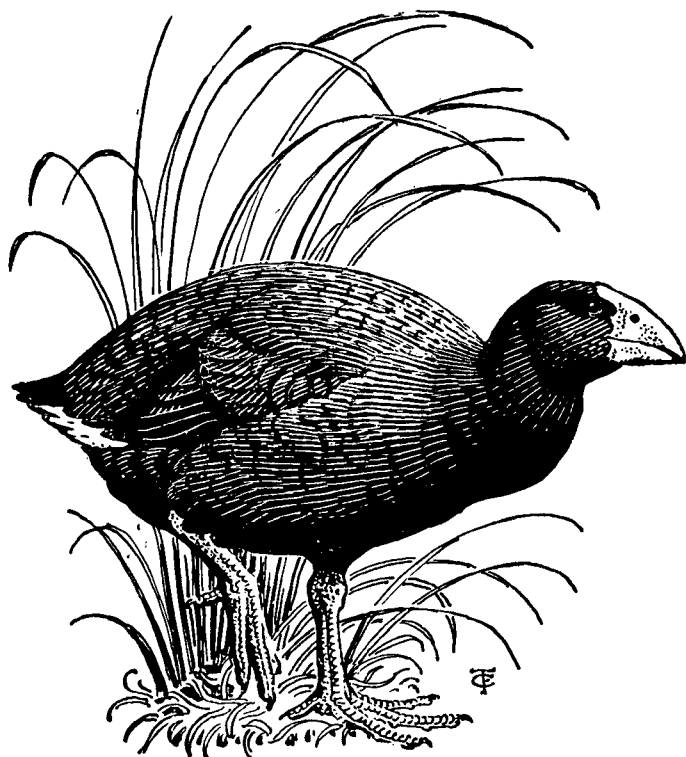


NOTORNIS

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Volume 7, Number Seven : January 1958

NOTORNIS

In continuation of New Zealand Bird Notes

BULLETIN OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND
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NOTORNIS

VOLUME SEVEN NUMBER SEVEN : JANUARY NINETEEN FIFTY-EIGHT

SOME NOTES ON MUTTONBIRDING IN THE NORTH ISLAND

By W. J. PHILLIPPS

During the period 1919-1924 odd notes were collected on the occurrence of muttonbirds breeding on Mount Pihanga not far from Lake Rotoaira. At this time it was customary for small groups of Maoris to visit selected spots each year and secure muttonbirds. However, this procedure had been vetoed by the authorities and was then regarded as quite illegal, so there was no opportunity of securing notes on the method used, though a small number of muttonbirds was collected surreptitiously for several years following this date. Later on, Mr Raureti Te Huia of Te Awamutu stated that he had had experience of taking muttonbirds in the Waikato district. For this temporary round houses, termed whare patu-titi, were built for the titi hunters. Adult muttonbirds were taken in November on the Kawhia coast along the Paeroa ridge. On a suitable night a fire would be lit on the ridge and piled high with green manuka. Muttonbirds flying over the ridge would be overcome with the smoke and would land in hundreds to be killed by the Maoris below. This was the custom last century, but is not carried out today. Birds were first plucked around a fire termed ahi-titi and then stored in a poha (seaweed vessel). Similar records have been received from Taranaki.

As the result of a visit to Te Kaha in January 1951, the following notes were collected:

Each alternate year in November it is customary for several parties of Te Kaha Maoris to visit White Island to take the young of the Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*). No visits were made in the summer of 1949-50; so towards the end of the year 1950 four parties of from thirty to forty people visited the island at intervals. Each person is said to have taken up to 200 birds. Taking 150 as the average number secured by each of thirty-five participants, we have a total of over 5,250 young birds taken in the 1950 season.

