be sold to members and their friends. Everyone's help will therefore be appreciated, and our thanks go to those who can and will help.

Helpful criticism would be appreciated from members so that we can be sure that we are producing what the members want, as increased sales mean greater profits. It is hoped that some of the profits will be used to get more illustrations in *Notornis*, but this has not yet definitely been decided.

In conclusion I would like to thank Mr McKenzie, Mr Turbott and Mr Sibson for the assistance which they have willingly given, and look forward to their help later this year.

B. S. CHAMBERS,
Convener

BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING 31/3/56

LIABILITIES

SUBSCRIPTIONS —

[illegible]

ASSETS

Subscriptions in arrears estimated to realise	12	0	0
STOCKS ON HAND —			
Envelopes	14	2	0
<i>Takahe</i>	6	18	0
'Checklist'	12	2	0
Back Numbers	158	5	0
Cyclostyled Issue Reprinted	78	0	0
Rings for Ringing Scheme	38	3	7
Stationery for Ringing Scheme	4	6	0
Brochure — 'Bird Study'	13	0	0
	<hr/>		
	324	16	7
SDNDRY DEBTORS	7	19	6
Printing in advance — April issue	21	11	0
PLANT at Cost Less Depreciation —			
Addressograph Machine	13	2	2
Addressograph Plates	21	17	1
	<hr/>		
	34	19	3
Special Stock of <i>Notornis</i> in Dominion Museum	5	12	0
Library	7	6	4
Loan to Card Committee	50	0	0
Cash — Bank of New Zealand	15	4	7
P.O.S.B.	263	9	5
	<hr/>		
	278	14	0
	<hr/>		
	£742	18	8

We report to the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Incorporated that we have examined the books, accounts and vouchers of the Society for the year ended 31 March 1956 and certify that the above Balance Sheet is properly drawn up to show the true financial position of the Society at that date. We have accepted the values placed by your Secretary on 'stocks on hand'.

CHAMBERS, WORTH AND CHAMBERS
(Signed) D. N. Chambers

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31/3/56

EXPENDITURE			
Printing <i>Notornis</i>	207	6	0
Illustrations	5	3	6
	<hr/>		
	212	9	6
SUNDRY EXPENDITURE —			
Envelopes	29	16	0
Postages	36	13	1
Sundry Printing and Stationery	42	12	0
General Expenses — Bank Fees, etc. ..	1	8	0
	<hr/>		
	110	9	1
Printing Brochur — 'Bird Study'	13	0	0
Depreciation	2	16	10

£338 15 5

INCOME			
SUBSCRIPTIONS —			
Cash received 1955 - 6	279	6	0
Overdue £29 15/- and estimated to produce	12	0	0
	<hr/>		
	291	6	0
DONATIONS —			
General	18	3	3
Illustrations	18	3	
	<hr/>		
	19	1	6
RINGING SCHEME —			
Cost of rings and cards used	15	1	5
Less Donations	7	12	6
Government Grant	25	0	0
	<hr/>		
	32	12	6
	<hr/>		
	17	11	1
SALES —			
Back Numbers	4	5	1
<i>Takahe</i>	13	19	0
	<hr/>		
	18	4	1
Less Loss on Sale of:			
'Checklist'	4	3	0
Cyclostyled Reprints ..	13	18	6
	<hr/>		
	18	1	6
	<hr/>		
Interest		2	7
Exchange		7	0
Excess of Expenditure over Income		13	2
		3	0
	<hr/>		
	£338	15	5

CARD COMMITTEE ACCOUNTS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 1956

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Sundry Creditors	15	3	11	
Interest Accrued Due	2	10	3	
				17 14 1
LOANS —				
Conway Clark Ltd	50	0	0	
Ornithological Society	50	0	0	
				100 0 0
Accumulated Funds				32 10 8
				<u>£150 4 9</u>

CURRENT ASSETS

Chambers, Worth & Chambers Trust Account	37	7	9	
Stationery in Advance	9	17	0	
Advertising in Advance	1	11	0	
Closing Stock	53	18	0	
				102 13 9
FIXED ASSETS —				
Printing Blocks	69	16	6	
Less Depreciation	22	5	6	
				47 11 0
				<u>£150 4 9</u>

TRADING AND PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1956

Cost of Cards (8000)	92	4	8	
Less Closing Stock	53	18	0	
				38 6 8
Stationery				1 15 6
Advertising				16 2 6
Postages				1 13 6
Depreciation				22 5 6
Interest				2 10 2
Net Profit				32 10 8
				<u>£115 4 6</u>

Sales	113	17	0	
Donations	1	1	4	
Overprinting Commission				6 2
				<u>£115 4 6</u>

LIBRARY REPORT, 1955-6

During the year eight books and eighty-seven reprints have been added to the Library. In addition, two more journals are being received on exchange — *Alauda* and *Ostrich* — and one by subscription — *The Ring*. Donations of books were received from Mr R. Noel Johnson, Mr H. F. Watts and Mr E. G. Turbott.

The number of books, journals and reprints borrowed during the year was thirty-six.

The Library has become very crowded, and is badly in need of more shelving. At present it is impossible to shelve the books and journals in their right places, which makes the Library very inconvenient for members.

ENID A. EVANS,
Hon. Librarian

ANNUAL REPORT OF NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Through Dr R. A. Falla's courtesy the card collection was transferred during the year to the Bird Room of the Dominion Museum for safe housing. The Society deeply appreciates the provision of this facility. To help administration, applications for loans should be made to the Organiser. In response to a request to Mr Turbott, the British Trust for Ornithology was provided with full information about the scheme. A suggestion having been made that the record card at present in use should be revised, the organiser asked the opinion of experienced members and regional organisers. However, judged by the few accessions to hand this year, the printing of a new style card is not justified meantime.

The organiser is disappointed at the lack of interest shown this year in the scheme, which entails little effort. Wellington workers, as an arbitrary example, made little attempt to work urban gardens on the one hand, or such alternative, accessible and productive spots as the banks of the Waikanae, Otaki and Ohau Rivers in nearby countryside on the other. Members are urged accordingly to give more support to this scheme so that the Society can get at an early date an understanding of such matters as species' peak laying times, variations in clutch size and related information. Cards can be obtained free of charge, preferably from regional representatives. As their printing and distribution involves expense they should be completed promptly and returned to the regional representative, or the organiser direct, to preclude likely loss. Members are asked to pay particular attention to getting records of the Song Thrush and Blackbird in the season 1956-7.

Contributors for the year and present accessions respectively follow as under:

R. Watson, W. C. Clark, H. R. McKenzie, H. L. Secker, P. Williams, E. B. Jones, R. V. Roberts, R. St Paul, D. McMillan, A. R. Harris, and W. A. Williamson. W. H. Secker and F. Luke (non-members).

Yellow-eyed Penguin (2)	Bush Pigeon (1)
Little Blue Penguin (1)	Rock Dove (24)
White-flipped Penguin (7)	Morepork (1)
Little Grebe (1)	Kingfisher (4)
Grey Faced Petrel (1)	Skylark (6)
Gannet (2)	Fantail (18)
Reef Heron (4)	Pied Tit (3)
White-faced Heron (1)	Yellow-breasted Tit (1)
Bittern (1)	Northern Robin (4)
Grey Teal (7)	Whitehead (4)
Black Swan (3)	Grey Warbler (13)
Brown Duck (2)	Song Thrush (162)
Grey Duck (8)	Blackbird (157)
Mallard (3)	Hedge Sparrow (32)
Harrier (10)	Pipit (5)
Pukeko (5)	Bellbird (3)

Black Oystercatcher (5)
 Pied Oystercatcher (2)
 Banded Dotterel (23)
 New Zealand Dotterel (5)
 Pied Stilt (19)
 Black-backed Gull (24)
 Red-billed Gull (1)
 Black-fronted Tern (3)
 Caspian Tern (2)
 Fairy Tern (1)
 White-fronted Tern (10)

Tui (1)
 White-eye (26)
 Greenfinch (5)
 Goldfinch (19)
 Lesser Redpoll (11)
 Chaffinch (25)
 Yellowhammer (3)
 House Sparrow (20)
 Starling (15)
 White-backed Magpie (1)

H. L. SECKER

REPORT OF THE RINGING COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1956

The year's ringing operations are summarised in the accompanying table which this year provides a complete list of all the species for which the Society has ringing records.

The number of birds ringed during 1955-6 (2717) is nearly 800 below last year's total, a fact which may be explained by the absence overseas of several operators who normally ring large numbers of birds. On the other hand, the number of recoveries (270) is higher than ever before. This is due partly to the large number of birds ringed in 1954-5 and partly to the fact that some of the 1954-5 recoveries were reported too late for inclusion in last year's summary and have been carried forward into 1955-6. The number of ringing operators has remained fairly constant at a little under 20 for the last four years.

The most spectacular recovery of the year was that of a Gannet ringed as a chick at Horuhoru and recovered 30 miles north of Geraldton in Western Australia eight months later; there were also some interesting recoveries of gulls in New Zealand. Black-backed Gulls from Rangitoto dispersed as far as Whangaparaoa, Whatipu and Tauranga, while a Red-billed Gull ringed at White Rocks on the Wairarapa coast was recovered at Waiau Pa near the Manukau Harbour. These, and previously published long-distance recoveries of gulls and harriers, show that these species may disperse over wide areas, and such information on species which frequently feed on dead animals could be of considerable economic importance in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease among farm stock. A novel recovery was the finding of a ring inside a fish caught in the northern part of the Hauraki Gulf. The ring had been put on a young Black-backed Gull at Rangitoto 17 months earlier.