The landing place on White Island is usually Mata-wiwi; but Pahou and Poroporo are other landing places sometimes used. These three localities cover the main areas where muttonbirds breed. Originally the old people departed from the mainland in canoes during the night. This was to take advantage of a morning breeze which is fairly constant in this locality. As the breeze dies down the muttonbirders are within easy reach of the island. At present 4 a.m. is the usual time of departure.

To avoid misfortune no one may mention anything associated with the muttonbirds or their young during the voyage. This would spell disaster. Also fatal would be a full look at Paepaeaotea, another island north of the main island. After the slightest glance at this dreaded spot one must steadfastly look elsewhere. Though November is the correct month to take young Grey-faced Petrels, they may also be secured up to the end of the first week in December and sometimes later. The young are termed kuia and live in burrows constructed by the parents. The adults are titi. My informants state that on White Island there are no flies, spiders, ants, sand-flies or mosquitoes. Lizards are also absent. Maoris never stay the night on the island if they can avoid it. All work required is carried out in the hours of daylight and a departure made at 4 p.m. at the latest.

I must acknowledge with best thanks information received from Mr and

Mrs P. R. Ranapia (Te Kaha); also from Messrs Ngamotu Tukaki (Te Kaha) and Mr Tatana Wharepapa (Maungaroa).

Late last century many muttonbirds (*P. griseus*) bred high up on Kapiti Island. Waikanae Maoris who had mostly joined the Te Whiti movement were accustomed to send a group of young men to Kapiti to get thirty or forty pigeons and as many young muttonbirds as possible. These latter were placed in kelp containers. Thereafter Wi Parata, who was the leading chief, together with his family and adherents, would journey to Parihaka with their gifts and take part in the services of Te Whiti. The late Mrs U. Webber, who supplied the main information, was a daughter of Wi Parata. She stated that on one occasion she had seen 400 muttonbirds taken. In this instance they were preserved in a cask.

A leading authority on Maori subjects in the Bay of Islands is Mr S. W. Maioha, of Russell. He states that Piercy Island, Cape Brett, is the main breeding place of 'muttonbirds', a loose term which here certainly means the Grey-faced Petrel, in the Bay of Islands. Here last century and early this century, muttonbirders could rely on collecting anything up to 500 young birds each season. Piercy Island has precipitous sides and can be scaled only at one point where selected experts make the ascent. Smaller colonies of muttonbirds may be found on a number of other outside islands near the entrance to Bay of Islands, the Pine Pinnacles or Nine Pins being of most importance.

Before European contact, the opening date for taking muttonbirds was decided by the tohunga; but later this date became fixed for 15 November. Much ritual, now fallen into disuse, attended this opening ceremony, which lasted for a full day. It was described by my informant as a Rahui ceremony. The general purpose was to lift the tapu from the reserve of birds which had not been visited since the previous year, and made both fowlers and birds 'noa' or common. First fruits were carefully put aside for offering to the gods.

For many years there has been a decline in the number of birds taken. The young men of today will rarely brave the precipitous path which leads to the top of Piercy Island. Also the date 15 November has lost its significance and such muttonbirds as are collected are usually taken late in October. Modern parties are armed with spades etc. and gouge out the burrows, so that birds have difficulty in finding breeding places in the next season.

Another informant at Paihia, Bay of Islands, Mrs L. Yorke, states that her people formerly received their supply of muttonbirds from the 'Nine Pinnacles', but for the last ten years none had been collected. As far as her family were concerned, the last young birds were taken in 1942. These were collected by her son-in-law in response to an urgent request from an uncle who was nearing death and wished to taste again the food he so much relished in his younger days.

At Hokianga Harbour so-called muttonbirds were also taken. These were given the name of 'taiko' by the Maoris, and were said to live in holes beneath trees in high inaccessible places. Dogs were used to drag out the chicks. Before killing it was said to be important that each one should be held upside down to drain out the oil from the stomach, otherwise they were useless for food. These young were said to be greatly esteemed, but none are now taken in that locality. This information was supplied by Mrs Whina Cooper, formerly of Panguru.