A feature of operations this year has been the ringing of a considerable number of petrels. Many of these have been ringed at sea in the Cook Strait area from a vessel engaged in fishing. In this instance the ringing of birds of uncertain age and breeding station appears justified because frequent trips to the same fishing ground provide an unusually good chance of obtaining recoveries. These petrels and a Fairy Tern at Mangawhai have been handled under special individual permits granted by the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs.

It is still too early to judge the lasting qualities of the Society's new rings, but evidence that the old type are unsatisfactory (especially if fitted too loosely) continues to accumulate. The rings on Gannets returning to Cape Kidnappers this year had to be replaced after only three to five years on the birds.

The Ringing Committee is most grateful to the Department of Internal Affairs for providing a grant of £25 for the purchase of rings. These funds have now been used, but thanks to those members of the Society who have generously contributed to the ringing fund, it may not be necessary to request a further grant from the Department of Internal Affairs this year. The willingness of members to give financial support to the ringing scheme is most gratifying, since it strengthens the Committee's hand in negotiating for

further Government grants in future years, and at the same time emphasizes the Society's independent status. It is hoped that even greater support will be given to the ringing fund during the forthcoming year by ringing operators and especially by those other members who, while not able to ring birds themselves, are nevertheless interested in this aspect of the Society's work.

The Committee notes with concern that some operators appear to have overlooked certain provisions of the ringing instructions. Although the infringements noted so far have not been serious, all operators are requested to read through the instructions again before undertaking any further ringing operations. Any operators who have lost their instruction leaflets may obtain new ones from the Convener. Strict compliance with these instructions is necessary if the Society is to continue enjoying the confidence of the Department of Internal Affairs, which issues permits for the handling of protected birds.

Mr P. C. Bull has asked to be relieved of his duties as Convener of the Ringing Committee in order to spend more time on his own research work; his resignation becomes effective with the publication of this report. The Committee has been fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr F. C. Kinsky as the new Convener, and from now on all correspondence on ringing matters should be addressed to Mr Kinsky, c/o Dominion Museum, Wellington.

In conclusion the Committee wishes to acknowledge its indebtedness to Mr J. Moreland (Dominion Museum) for his work as Ringing Recorder, to the Dominion Museum for housing the Society's rings and records, to the Department of Internal Affairs for the grant of £25 and for its co-operation in issuing permits, to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research for clerical assistance, and last but not least to the many members of the public who have sent in rings from dead birds.

P. C. BULL
Convener

SUMMARY OF RINGING OPERATIONS TO 31 MARCH 1956

Compiled by P. C. BULL, Lower Hutt

In addition to the usual details of birds ringed or recovered during the current year, the present summary provides a list of all species for which the Society holds records of ringing or recovery. It includes a number of species outside the normal scope of the Society's scheme, ringed by special permission of the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, and also some birds ringed with other than the Society's rings, but details of which have been provided by the operators. No distinction is made in either case.

Species are listed below in the order in which they appear in the Society's *Checklist of New Zealand Birds* (1953); similarly, the vernacular names are those used in the *Checklist*.

BIRDS RINGED AND RECOVERED

(* indicates coloured rings used during 1955-6)

<i>Species, Operator and where ringed</i>	<i>Totals for 1955-6</i>		<i>Grand totals to 31/3/56</i>	
	<i>Ringed</i>	<i>Recov.</i>	<i>Ringed</i>	<i>Recov.</i>
WHITE-FLIPPED PENGUIN			11	3
WANDERING ALBATROSS			31	1
ROYAL ALBATROSS			374	14
BULLER'S MOLLYMAWK			44	
SHY MOLLYMAWK			1	
LIGHT-MANTLED SOOTY				
ALBATROSS			23	11
GIANT PETREL			38	2
F. Abernethy, Cape Campbell	19			

BIRDS RINGED AND RECOVERED — *continued*

<i>Species, Operator and where ringed</i>	<i>Totals for 1955-6</i>		<i>Grand totals to 31/3/56</i>	
	<i>Ringed</i>	<i>Recov.</i>	<i>Ringed</i>	<i>Recov.</i>
CAPE PIGEON			82	
F. Abernethy, Cape Campbell	82			
FAIRY PRION			51	
FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER			286	
F. Abernethy, Cape Campbell	258			
BULLER'S SHEARWATER			17	
B. D. Heather, Poor Knights Is.	17			
SOOTY SHEARWATER			44	
FLUTTERING SHEARWATER			5	
ALLIED SHEARWATER			7	
R. B. Sibson, Mokohinau Is.	7			
GREY-FACED PETREL			26	
PYCROFT'S PETREL			8	
WHITE-FACED STORM PETREL			3	
DIVING PETREL			52	4
GANNET		61	3482	144
K. Wodzicki and co-workers, Cape Kidnappers Plateau	80			
P. A. S. Stein, Mahuki	100			
P. A. S. Stein, Horuhoru	640			
P. A. S. Stein, Bush Is.	100			
PIED SHAG			4	
LITTLE BLACK SHAG			2	
WHITE-THROATED SHAG			7	3
BLUE HERON			2	
BLACK SWAN		21	161	21
PARADISE DUCK			4	
GREY DUCK			4	
DUCK (Mallard/Grey cross)			1	
HARRIER		4	250	72
N. B. McKenzie, Pakowhai	6			
J. S. Watson, Maraekakaho	15			
PHEASANT			710	197
CALIFORNIAN QUAIL			22	
BANDED RAIL			4	
PUKEKO			2	
PIED OYSTER-CATCHER			1	
BANDED DOTTEREL		1	52	1
*H. R. McKenzie, Miranda	3			
NEW ZEALAND DOTTEREL			10	5
BAR-TAILED GODWIT			1	
PIED STILT			33	2
SOUTHERN SKUA			6	
BLACK-BACKED GULL		65	3358	173
J. M. Cunningham, Palliser Spit	24			
J. C. Davenport, Rangitoto Is.	528			
RED-BILLED GULL		35	706	124
BLACK-BILLED GULL		10	2688	42
W. C. Clark, Ashley R.	475			
CASPIAN TERN		3	357	3
M. A. Waller, Kaipara Heads	111			
H. G. Warburton, Kaipara Heads	1			
FAIRY TERN			1	
*Miss N. Macdonald, Mangawhai	1			
WHITE-FRONTED TERN		3	1846	60
J. C. Davenport, Kaipara Heads and Motutapu Is.	3			

BIRDS RINGED AND RECOVERED – continued

Species, Operator and where ringed	Totals for 1955 - 6		Grand totals to 31/3/56	
	Ringed	Recov.	Ringed	Recov
KEA			7	
SHINING CUCKOO		1	1	1
LONG-TAILED CUCKOO			1	
NORTH ISLAND FANTAIL			19	3
GREY WARBLER			16	1
SONG THRUSH		10	163	26
*P. C. Bull and co-workers, Lower Hutt	30			
N. B. McKenzie, Pakowhai	3			
BLACKBIRD		52	664	124
*P. C. Bull and co-workers, Lower Hutt	120			
H. L. Secker, Karori	12			
*S. S. McDonnell, Khandallah	5			
HEDGESPARROW		2	57	5
P. C. Bull and co-workers, Lower Hutt	18			
WHITE-EYE			5448	189
R. D. Bell, Blenheim	26			
GREENFINCH			12	
GOLDFINCH			12	
N. B. McKenzie, Pakowhai	12			
CHAFFINCH			4	
YELLOWHAMMER			4	
HOUSE SPARROW			7	
STARLING		2	123	3
H. L. Secker, Karori	21			
WHITE-BACKED MAGPIE			1	1
MAGPIE SP.			1	1
KOKAKO			3	
Numbers Ringed and Recovered 1955 - 6	2717	270		
Numbers Ringed and Recovered to 31/3/55	18643	967		
Numbers Ringed and Recovered to 31/3/56	21360	1237	21360	1237

NOTES ON 1955-6 RECOVERIES

GANNET

A total of 25 Gannets ringed at Horuhoru were recovered in Australia during the year and a further 12 in New Zealand. The Australian recoveries were distributed as follows: Queensland 7, New South Wales 11, Victoria 5, South Australia 1, and Western Australia 1. The last of these constitutes a record for long-distance travel, the bird being recovered 30 miles north of Geraldton eight months after being ringed as a chick at Horuhoru. Two of the above 25 birds were in their second year, the rest being first-year birds. Except for one Horuhoru Gannet found dead in Tasman Bay, the 12 New Zealand recoveries were confined to the Hauraki Gulf and North Auckland coastline. Of these 12 birds, seven were recovered in their first year, one in its second, one in its third, and three in their fourth year.

Four Gannets ringed at Bush Island in January 1956 have been recovered already, two from New South Wales and two from New Zealand (Cape Palliser and Orewa). No. 28154, ringed at Mahuki, was recovered in Victoria, having travelled some 1700 miles within eight days of its estimated date of

leaving Mahuki. This is the fastest trans-Tasman crossing so far recorded.

At Cape Kidnappers 10 birds were recaptured for the first time at the breeding colony where they were reared three years (two birds) and five years (eight birds) earlier. (In addition, some Gannets included in last year's summary were again recaptured this year, but these are excluded from this summary.) Five Cape Kidnappers Gannets were recovered dead in New Zealand, three at Cape Kidnappers, one at Pukerua Bay and one near Dargaville; three of these birds were in their first year and two in their second. Finally four Cape Kidnappers Gannets were recovered in Australia, two first-year birds in Queensland and a first-year bird and a second-year bird in New South Wales.

BLACK SWAN

Of 161 Swan ringed at Lake Ellesmere in January 1955, 21 have been recovered so far, 20 from the vicinity of Lake Ellesmere and one from Parnassus in North Canterbury. One bird was caught and released again, the remainder were shot.

HARRIER

Four Harriers were recovered in Hawke's Bay within 10 miles of where they were ringed. One was recovered within a year of ringing, another in its second year and two in their fourth year from the date of ringing.

BANDED DOTTEREL

A young Dotterel ringed at Whakataki, near Castlepoint, was found dead at the same locality two days later.

BLACK-BACKED GULL

The 65 birds recovered during the year were ringed at Rangitoto (55), Baring Head (5) and Palliser Spit (5). All recoveries were of dead birds except for 15 of the Rangitoto ones, these 15 being identified by reading the ring numbers with binoculars. Ring No. 22911 was found inside a fish trawled in the northern Hauraki Gulf. Another Rangitoto bird was recovered at Whangaparaoa, a third at Tauranga and a fourth at Whatipu; all the others were found near Auckland city or suburbs.

Gulls from Palliser Spit were recovered at Lake Ferry (3), Karori and Wellington Harbour, while those from Baring Head were found at Karori, Wellington City (2), Lake Wairarapa and Spring Creek (Marlborough).

Most recoveries were of first-year birds, but 12 gulls were in their second year, five in their third and one in its fourth.

RED-BILLED GULL

Bird No. 9600 was ringed as a fledgling at White Rock, on the Wairarapa coast, in January 1953, and was recovered at Waiau Pa, Patumahoe, in August 1954.

The remaining Red-billed Gull recoveries were of birds ringed as fledglings at the Boulder Bank, Nelson, and subsequently identified in the vicinity of Port Nelson by reading the ring numbers with binoculars. Of these 34 gulls, 11 were in their first year of life, 19 in their second, two in their third and two in their fourth. Some additional birds were also identified under the same circumstances, but these were repeats of recoveries published in earlier reports and are therefore excluded from the present one.

BLACK-BILLED GULL

Ten Black-billed Gulls, originally ringed as fledglings on the Ashley River, were recovered during the year. Two of them were identified on the Avon River in Christchurch by reading the ring numbers with binoculars, but the other eight were recovered dead, four of them in Christchurch, one near Halkett, one near Fernside Station (Ashley River), one by the Waimakariri Bridge and one at the mouth of the Waitaki River. Two of these gulls were in their first year of life, three in their second, three in their third and two in their fourth.

CASPIAN TERN

Three Terns ringed as fledglings at South Kaipara Head were recovered during their first year of life at Manganui Bluff, Muriwai Beach and Miranda respectively.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN

A bird ringed at the Waitaki River mouth was recovered on the North Spit, Dunedin, 14 months later; another ringed at Miranda was found dead at Papanawa Beach, Coromandel, two years afterwards, and finally a Tern ringed at the mouth of the Tutaekuri River was found dead at the Napier Breakwater nearly four years later.

SHINING CUCKOO

An adult Cuckoo ringed in Auckland was caught by a cat the following day within a quarter of a mile of where the bird was released.

SONG THRUSH

Ten Thrushes were recovered in the Hutt Valley. Six of these were retrapped at the place of ringing, another was recognised nearly a mile from the ringing station by its colour combination, and three were found dead, one a little over a mile from where it was ringed and the other two at lesser distances.

Seven of these birds were recovered within a year of ringing and the rest within two years. In addition to the above, some birds recorded in earlier reports as recovered by retrapping were again retrapped during 1955-6.

BLACKBIRD

Of 46 Blackbirds recoveries in Lower Hutt, 17 were dead birds, 28 were of birds retrapped at the place of ringing and one was identified by its colour combination near where it was ringed. Most of the dead birds were found within a mile of where they were ringed, but two had exceeded previous records by moving two and three miles respectively.

Three birds were retrapped at the Karori ringing station and a fourth bird was found dead within 200 yards of it. A bird ringed at Mairangi Bay was caught by a cat at the ringing station, and another ringed at Khandallah was retrapped there.

The cause of death was usually unknown, but seven birds were brought in by cats, two were killed in rat traps and three were found dead on roads presumably after being hit by cars. Of the total recoveries 33 birds were in their first year since ringing, 10 in their second, six in their third, one in its fourth and two in their fifth year. In addition to the above there were further repeats by retrapping of birds included in earlier reports.

HEDGESPARROW

Two birds were retrapped at the ringing station in Lower Hutt three months and 12 months respectively after ringing.

STARLING

Two Starlings were recovered at or near the ringing station at Karori three months and three years respectively after the date of ringing. One of them was caught and released, the other was killed by a cat.

Note: While stocks last, copies of ringing reports for the last three years may be obtained from the convener.

EXTRACT FROM THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Last year I discussed the membership of the Society. This year I wish to mention the Regional Organizers. At the very beginning provision was made for the appointment of Regional Organizers in the several parts of the country. The wisdom of this early step has been amply proved by experience and the system has been amplified by making the country into more and smaller regions. If the ordinary member is 'Tommy Atkins', the R.O. is the sergeant-major — though a more sympathetic approach may be required of him in the O.S.N.Z. than in the Army.

In the Rules of the O.S.N.Z. there is a long list of suggested activities for the R.O. It is not expected that anyone could carry out all of these at once. He can do only what is permitted by local circumstance and pursue the objects which lie to his hand or for which he is particularly talented. Of course work in an urban area must differ from that of a far-flung country district. He must judge for himself what is required in the way of field work,

evening meetings, fostering of Society schemes and co-operation with other bodies.

Relationship with the Executive is not subservient but co-operative. The R.O. is entitled to expect help and encouragement from the various officers in his many duties and his problems. For his part he is expected to keep his records up to the time required and assist the Executive in every way open to him.

Of the members in his region the R.O. will expect willingness to help in all his responsibilities. One man cannot do all that is required in a region to make the Society successful in its aims and objects. It has to be remembered that he is usually kept quite busy making a living and carrying out other public functions so cannot make ornithology a full-time job. So please, member, go to him and ask for something to do. The R.O. will do his best to learn what the members like to do and will try to co-ordinate their efforts. He will seek active new members, especially in places not yet covered by observers, so that eventually the whole country will be under close study.

It seems that the R.O. needs to be patterned on the lines of the virtuous angel Gabriel, the patient Job, and the evangelistic Paul. This is a high aim, but our success depends upon its being attempted by ordinary men and women, so we wish 'all the best' to those who try.

EXCURSION TO WAIKANAЕ

The excursion which takes place on the day following the Annual General Meeting is a significant social occasion in the Society's year. It is perhaps more important that our scattered members should have the opportunity of meeting one another and discussing at leisure mutual interests and problems than that a wide variety of birds should be on view. This year we went to Waikanae, where under most pleasant conditions in the motor camp we were able to take our time over morning tea and lunch, and at the same time some members were able to watch at close range species which they had never seen before.

The west coast of the province of Wellington is now a stronghold of the White-faced Heron, of which several were seen on the inlets beside the main road and later at Waikanae. Snugly hidden among the dunes, the Waikanae lagoon is a sanctuary; and as the last shots of the shooting season had not yet been fired, it was crowded with ducks. Pride of place must go to the Shovelers, a group of which contained at least 17 drakes. Some of these were of especial interest as they showed much more white on the breast than is normally seen. The Paradise Duck, a firmly established breeding species on this coast, was represented by several dark-plumaged birds and two white-headed adult females. Mallard and hybrids unfortunately outnumbered genuine Greys by a large margin. A Grey Teal which had been seen a few days before could not be found. Some Black Swans and a noisy albino Grey-lag completed the list of *anatidae*.

From the lagoon we moved to the estuary, with its terns (three species), gulls (three species), shags (two species), Pied Stilts and rather elusive Banded Dotterels. One of the features of this estuary in winter is its flock of Black-fronted Terns, which some of the visitors had to see closely, even if to do so necessitated wading the cold knee-deep river. Fortunately the tide was low and the birds were approachable as they rested in a compact group on the sand. Of thirty-four examined, thirty had the glossy caps and orange bills of adults and only four were in the much less striking plumage of young birds in their first winter. As a parting gesture a Reef Heron appeared and received honourable mention; for this species is now very much in a minority on this coast as compared with the aggressively adaptable White-faced Heron. Our beachcombers had no luck, although a few days before there had been a vast southward movement of Sooty Shearwaters through the strait.

Wellingtonians are inclined to be rather diffident about what the environs of their city have to offer to the visiting ornithologist. Those visitors who went on this excursion would assure them that there is no reason why they should be unduly modest about the birds of their coast. R.B.S.