On a recent visit to the East Cape district, March 1957, enquiry was made into the incidence of mainland breeding of muttonbirds. Mr Tom S. Hovell, a surveyor, who lives at Te Araroa, informs us that the largest breeding centre is on Maungaroa, a precipitous hill across the Awatere stream from Te Araroa. Approximately 100 birds breed here each year. No information is available on numbers taken by local Maoris, though some young birds are known to be taken each year on Te Koau Point, which is a hill on the north of the road between Te Araroa and Hicks Bay. Small groups of muttonbirds may

be found nesting in numbers from two to six on rocky seaward localities southward to Gisborne.

[Mr Phillipps' notes draw attention to the need for collecting, before it is too late, all possible information about muttonbirds which bred or are still breeding on the coastal headlands or inland in the ranges of the North and South Islands.

The term 'muttonbird' is a loose one; and on the outer islands of the Hauraki Gulf and the Bay of Plenty certainly once included as well as the Grey-faced Petrel (*Pt. macroptera*), the Black Petrel (*Pr. parkinsoni*) which was taken on Little Barrier, the Flesh-footed Shearwater (*P. carneipes*) and not improbably Buller's Shearwater (*P. bulleri*), the Fluttering Shearwater (*P. gavia*) and Cook's Petrel (*Pt. cooki*). But if the season for taking the young muttonbirds were November, the victims would in the main be Grey-faced Petrels, with perhaps an occasional Allied Petrel (*P. assimilis*) getting into the bag along with adults of some of the other species mentioned.

It would be interesting to know what were the adult muttonbirds 'taken in November on the Kawhia coast along the Paeroa ridge'. The Grey-faced Petrel is not now known to breed south of Manukau heads. On the Awhitu peninsula S. C. and V. M. Rutherford have searched in vain for evidence of breeding, though the cliffs and cover are suitable.

A careful exploration of old known nesting places and the critical examination of nearby Maori middens might yield bones which would enable the muttonbirds of Pihanga, the Paeroa ridge and other traditional inland sites to be identified. — Ed.]

CLASSIFIED SUMMARISED NOTES

I. G. Andrew, Palmerston North

L. Angus, Greymouth

J. W. Bain, Gisborne

Barlow, Mrs M. L., Mangakino

M. S. Black, Rotorua

A. Blackburn, Gisborne

C. D. Blomfield, Rotorua

Blundell, Mrs M. J., Clevedon

W. J. Broun, Wellington

C. R. Buckeridge, Aotea

Burgess, Mrs N., Onehunga

W. C. Clark, Christchurch

R. Clelland, Arthur's Pass

Couldrey, Mrs E. M., Maraetai

D. E. Crockett, Christchurch

M. P. Daniel, Waerenga

J. C. Davenport, Auckland

E. W. Dawson, Christchurch

E. Dear, Kopane

R. T. Duder, Clevedon

Dunedin N.F.C.