AN UNRECORDED GANNETRY ON THE EAST COAST

By A. BLACKBURN

It is not to be wondered at that no gannet colonies on the East Coast between Gisborne and East Cape are included in the Census by Fleming and Wodzicki (*Notornis* 5, No. 2), for that part of the coast is little traversed by small boats sailing close inshore, one known breeding place is not visible from the mainland, and settlement nearby is non-existent. This colony has been known to the odd hardy fisherman without realisation of its importance, or even of the fact that the gannets were breeding in this place. The rocky islet containing the gannetry is impossible of access except under the most favourable conditions, and in foul ground, which requires some knowledge to avoid disaster even to a small boat.

My interest was first aroused some two or three years ago by noting from beaches near Gisborne numbers of gannets during the summer months flying northwards just before dusk. Cape Kidnappers was too far south for a return flight, and White Island too far north, and a breeding place a few miles north of Gisborne appeared to be indicated. Later inquiries from an observant Maori amateur fisherman at Hicks Bay revealed that during the breeding season, late in the day, gannets flew in a south-westerly direction. This seemed to indicate another colony on the northern part of the coast. East Island seemed a likely spot, but reliable information from Mr George Goldsmith, the nearest resident to East Cape, was to the effect that the island was only a breeding place for Flesh-footed Shearwaters and goats, and that it was eroding rapidly.

Subsequent investigations have revealed one gannetry at Moutara Point on the East Coast, and although two other likely islands further to the north have been investigated during the past season without result, I have some grounds for believing that another colony may yet be discovered somewhere north of Tokomaru Bay.

Moutara Rock

This island is 400 yards off Moutara Point at the northern end of Waihu Bay, and is three miles south of Tolaga Bay. The coastline is extremely precipitous at this point and is fairly inaccessible from the landward side. The rock has an area of about four acres and is completely bare of vegetation. There is an inshore island, separated by a dangerous channel 50 yards wide from the rock, and this island has vegetation and is a nesting place of numerous Black-backed Gulls, while a colony of Red-billed Gulls nests on a sloping rock on the point of the mainland. My first opportunity of making a visit was on 7/11/55, and in any case this was only the third occasion since the end of August that an approach to the rock in a small boat was possible, owing to surge and the lack of any sheltered landing place. Through the kindness of Mr Fred Hall, of Tatapouri, the owner of a small crayfish boat, and the expert handling of a dinghy by his brother Syd, a safe landing was made at 11 a.m. and an equally successful take-off made at 4.30 p.m.

The rock rises to about 45 feet and the surface was found to be very dusty. It is obviously swept by spray during winter gales, and thus much of the guano deposits would be removed. An accurate count of the gannets is impossible at this time of the year, owing to so much movement of the birds, but several estimates were made and averaged 230. The nesting site occupies two low hummocks and a basin in between, and is exposed to the prevailing north-easterly wind. The area occupied is about 25 yards by 10 yards. I estimated that between 80 and 90 birds were sitting close on empty nests, eggs or young, and there was much playing about with nesting materials, with other birds bringing in fresh seaweed continuously. Several males were observed treading the hens.

In September Mr Hall informed me that only 30 to 40 birds had arrived, and these appear to have occupied the northern hummock only, as several nests here contained a young bird one week old. Nests in the upper part of the basin between the hummocks contained an egg, and occasionally two,

while those in the lower part of the basin and on the south hummock were without eggs. It was noted twice that nests left unoccupied for a few moments were appropriated *in toto* by a next-door neighbour. Unattached birds were gathered mostly at the lowest end of the basin.

Continuous north-easterly weather rendered impossible any further attempts to visit the colony until 6/2/56, when a change to westerly conditions occurred. When I arrived off the rock in the early afternoon, again through the kindness and keen interest of Mr Hall, a landing was out of the question, but by 4.30 p.m., when the tide had fallen, this was successfully accomplished. The light was good for photography, both colour and black and white. A count of the young birds gave a total of 78, in all stages from the youngest three to four weeks old up to birds ready to fly, in addition to two dead chicks and four added eggs. One bird was still brooding on an egg which was probably infertile. A heavy rainstorm caused a hurried take-off at 5.45 p.m.

The following morning an easy landing was made at 6.30 a.m., and shortly afterwards one young bird took flight from a rock ledge about ten feet above the sea. It was observed for about a mile flying north-east fairly steadily, but it then seemed to waver and probably dropped into the water. It is impossible to say whether any young birds had left the colony already, but if so they would be few in number. Ten young birds which had lost their fluff and were nearly ready for flight were congregated on the northern hummock, and this approximated the number of nests made by early arrivals at the beginning of the nesting season. A further 49 young were in black and white stages with fluff, and 18 were in the white down stage.

The remains of three dead adult birds at the colony somewhat mystified me, but seemed to be explained by the discovery of a badly wounded bird, obviously shot by a heavy calibre bullet. Access to the nearest point of the mainland is only possible through a station property some miles to the south and through another several miles north, and apparently the shooting had taken place at a range of 500 yards from the mainland. The co-operation of these station owners is being sought to prevent the taking of rifles through their properties.

Otherwise the colony is almost completely free from the possibility of interference, and the rock itself is suited to unlimited expansion of the breeding ground.

Information as to the history of the colony is scanty. Mr Hall states that gannets have been seen by him on the rock for seven years past, but he cannot estimate any numbers; and Mr Norman Loisel, owner of Waihou Station, and the nearest resident, states that as a boy 30 years ago, while fishing in Waihou Bay, he used to see gannets heavy with food disappearing off Moutara Point. Inquiries have failed to show that anyone has previously landed on the rock, and the colony's history may remain obscure.

TWO NESTING COLONIES OF STEWART ISLAND SHAGS

By MAIDA L. SANSOM

On 20/11/55, with my mother, Mrs Olga Sansom, I visited a colony of Stewart Island Shags (*Phalacrocorax (Leucocarbo) carunculatus chalconotus*) on Papa-kaha, at the entrance to Bluff Harbour. This shag is a dimorphic subspecies in which the white-breasted phase has been named *huttoni* (Buller) and *stewarti* (Ogilvie-Grant).

We were accompanied ashore by Messrs C. Barwell and J. Mackintosh, of Invercargill, who took colour photographs, and Mr Maro Bradshaw, of Bluff. Mr Olaf Wiig of the pilot boat *Takitumu* remained aboard.

Papa-kaha is a low reef of rocks separated from the mainland of Tiwai Point by deep water. It is accessible only by boat, handled by experienced men. Papa-kaha is the old Maori name for these rocks. 'They were a rookery for the kind of shag known as "kaha"' (Herries Beattie). The rookery must be ancestrally old. Until 1953 Papa-kaha had been untenanted for

many years, but in that year Mr Wiig noticed that a few shags were using it again. With my mother, he made a landing in October 1953, when nine nests were counted. In 1954 Mr Wiig estimated the number of nests at about thirty. Our count on 20/11/55 was as follows: Nests, 90; nestlings, c. 94; fully-fledged young, c. 40; adults, 160 plus.

When approaching Papa-kaha in the pilot boat we noticed that the birds were massed in two groups, the eastern group being at a slightly lower level than the western. When the boat hove to, and while we were transferring to the dinghy, the birds of the eastern group (about 40) flew off in alarm, most of them later landing on the sea. Most of these birds were brown in colour and only about ten were white-breasted; they had no white wing-bars or dorsal patches, and no crests or red gular pouches were seen. Few birds on the western 'plateau' flew and on landing we found that all the nests were on this western area. On making a reconnaissance of the islet I found the eastern area covered with guano; there were a few shallow pools of foul water in which were bits of fish bone, tufts of feathers and down, and four corpses. There was on this area no sign of any attempt at nest-building. It seemed obvious to me that this area was used (and in no sanitary fashion!) by unemployed birds. From the fact that the birds flew early, and from the colour of the plumage as it appeared to us, we assumed that these birds were the fully-fledged young of the season. This compares with the findings of Guthrie-Smith (*Mutton-birds and Other Birds*), who records that the Kane-te-toe colony was distributed over three areas. He says: 'The main rock . . . is unevenly and roughly terraced, and its altitudes occupied by the older and more experienced breeders. Towards the southern end of these nesting grounds, where the land slopes off into almost unbroken and smooth slabs of granite, is the Alsatia of Kane-te-toe, wholly given over to thieving and riots, where might is right, and where only present possession is respected. To the north-west dwell the youngsters of the season, fully fledged and of varying ages, and thereabouts the crags and ledges are densely peopled by these immature citizens. It is their school, playground, and particular home.'

In the nesting colony there were several empty nests; two nests with eggs, one of these containing a new-hatched chick and two chipping eggs; and in the remaining nests were young birds in all stages, from black wriggling nudists to down-covered birds of all sizes. Oliver records this as 'black down, sometimes white on underparts' ('Stewart Island' variety), and 'blackish-brown down' ('Bronze' variety). Guthrie-Smith describes the young of the colony at Kane-te-toe as 'with two or three exceptions only . . . clothed in dark down, the abnormal birds showing down mottled and spotted on breast and belly.' With two exceptions, the woolly young birds on Papa-kaha were covered with dark greyish-brown down — 'donkey-brown' was the term the members of our party agreed upon. We did not disturb the birds to examine the underparts. The two exceptions showed mottled pale patches on neck, breast and belly. This appeared to be down, and not next-stage plumage showing through.

Another individual, which we assumed to be a fully-fledged immature bird, had glossy greenish-black back and wings as of the bronze phase (no white alar bar or dorsal patch), white belly and dappled dark breast.

The adult birds were approachable and we were able to get within a few yards without disturbing them. We saw one bird with nesting material — a mouthful of seaweed. We were looking closely for any evidence of breeding between the two types and were retreating, unsatisfied, when my mother drew my attention to two birds, a 'bronze' and a 'white-breasted', posturing and stroking each other with their bills. On Kane-te-toe Guthrie-Smith counted eleven mixed couples simultaneously on their nests.

We made no definite count of the corpses — all young birds — but one at least appeared to be fully fledged. We estimated the number at about twelve. Most of these were lying in shallow pools on the rocks about the nesting colony.

The live chicks were in very good condition — plump and active. The adult birds were in excellent feather, showing no signs of incubation wear and tear.

All members of the party agreed that of the adult birds the proportion was about ten bronze to eight white-breasted.

A dancing umbrella of Red-billed Gulls was in constant attendance three or four feet above the nesting area, individual birds continually dropping down to filch what food they could get. The only other birds on the islet were one Black Oystercatcher, resting, and one Black-backed Gull with a nest containing two eggs. We could hear the calls of the gulls through the wind which swept the area; later, when comparing notes in the warm comfort of the *Takitumu's* engine room, we realised that we had not heard the shags utter a syllable. It was at this time, too, that Mr Mackintosh said he had noticed that the gular pouch of the white-breasted variety looked a brighter red than that of the bronze. I had not noted this at the time, nor had my mother, but on reflection we agreed with him. We have since taken particular note of the individual birds we see heading up the harbour or out to the straits, but have not been close enough to confirm the impression. Since visiting Papa-kaha, the only birds from this colony seen at close quarters have been in the harbour. None of these has shown any sign of a gular pouch, or a crest, and many have been dark brown with only a hint of green sheen on the back. We assume that these are immature birds of the bronze variety. One such bird we saw fishing close in, about the piles of the main wharf at Bluff.

We have yet to see a Stewart Island Shag of either bronze or white-breasted phase showing a crest.

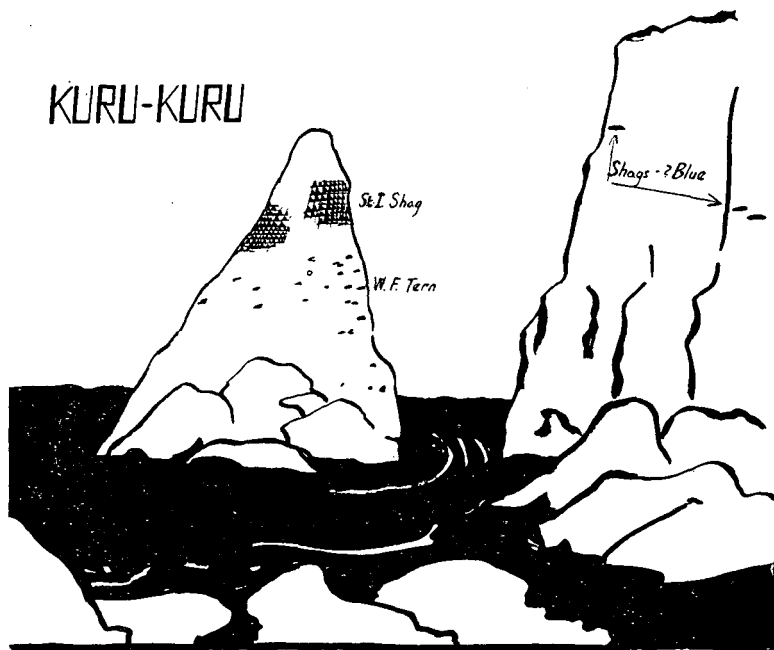
From our house at Stirling Point (a point guarding the harbour entrance, opposite Papa-kaha) from dawn to dark we see the shags, singly or in groups of two, three, and occasionally four, heading for and returning from the open sea. The line of flight is unswerving and direct as an arrow for its mark.

There is no likelihood of confusing these shags with other varieties. They look smaller than the Large Black Shag — Oliver quotes the length of the Large Black as 88 and Stewart Island Shag (both bronze and white-breasted) as 73. The Stewart Island Shag looks stockier, with a comparatively short, thick neck. Even when seen at some distance and without binoculars, the pale flesh-coloured feet are apparent. The white-breasted variety is immediately recognised by the two white flashes of alar bars. The white dorsal patch is sometimes, but not always, apparent.

When visiting Papa-kaha we were concerned about disturbing the birds, particularly when we remembered Guthrie-Smith's stories of thieving and immorality at Kane-te-toe. Most of the adult birds which flew eventually were back on the nests by the time we returned to the pilot boat. From our house, two hours later, the colony looked as usual — with binoculars and good visibility we can see the birds, and get an impression of numbers but not a count. On the following day, from midstream in the harbour channel I could see adult birds on all nests visible, and the 'teen-agers' were in residence.

On 21/11/55 my mother and I visited another colony of these shags on Kuru-kuru, a rocky pinnacle below the lighthouse on the south knob of Centre Island. Centre Island, which is of triangular shape, high, and three-quarters of a mile long, is three hours run from Bluff, steaming at ten knots. Once a lively Katimamoe tribal centre, its only inhabitants now are three lighthouse-keepers, their wives and families. Kuru-kuru is about 180 feet high and is separated by a deep channel from the main island. The approach is over large boulders and rocky slabs, with crashing sea uncomfortably close. A high wind and spray made visibility difficult, but we had a fair view of the colony. The nests are crammed close, in serried rows, on the steep rock face. They form a pattern of converging lines, dictated, we thought, by the rock formation. They are in an uneven ring, near the top of the pinnacle. We could see only one side of the pinnacle. Our estimate — a conservative one — was 300 nests. There were at least 500 birds, either on nests or in the air. The captain and crew of the m.v. *Wairua* say that the birds nest right round the pinnacle — 'there are as many on the other side'. This, then, is a colony of over 600 nests. We had less than ten minutes at our disposal and could do little more than get a rough count. Here again we had the impression that the bronze outnumbered the white-breasted. There are some sloping rock faces

KURU-KURU



covered with loose soil near the nests. We saw several birds fly in, land on these sloping faces, and scramble in ungainly haste up to their nests, causing minor earth slides with their pale splayed feet. Guthrie-Smith says the Kane-te-toe birds 'arrive invariably on the wing, settle on the edge of the nest, and from that stance feed their young'. Kane-te-toe is, of course, flat compared with Kuru-kuru, and any bird who valued his feathers (and his pride) would surely avoid any unnecessary promenading along the 'terrible lanes' between his neighbours' nests.

A few Red-billed Gulls were in attendance. Also nesting on the pinnacle, on narrow individual ledges, were 30 White-fronted Terns, and on the high steep face of the main island we saw three Spotted (? Blue) Shags on nests, also on narrow ledges where the bird could only sit sideways, parallel to the cliff.

It is hoped that these colonies will be visited again, when more time can be spent observing. On Papa-kaha there is an excellent 'hide' — a disused wooden-slatted light reflector — a few yards from the nesting colony.

Our thanks are due to the following people:

Captain N. B. Haszard, Harbourmaster, Bluff.

Mr Olaf Wiig, an O.S.N.Z. member. Mr Wiig, of the pilot boat *Takitumu*, has a lively interest in the bird life of the harbour. Without his co-operation the visit to Papa-kaha could not have been made.

Captain Ian Williams (skipper), Mr T. Fitzgerald (first mate) and Mr Cullen (engineer), of m.v. *Wairua*, for their co-operation, interest and unfailing courtesy.

The crew of the *Wairua*. They also gained our admiration for their skill and expert seamanship in a difficult landing and a tricky take-off.

Colonies previously recorded:

Otago Peninsula: Seymour, 1886.

Kane-te-toe: H. Guthrie-Smith, 1911. 4-500 birds. Mr George Moffett, of Invercargill, informs me that Mr G. M. Turner, of Stewart Island, has made an intensely interesting film of the life of the Kane-te-toe colony.

Knowing Mr Turner's interest in the birds, and his capabilities as a photographer, I consider that this film will be invaluable as a documentary of the life of the Stewart Island Shag.

Sealers Bay, off Codfish Island: Dell, 1948. In 1934 the late Mr E. F. Stead estimated this colony as containing about sixty nests. Mr Dell in 1948 could obtain no estimate of numbers, 'but it appeared that the nesting population was considerable'.