R. A. Falla, Wellington

M. Fitzgerald, Gisborne

C. A. Fleming, Wellington

R. E. W. Fordham, Rotorua

Gardner, Rev. W. M., Thames

F. E. Gee, Rotorua

Gillespie, Miss K. M. P., Titirangi

Goodwin, Miss A. E., Clevedon

Goodwin, Miss A. J., Clevedon

Harbour, Mrs E. H., Waipori Falls

B. D. Heather, Otahuhu

A. C. Hipwell, Auckland

M. Hodgkins, Tauranga

J. R. Jackson, Christchurch

R. Kidd, Te Kopuru

F. C. Kinsky, Wellington

P. W. Law, New Plymouth

T. G. Ledgard, Otahuhu

Macdonald, Miss N., Howick

G. K. McKenzie, Clevedon

McKenzie, Mrs H. M., Clevedon

H. R. McKenzie, Clevedon

D. Medway, New Plymouth

D. Merton, Gisborne

R. H. Michie, Kaitiaki

W. L. Moisley, Clevedon

G. J. Moon, Warkworth

J. Munden, Hokitika

A. J. Peart, Ardmore

C. Peart, Raglan

J. G. Penniket, Kokuri

O. Petersen, Auckland

Prickett, Mrs A., Auckland

J. Prickett, Auckland

M. R. Roberts, Rotorua

R. V. Roberts, Wellington

J. W. St Paul, Moumoukai

R. St Paul, Minginui

Sansom, Mrs O., Invercargill

H. L. Secker, Wellington

D. J. Shaw, Clevedon

R. B. Sibson, Auckland

G. E. Sopp, Aniwanuiwa

P. A. Stein, Auckland

R. H. D. Stidolph, Masterton

E. G. Turbott, Christchurch
D. A. Urquhart, Karaka
Walker, Mrs L. E., Dunedin
M. A. Waller, South Kaipara

J. Watt, Dunedin
Whittaker, Mrs J. I., Howick
W. A. Williamson, Dunedin
J. C. Yaldwyn, Wellington

N.I. KIWI (*Apteryx australis mantelli*) – Aniwanui, calls heard throughout year (G.E.S.). Heard near junction of Hook Stream and Te Hoe River, Hawke's Bay, August 1957 (D.M.).

DABCHICK (*Podiceps rufopectus*) – Flourishing on the lakes of the volcanic plateau; winter flocks up to 20 not unusual (M.R.R., W.J.B., M.S.B.), c. 24 on 25/6/57 on Hinemaia dam, Taupo. Lake Taharoa, Kawhia, reported present by J. E. Scott (H.R.McK.), Tiniroro, Gisborne, 15/6/57, three on artificial dams (A.B.).

WANDERING ALBATROSS (*Diomedea exulans*) – Auckland - Brisbane, three or four on 11/3/56 off Poor Knights; several jno., Lat. 32 S, on 12/3/56; none, Lat. 30 S, 13/3/56. Tonga - Bay of Islands, June 1957; first seen in Lat. 27 S; up to three daily, no adults, juv. in various stages of mottled plumage, Lat. 27 - 31 S. Off Cape Brett, 14 - 17/6/57 in Lat. 31 S, several, including adults, but no very brown juv. (A.E.G., A.J.G.). 12/12/56, not recorded in Cook Strait between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.).

ROYAL ALBATROSS (*Diomedea epomophora*) – 12/12/56, not recorded in Cook Strait between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.).

BLACK-BROWED MOLLYMAWK (*Diomedea melanophris*) – Tonga - Bay of Islands, June 1957, first seen, one in Lat. 28 S; then one or two daily to Cape Brett; inside Little Barrier five to ten on 23/6/57 (A.E.G., A.J.G.). Island Bay, Wellington, 25/11/56, one sub-adult following fishing boat; 12/12/56, not recorded between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.).

BULLER'S MOLLYMAWK (*Diomedea bulleri*) – 12/12/56, not recorded between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.). Sandfly Bay, Otago, 10/11/56, several offshore (D.N.F.C.).

WHITE-CAPPED MOLLYMAWK (*Diomedea cauta*) – 12/12/56, 10 seen in Cook Strait between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.). Kaka Point, Otago, 31/12/56, two (L.E.W.).

GIANT PETREL (*Macronectes giganteus*) – Tonga - Bay of Islands, June 1957, first seen one in Lat. 28 S. Chickens to Rakino, 23/7/57, three (A.E.G., A.J.G.). Ngamutu Beach, New Plymouth, 10 on 29/8/56 (P.W.L.). 12/12/56, c. 50 between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.). Ocean Beach, c. 50 on 4/1/55 (D.E.C.). Brighton, Otago, seen offshore on 30/8/56 (J.W.).