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A FRESHWATER COLONY OF PIED SHAGS (*P. varius*) AT TAKAPUNA

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON SOME OTHER SHAGS

Compiled from the notes of several observers

For many years the water of L. Pupuke was used for domestic purposes and as a result of the lowering of the level a variety of trees, mostly exotic pines, willows and wattles, and thickets of bamboo sprang up on what had been the floor of the lake. Some of the trees had reached the height of 50 to 60 feet. When pumping ceased the water level steadily rose till by 1953 it was almost back at the original shoreline and most of the encroaching vegetation was dead or dying. Now in 1955 the gaunt relics of big pines stand or lie more than a chain out from the shore. L. Pupuke is a large crater-lake, situated about a mile from the sea. Eels and introduced carp made it a good fishing ground for shags. Black, White-throated and Little Pied Shags were commonly present; the Little Black had been recorded and the Big Pied was an occasional visitor from Waitemata and the Hauraki Gulf.

About 1952 a few pairs of Pied Shag (*P. varius*) began to breed there. As a freshwater colony of these shags is unusual in New Zealand and as the colony has increased most remarkably, it seems worthwhile giving an account of it, based on the notes of various observers. In the Hauraki Gulf the typical colony of Pied Shags is in pohutukawas which are growing on a cliff and overhanging the sea. An atypical colony in ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*) at the Chickens has recently been described (*Notornis* 6, p. 154). The only other freshwater colony of *P. varius* known to the authors is in pohutukawas which overhang L. Paritu, one of the two lakes inside the great crater of Mayor I. in the Bay of Plenty. This colony differs from most others in lying snug and sheltered. These two lakes also are said to contain a species of introduced carp.

On 9/8/53 we were surprised to find Pied Shags breeding at L. Pupuke. There were six nests in one dead tree and one in another. Most nests had two adults in attendance and incubation was in progress. Nearly a score of fully-winged smudgy juveniles were also present. It seems safe to assume that the colony had been established at the latest during the previous autumn, but more probably in the winter or early spring of 1952. It is now known that at L. Pupuke breeding goes on all through the winter. Only two Black Shags (*P. carbo*) and one White-throated (*P. brevirostris*) were seen.

R. B. SIBSON, J. C. DAVENPORT

Donald Merton, who visited L. Pupuke in September 1953 and August 1954, has sent the following notes.

'Before 1953 only a few shags had nested. In 1952 some shags, reported as "black", nested in some bushy "basket" willows. So far they have not nested there this season (1953), probably because the water has risen. A colony of shags is now scattered along 200 yards of lake shore. On 9/9/53

there were 24 nests of Pied Shags; building and incubation were in progress. A pair of "black" shags was building among the Pied; and a pair of Little River Shags (*P. melanoleucos*) was seen. On 26/8/54 the number of nests of Pied Shags had increased to 54. In one of the large willows 18 Little River Shags occupied most of one side, but among the Pied Shags on the other side a pair of Little Black Shags was nesting.

D.M.

Miss J. Goodwin writes:

From the beginning of May till the end of September 1954 I had occasion to stay on the northern shore of Lake Pupuke, Takapuna, this giving me an excellent opportunity of observing the colony of Pied (*Phalacrocorax varius*) and White-throated Shags (*P. melanoleucos brevirostris*) which breed there; also the Black (*P. carbo*) and Little Black Shags (*P. sulcirostris*) which come in regularly at dusk to roost. The colony is believed to be some four years old. About eight willows along the northern and western shores of the lake are occupied by those species breeding there and many others are being used as roosts; I had four trees of nesting birds to observe, and three which were crowded each evening by shags coming in for the night. The willows are for the most part the worse for wear because of the rise in the level of the lake and the strong excreta of the shags which kills nearly all the foliage. The high level of the lake, although it will in time cause the trees to die off altogether, has, however, been something of a blessing to the shags in that the five feet or so of water round each tree acts as an excellent deterrent to the raids of small boys and other predators.

At the beginning of May I counted, in the four trees I could see, 42 nests, and at the beginning of September 56 nests, all occupied and containing half and three-quarter grown chicks, two in most nests, but also some with three and four young. By the middle of June nearly all the youngsters had left their nests and the parent birds were bringing in fresh nesting material with which to reinforce their rather untidy and bulky nests. Whenever the parents left the nest unattended for a day or so, that nest was quickly demolished by neighbouring shags, which pulled it to pieces and carried the material off to add to their own nests. Some two hundred yards away from the nesting colony was a large willow standing a little further inland than the others, which, during the day, was occupied by a dozen or so shags resting and preening, while at dusk dozens of birds would fly in from all directions and the tree would soon be laden with Black, Pied and White-throated shags, immature birds which had recently left the nest, and adults. The most numerous in this 'dormitory' tree were the Pied and then the White-throated; there were never more than three or four pairs of the Black shags and they kept very much to their one particular branch; if they attempted to land in amongst the Pied they were quickly sent away with loud and indignant croaks and squawks. Yet another, smaller willow about 20 yards from one of the nesting trees was occupied every night by Little Black Shags.

This species was rarely seen during the day, and seemed much quicker in its movements and altogether shyer and more watchful than any of the others. It is interesting to note that by mid-September only one or two individuals of the Little Black shags would arrive in the evening, the others having presumably gone elsewhere to breed.

Only a very small number of shags appeared to forage for food in Lake Pupuke. They seemed to play and squabble on the water and to dive for long strips of weed which they carried off to their nests, but nearly all food seemed to be collected elsewhere. I repeatedly saw birds come in from the direction of the East Coast beaches and the Waitemata Harbour, alight at the nest and almost immediately start to feed their family. Very often, too, I saw a parent bird fly in with a greatly distended neck and gular pouch, as if full of freshly collected food. It would sit a few feet away from the nest all hunched up while the food was part-digested. During this time the young birds would stretch up out of the nest and 'chirrup' without ceasing, getting more and more agitated until finally the parent shag hops over to the nest and the chicks eagerly plunge their beaks, and almost their heads too, down the parental throat for a pre-digested meal.

From the end of July onwards, nesting and courting activities greatly increased in intensity. The Pied and White-throated shags began coming right in to the sections bordering the lake and they would land in the top of a nearby *Grevillea* tree and break off branchlets which they carried off and added to their nests. At this time too there was much courting and displaying, one incident in particular being most interesting. Three of the trees in question contained 42 nests, all occupied by Pied shags; one tree, however, also contained 14 nests of White-throated, where it was interesting to see examples of the polymorphism of that species, the white-breasted phase being the more numerous. One morning I heard a sound new to me, a muffled sound, something between a low bark and a coo; on investigating I saw two pairs of the White-throated Shags engaged in a most curious performance. Seated on a branch near their nests, with their black crests and white cheek feathers puffed out, they were putting their heads right back on their backs, bringing them slowly forward till they were level with their chests, then with a rapid jerk their heads were swung under their feet; a hesitation, and then the head would go up and back and then the movement would be repeated again. As the head was brought down the gular pouch would inflate and when the head was back it would deflate, the whole being accompanied by low urgent cooings. This went on for over 15 minutes and acted as a very strong 'releaser' affecting every pair of White-throated Shags in that tree. The reaction of the Pied Shags during this performance was most interesting. They were only a few feet away from the excited White-throated Shags, but appeared to be completely unmoved; they looked on, but seemed quite disinterested, and presumably they were at the same stage in their breeding cycle. It would be interesting to know if it is the normal thing in mixed nesting colonies of other congeneric species that behaviour acting as a releaser among individuals of one species should not act as a releaser with individuals of another.

Apart from the cooing sound made by the White-throated and Little Pied Shags when courting, and a low croak when alarmed, I never once heard this species make anything like the noise the Pied Shags made. When the Pied Shags indulged in displays and courtship, they put their heads right back on their rumps, inflated their pouches and gave vent to loud yaffling guffaws and high-pitched croakings; then as the head came forward, so the pouch deflated and much vigorous head-shaking took place with both birds sometimes entwining their necks to do so, this being accompanied by small choking sounds. The Pied Shags were certainly by far the noisiest of all the shags on the lake, and the most quarrelsome; often their clamour would continue through the night. The young shags of both species, up to the time of leaving their nests, made the same sounds when asking for food.

It was interesting, too, to watch the reaction of the young chicks when they were alone and unattended in the nest. While only a week or two old they would lie low and quiet in the nest, and although there were adult birds coming and going and feeding other families all around them, they reacted not at all. The moment, however, that the parent bird arrived, while it was still circling the tree preparatory to landing, the little ones would stretch up and wave their heads about, uttering their incessant 'chirping' food cries.

There was an outstandingly handsome pair of Pied Shags which one day arrived and took possession of a branch. They sat there displaying the greatest affection for each other, rarely spending more than half an hour apart. After three weeks they decided to build a nest. The hen crouched down into brooding position while the nest consisted of only a few rough twigs, the cock worked hard bringing in material which he then passed to the hen who tucked it in in the right place. Very often he would fly in with an enormous branch and have the greatest difficulty in getting it to the nest at all — breaking pieces off it, knocking other birds on the head with it, and very often having to let it drop into the water after all. The nest took three days to build and the hen began to sit on about the fifth day.

J. GOODWIN

On 22/5/55, 85 occupied nests of Pied Shags were counted. Most of these were in six willow trees, but one fallen pine held eight nests, only a few feet above the water. This dead pine is evidently not so desirable a building site as the willows; for while most of the other nests contained well-grown young, frequently four in a nest, the tenants of the pine tree had nested considerably later and were still incubating eggs.