CAPE PIGEON (*Daption capensis*) – Tonga - Bay of Islands, June 1957, first seen one in Lat. 29 S. Several on 14/6/57 in Lat. 31 (A.E.G., A.J.G.). 12/12/56, three in Cook Strait (H.L.S.). Mt Maunganui coast, two dead on 15/7/57; one on 4/8/57 (M.H.).

FAIRY PRION (*Pachyptila turtur*) – 1/9/56, one on Wainui Beach, Gisborne. (No big wrecks of Prions were reported from the Auckland west coast in the winter of 1957.)

ANTARCTIC PRION (*Pachyptila desolata*) – Waikanae, one just dead on 28/4/57 (C.A.F.).

FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER (*Puffinus carneipes*) – Cook Strait, 12/12/56, several (H.L.S.).

BULLER'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinus bulleri*) – One corpse Muriwai, 27/5/57 (B.D.H.).

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Puffinus griseus*) – 12/12/56, only one seen between Wellington and Tory Channel (H.L.S.). Corpses: Kaipara heads, many in November (M.A.W.); Kawhia, 15 on 30/11/56; Muriwai, six on 27/5/57 (B.D.H.); Mikotahi, New Plymouth, one on 24/8/56

- (D.M.). There is a decreasing breeding colony on Makawhio Point, Westland; for 10 years or so local Maoris have not considered it worthwhile to go muttonbirding there (R.J.).
- TASMANIAN MUTTONBIRD** (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) – One corpse Muriwai on 27/5/57 (B.D.H.). Mt Maunganui, last week December 1956, three dead (M.H.).
- FLUTTERING SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus gavia*) – Hauraki Gulf, 28/4/57, c. 1000 between Ponui and Shag Rock (G.K.McK.). Off Amuri Bluff, 400–500 feeding, December 1956 and March 1957 (D.E.C.). Mikotahi Beach, New Plymouth, two corpses, August 1956 (D.M., P.W.L.).
- GREY-FACED PETREL** (*Pterodroma macroptera*) – Tonga - Bay of Islands, June 1957, small numbers daily from Lat. 27 S, except on 7/6/57. By far the commonest bird till within 60 miles of Cape Brett on 17/6/57, when none was noted (A.E.G., A.J.G.). Muriwai, 27/5/57, 6 p.m., deep dusk, several dozen wheeling and calling loudly over and near the cliffs (B.D.H.). 27/6/57, breeding on islet 30 miles south of Gisborne (A.B.).
- WHITE-HEADED PETREL** (*Pterodroma lessoni*) – Corpses: Mikotahi, New Plymouth, one on 24/8/56 (P.W.L.); Muriwai, two on 27/5/57 (B.D.H.).
- GANNET** (*Sula bassana serratator*) – Ngamotu, New Plymouth, 20 offshore on 30/12/56 (D.M.). Two over breakers at Spencer Park, Christchurch, on 16/2/55 (D.E.C.). Kaka Point, Otago, one on 31/12/56 (L.E.W.). Two just found dead at New Brighton, mid-May 1955, and Taumutu, 12/4/55 (D.E.C., W.C.C.).
- BLACK SHAG** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Young Nick's Head, 12+ large young in colony on 28/8/56 (D.M.). Believed to breed near headwaters of bush streams on volcanic plateau (M.S.B.). Lake Repongaere, Gisborne, 29/6/57, one pair nesting (A.B.).
- PIED SHAG** (*Phalacrocorax varius*) – Ponui Island, 3/6/57, two trees with numerous nests occupied with young from newly hatched to fully feathered. 21/7/57, most nests vacated, but numerous young sitting on logs underneath (M.J.B.). Amuri Bluff, 16 resting in a ngaio, March 1957 (D.E.C.).
- LITTLE BLACK SHAG** (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – Frequently present in considerable numbers now on Lake Pupuke, Takapuna (J.P., R.B.S.). Howick, 17–22/8/57, 25 to 41 daily (B.P.W.). Maraetai, up to 40 in July 1957; 250+ reported on the sea by J. A. Bell; 12/8/57, c. 200 flying east across Clevedon estuary; 20/8/57, c. 200 (D.J.S., M.J.B., E.M.C., H.R.McK.). Hamilton Lake, 18 on 2/2/57 (R.B.S., H.R.McK.). Volcanic plateau, fair numbers present, but easily the least numerous of the four Rotorua shags (M.S.B.).
- LITTLE SHAG** (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) – The breeding site at Western Springs appears to be abandoned (R.B.S.). Three Sisters, Waiheke, 8/12/56, 12 nests with eggs (M.J.B.). Increasing around Rotorua; breeding in the Kaituna gorge. The white-throated form (*brevirostris*) probably outnumbers the pied form (*melanoleucos*) by ten to three. Hundreds frequent the coastal estuaries to feed and return to the volcanic plateau to roost. On 24/6/57 at Hongi's Track 300+ were counted flying inland at sunset (M.S.B. et al.).
- WHITE EGRET** (*Egretta alba*) – Unprecedented numbers have been present during the winter in many parts of New Zealand from Northland to Southland, and a special report is being prepared. It will include also several records of Little Egret (*E. gatzetta*).
- BLUE HERON** (*Egretta sacra*) – Present on most coastal lagoons and estuaries in the Bay of Plenty (W.J.B., M.S.B. et al.). Fox River mouth, 32 miles north of Greymouth, two in August 1957 (L.A.). Nelson, three on 11/1/57; Aramoana mud-flats, Otago Harbour, two on 20/1/57 (L.E.W.).