On arriving at the lake we had immediately noticed a Little Black Shag (*P. sulcirostris*) in flight; but we had not expected to find them breeding. These rather rare shags have been recorded in the suburbs of Auckland before, especially at Orakei Basin in winter, when it was supposed that they were visitors from the lakes of the lower Waikato where they are known to breed. In the willow tree which contained the largest number (26) of Pied Shags' nests there were also four pairs of Little Black Shags occupying nests. In two of these there were well-grown young; but judged by the behaviour of the adults, the other two nests, which were the highest nests in the tree, held small chicks or eggs near hatching. The emerald green eye of the adult is a vivid feature easily seen when the bird is at the nest. No species of shag other than Big Pied and Little Black was seen on L. Pupuke during this afternoon visit. However, a few miles away at the dams of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company at Chelsea, 14 Little Pied and 20 White-throated Shags were counted towards dusk, and others were still coming in to roost. The great increase in the Pied Shags at L. Pupuke may have upset the roosting of the smaller species there, as described above by Miss Goodwin.

MR & MRS J. PRICKETT, R.B.S.

On 14/8/55 Pied Shags were occupying 42 nests in eight different trees. Most nests contained well-grown young; and not more than three pairs were incubating eggs. The autumn breeding when 85 occupied nests had been counted had clearly been successful, for scores of young shags were swimming or sitting on a variety of perches. Altogether there were at least 150 adult and immature Pied Shags at the lake, excluding nestlings.

No Little Black Shags were seen at nests; but two were sitting in the tree in which four pairs had nests in May and where 16 pairs of Pied Shags now had nests as against 26 in May. Other Little Black Shags were seen in flight, once nine together.

Little Shags were scarce, only three of the white-throated phase being seen.

J.C.D., R.B.S.

9/10/55. The composition of the shaggery is now very different. There are still about 40 pairs of Pied Shags. Breeding is at all stages—nest-building, eggs, chicks, medium and big young, but few of the last. There were not nearly as many juveniles at the flying stage on the lake today as on August 4. The fallen pine is still being used as a nesting site, although the three nests on it are within a few feet of the water.

At least 12 Little Black Shags were sitting in the willows where they breed, but none was at a nest.

Little Shags have now moved in and are breeding in strength. They do not appear to be over-awed by the much larger Pied Shags; for of 38 nests counted, 18 were in the big willow much favoured by the Pied and Little Black Shags, 16 were in two other willows dominated by Pied Shags, and only four were apart in low bushy willows, which are not used by the heavier shags. Most of the nests of these Little Shags were at the egg stage; a few held very small young.

A single immature Black Shag (*P. carbo*) was present.

N. MACDONALD, A. C. HIPWELL, R.B.S.

It should here be mentioned that the traditional breeding place of Little Shags in Auckland is at Western Springs; but it was known that the willows in which most of the nests have been built in the past were dead or dying. Accordingly on 6/11/55 a visit was paid to Western Springs to find out if the colony still existed and if there were any grounds for assuming that

Western Springs had been abandoned in favour of Pupuke. However, despite a lack of robust nesting trees, the colony was still flourishing. More than sixty birds were present and 25 nests were counted on the island, on which there are now no big trees growing. Most of the nests were within three feet of the ground, some in bent and flattened solanum shrubs, others resting on rushes and scarcely higher than the nests of the Black Swans which also use the island. With most of the Little Shags it was about hatching time. A few hybrids with mottled breasts were present.

J.C.D., R.B.S.

12/11/55. The numbers of Pied Shags at Pupuke are much the same as in October. Young are at various stages and no nests appear to have eggs.

Some Little Black Shags are nesting again. Two new nests, probably containing eggs, have been built in the big willow where they were nesting in May. Away from the breeding trees at least 12 Little Black Shags were resting. Some of these may be the product of the autumn nesting.

A few more nests of Little Shags have been added in the bushy willows. In the main colony young with purple-pink faces are visible in nearly every nest. Birds of the pied phase form a high proportion, perhaps 50%, of the Little Shags. No pairings of birds of the white-throated and pied phases could be found at those nests where the two adults were present. Three mottled 'hybrids' were seen.

R.B.S.

28/4/56. There is great activity among the Pied Shags, of which 86 pairs have nests in eight willows. This is the biggest count so far, and is comparable with the 85 of May 1955. The half of one willow at one end of the colony which last October was wholly occupied by Little Shags is now crowded with the nests of the bigger species. Breeding as usual is at various stages. Many nests hold well-grown young, some near fledging; a few nests hold chicks; some birds appear to be brooding eggs.

The number of Little Black Shags present exceeded all previous counts. At least 25 were sitting in the breeding trees and about 50 were already roosting at 4.15 p.m. in a 'dormitory' tree just outside the colony. It is pleasing to be able to report that this species is again nesting. One bird, apparently sitting on eggs, refused to leave its nest when other Little Black Shags took wing; and two other pairs were interested in collections of sticks. It is doubtful if the increase in the numbers of Little Black Shags at Pupuke is to be explained wholly by local breeding. There appears to be an annual influx into the Waitemata. It is likely that three years ago some of these visitors, attracted by the Pied Shags and the favourable conditions at Pupuke, stayed to nest; but as not more than four pairs have been found nesting at once, it is hardly conceivable that the eighty or so which we saw this afternoon were all locally bred.

About thirty Little Shags were sitting in the bushy willows. There was no sign of nesting.

R.B.S., J.C.D.

From the above observations some tentative deductions may be drawn and some comments made upon them.

Although the breeding of Pied Shags goes on at Pupuke all through the year there are two peak seasons of egg-laying, August-September and March-April. Rather curiously, the numbers which lay in the autumn and rear their chicks during the winter are greater than those which lay in the spring, viz.: September 1954, 54 nests; April 1955, 85 nests; September 1955, 42 nests; April 1956, 86 nests. According to Oliver (*N.Z. Birds*, 2nd edition, p. 209), eggs 'may be found from June to November'. There is no mention of autumn breeding. He also implies that a clutch of four eggs is rare. At Pupuke a nest containing four lusty youngsters is not an uncommon sight.

Little Black Shags at Pupuke also appear to have two peak periods of nesting and egg-laying, October-November and April-May, though perhaps the numbers are too small to judge. Both these periods are rather later than

those of the other shags. In early spring the extra competition provided by Little Shags increases the difficulty of finding suitable sites. In autumn the number of Pied Shags breeding reaches a maximum. At L. Waikare, in the Waikato, Fleming found Little Black Shags breeding at a date which indicated egg-laying about midsummer or soon after.

With the Little Shags breeding does not go on throughout the year. They appear to have a fairly rigid annual breeding cycle, with egg-laying at a peak in September or early October.

R.B.S., J.C.D.

PROBABLE RECENT OCCURRENCES OF ORIENTAL DOTTEREL IN NEW ZEALAND

1

By H. R. McKENZIE

The Oriental Dotterel (*Charadrius asiaticus veredus*) is recorded by Oliver in *New Zealand Birds*, 1st edition, p. 286, as having been taken by him in 1908 on Sunday Island. This one specimen has so far been the only New Zealand record.

The two strange dotterel noted but not identified at Ruakaka, Northland, in 1956 (McKenzie, *New Zealand Bird Notes*, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 75), may well have been Oriental Dotterel. In this paper I mentioned *Charadrius mongolus* as a possibility, but I have since studied further literature and a skin of *C. mongolus* and am satisfied that the size as described in the above-mentioned article was much too large for the latter species.

At Kaiaua, Firth of Thames, on 7/3/53, with Mr and Mrs E. H. Southerill, of Christchurch, I carefully observed a bird which I am sure was an Oriental Dotterel. Closely associated with four New Zealand Dotterel (*C. obscurus*), it was studied at leisure by telescope at about forty feet. It was a little smaller than the New Zealand Dotterel, but of much the same proportions except that the legs appeared longer. The colour of bill, head and back were similar to New Zealand Dotterel in winter plumage. The greatest difference lay in the white throat and the strong grey wash on the lower neck and all of the breast. From the definite lower edge of the grey wash the colour was a dull white. In flight it was noted that its wings appeared to be as long as those of its companions, while the body was smaller. Subsequent reference to Oliver showed that the wing measurements are the same for the two species, while the overall length of the smaller bird is 5 c.m. less. This, and the grey wash on the breast, left little doubt of the identification. It was probably a young bird. A fully adult Asiatic breeder would be expected by this date to have acquired a more advanced state of plumage.

On 12/12/54 a party of ten birds was seen at Miranda, Firth of Thames, by Misses A. J. and A. E. Goodwin, M. L. Sansom and myself. They were on the edge of a flock of about 3000 godwit and about 7000 knots on a dry area of mudflat. Taken for Golden Plover (*C. dominicus fulvus*) at first glance, they were soon seen to have different action and features. The eye was caught particularly by their extreme activity at the time of high tide, when all the other birds were resting peacefully. In many years I have never seen Golden Plover act in this manner at such a time. They ran about, fed a little and 'bobbed' in dotterel fashion. Miss Sansom had closely studied Golden Plover only the previous day at Karaka and she too was quite certain that these birds were not of that species. Telescope and binoculars used at about 80 yards enabled the party to agree upon the following notes:

'Feeding actively on edge of godwit flock; dotterel action; colour of face and head similar to New Zealand Dotterel; long legs; larger than Siberian Pectoral Sandpiper (*C. acuminata*); back like Golden Plover; front (of body) dark grey and brownish; one with lower edge of pectoral colour well defined as if still having some breeding colour; flew inland; called as they rose, "k-lnk". The call was similar to that made by a flying unidentified bird

seen by R. B. Sibson and me on 17/10/54 at the same place. It sounded like a minor of the yelp of an oystercatcher. Two weeks later twelve Golden Plover were found on the same lagoon, but this did not cause Miss Sansom and me to think that we had made an error: Golden Plover were present on each of several subsequent visits and their action and appearance served to convince us still further that the ten birds had been different.

The best opportunity for identification came on 15/1/55, at the same spot, when Miss Sansom, Messrs F. Murray, B. F. Duder, R. T. Duder and I found an odd bird among thirteen Golden Plover. Careful study at about 70 yards showed it to be similar to the ten birds seen on 12/12/54. Those of the party who had not seen the ten birds readily agreed that it differed from the Golden Plover. Later in the day Miss Sansom and I were able to study it by telescope at leisure at about 35 yards. Two Golden Plover in winter plumage within two feet of it enabled close comparison to be made and the following notes were taken. Compared with the two Golden Plover beside it:

'Bill similar in shape, size and colour; crown much darker, quite brown; side of head whitish, not buffy; dark through eye; back darker; belly whiter; chin and throat white, not light buff; neck and breast grey-brown, not buffy; darker on shoulder and side of breast area; large grey patch on flank; legs darker but colour not determined; more erect and of slimmer build; under-wing thought to be a strong grey, including axillaries.'

These field notes, though couched in different terms, agree with descriptions by Serventy and Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, Cayley, *What Bird Is That?* and Serventy, *Emu*, July 1938.

According to the Australian writers mentioned the Oriental Dotterel breeds in Mongolia and northern China, many wintering in Australia, especially the north-west, from the second week in September to mid-March. It could occur quite frequently in New Zealand without being noticed, especially when consorting with New Zealand Dotterel or Golden Plover.

2

By R. B. SIBSON and V. M. RUTHERFURD

At the beginning of February 1955 we spent three days at Parengarenga. Pua was our base and our main purpose was to watch waders. On the evening of 2 February we were sitting on the Te Pua peninsula opposite the Kaiata bank, where, as the incoming tide encircled it, some thousands of waders were gathering. Immediately below us was a slightly raised strip of sandy foreshore, dotted with patches of *salicornia* and *samolus*, where waders often pause before moving to Kaiata. On this occasion c. 150 Turnstones were spread over this resting place and with them were some Red-breasted Dotterels (*C. obscurus*), including a pair with a downy chick. When the Turnstones left, we counted besides the pair and chick, four other Red-breasted Dotterels. The owners of the chick were very agitated and their agitation manifested itself in various ways, crouching, screaming and rodent-run; and from time to time this behaviour affected the other dotterels.

It was now that we noticed another dotterel which puzzled us, for like many species of dotterels in juvenile or eclipse plumage, it lacked any salient characteristics. It was about the size of *C. obscurus*, but its proportions were different. It was not so squat, appeared longer in the leg, held itself more erect, and its head and neck were of finer build. There were subtle differences in the plumage too. Whereas the Red-breasted Dotterels had white foreheads, the forehead of this bird was pale brown, the crown and sides of the head darker except where pale lines showed faintly above and below the eye. The brown mantle was less speckled than that of the Red-breasted Dotterels and had a smoother look. Its underparts were off-white or very pale buff, whereas those of the Red-breasted Dotterels which had no nuptial colour, were dazzling white. A dark line showed along the edge of the wing and from the rear the bird had a narrow sharp-pointed appearance. There was nothing distinctive about the bill.

In the presence of the Red-breasted Dotterels, one of which was seen to make a run at it, the stranger was uneasy and alert, and sometimes nervously bobbed its head. Unfortunately when it flew it went into the sun so that we were deprived of the opportunity of noting any further features. However from our knowledge of plovers and dotterels in New Zealand and after consulting the relevant literature, we are forced to the conclusion that the 'difficult' wader which we watched near Paua and which we have attempted to describe could only have been an Oriental Dotterel (*C. asiaticus veredus*).

REVIEWS

NEW ZEALAND BIRDS, by W. R. B. Oliver (revised and enlarged edition). A. H. & A. W. Reed, Wellington, 1955. £6/-/-

Ever since 1930 Oliver's *New Zealand Birds* has been the standard work, and so the appearance of a new edition, revised and enlarged, is a notable event. As is pointed out in the preface, so much ornithological work has been done during the last twenty-five years that revision has involved rewriting a great deal of the book, but on the whole the plan of the first edition has been retained. There are some short introductory chapters dealing with structure, migration, classification and similar topics. Then, after the main systematic part of the book, are sections dealing with the Moas, the other extinct birds, and the introduced birds. There is an extensive index. The book is profusely illustrated by photographs and drawings, many new ones being added in this edition, and by a series of coloured photographs instead of the former coloured plates of paintings.

In a work of this kind it is usually easy, by turning up subjects with which one is especially familiar, to pick on omissions and debatable statements, but it is somewhat unfair to do so in a general review. The attempt to present a summary in a convenient form of what is known about our birds has certainly succeeded: this book will be the reference work on the birds of New Zealand for many years to come and will have to be on the shelves of all who are seriously interested in birds. Dr Oliver puts forward views on classification, especially with regard to the dimorphic species, which will not meet with the agreement of all taxonomists. Non-biologists do not always realise that changes in classification are attempts to get at the truth, not mere gratuitous tiresomeness, and it is to be hoped that the differences between Dr Oliver's system and that used in the Chicklist will not cause any reader to become more averse to classification than ever.

The success of the attempt, mentioned in the preface, to be also a book useful 'not only for the professed ornithologist, but also to all interested in wildlife, including the tourist and tramp', is more questionable. The handling of the material is not adapted for field use; field characters and identifications are not stressed; and the keys, which are freely provided, are ones suitable for the museum. Nor is the format of the volume adapted for field use. It is certainly a handsome one, but it is large and heavy, and it is also expensive. A great deal could have been done to avoid these disadvantages, without any loss to the contents, by the use of different paper and by the elimination of some of the repetitive illustrations. The coloured plates especially must have been expensive, and they could have been omitted with no loss at all. Books have increased in price enormously of late years, but even the five volumes of the *Handbook of British Birds* together retail at £7. It is a pity that every effort was not made to reduce the price of this volume to within the reach of as many as possible. It is however unfair to expect a reference book for the library to be also suited to the jacket pocket and to the purse of the field naturalist. Oliver's *New Zealand Birds* will remain for many years unchallenged in its field, but there is still room in New Zealand for a small, cheap, practical handbook on birds for use out of doors.

B.J.M.

BIRDS OF NEW ZEALAND, by A. M. Bailey.

Through the enterprise of an American museum an original guide to the *Birds of New Zealand* has been compiled by Aldred M. Bailey of the Denver Museum of Natural History, with the help of National Publicity photographer Ken Bigwood's very fine bird portraits.

Designed principally for American tourists visiting New Zealand, this valuable handbook would be a great asset if made available for New Zealanders too, for there is a sad lack of such literature in this country. Schools would also benefit by the addition of the book to their libraries.

The standard of the photography is of the very highest, and particular mention should be made of the photographs of the Royal Spoonbill at its nest at the Waitangituna River and the strikingly beautiful study by the author of the White Heron displaying nuptial plumes. Other very appealing pictures depict day-old cygnets at Lake Ellesmere, White-fronted Tern in flight, and Yellow-breasted Tit feeding young.

Bush-birds, sea-birds and waders are all included in this fine portrait gallery and many interesting and informative details of breeding and habitat, nest structure and feeding and other miscellaneous observations are collected in the text. The brief account of the author's visits to this country will be appreciated by New Zealand readers as well as by those for whom the book was originally intended.

N.M.

NOTICES

Members are reminded that short notes, the year for which ends on 30 June, should be sent to their Regional Organizers in July.

A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

about the Society's Greeting Cards

At the last Annual General Meeting some members expressed doubt as to whether we had advertised the cards sufficiently. The following methods were used: An advertisement was placed in the October issue of *Notornis*; the retailers were approached; endowment members each received an order form early in December, and also sales to friends. A total of 3200 cards was despatched, the maximum that could be handled at that time.

THIS YEAR, all members will receive an order form in September, showing the birds and giving the price. The price is a specially reduced one. What we ask is this:

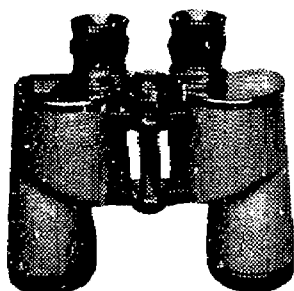
1. Return the form promptly with remittance.
2. Have patience with those packing and give them time to complete the task.

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The Convener, O.S.N.Z. Card Committee, P.O. Box 3496, Auckland.

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HANDY COMPACT SHAPE

Prominar Binoculars are supplied with genuine hide cases and are available in sizes 7 x 50, 7 x 35, 6 x 30, 10 x 50, 7 x 35. Extra wide field.

Copy of an independent report on Prominar by an experienced New Zealand instrument maker is available on request.

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