WHITE-FACED HERON (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) — Rangaunu Bay, six on 15/10/57 (R.H.M.). Kaipara, one near Kaiwaka on 17/12/56 (R.B.S.); regularly frequenting ponds at South Head (M.A.W.); seven near 'The Run' on 7/9/57 (A.P., J.P.). Whau estuary, Auckland, three on 17/7/57 (J.P.). Silverdale: F. Bartlett reported one young reared in a nest in a pine tree. 24/8/57, broken egg on ground under same tree; later three eggs in the remade 1956 nest (H.R.McK.). Clevedon estuary, nine on 15/5/57; usually odd ones (R.T.D.). Ness Valley road, up to seven on farm during winter of 1957 (W.L.M.). North Road, Clevedon, six on 13/10/57 near river (M.J.B.). Maketu, two on 12/10/57. Matata lagoon, one on 8/8/57 and 7/9/57; still rare in the Bay of Plenty (W.J.B., M.S.B.). Gisborne, Awapuni lagoon, 16/1/57, two; Muriwai lagoon, 19/4/57, two; Lake Repognaere, 12/5/57, one (J.W.B.). Waikato estuary, three on 14/7/57 (B.D.H., O.P.), two on 10/8/57 (A.P., J.P.). Meremere, one on 3/1/57 and for some time later (R.B.S., A.C.H.). Bell Block, New Plymouth, one, August-September 1956; three on 26/1/57 (P.W.L.). Otakeho, Taranaki, five on Farm dam on 19/5/57; single birds often seen. Newell's Lake, Hawera, one on 24/5/57 (B.D.H.). Masterton, reported from several localities; one pair watched at nest in pine tree, October 1957 (R.H.D.S.). Manawatu, common in autumn on dams; 11 at Ashhurst (E.D., I.G.A.). Halswell estuary, Lake Ellesmere, 24 on 26/12/55 (W.C.C., E.W.D.). Heathcote estuary, five on 7/5/55 (W.C.C.). Mt Oxford, pair at the foot, 23/2/57 (D.E.C.). Lower Maita, five in turnips' feeding on slugs', 2/3/57; seven at Titiroa on 26/5/57 (per O.S.).

BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris poiciloptilus*) — Volcanic plateau, relatively common, probably increasing (M.S.B.). Lake Whakamaru, up to four seen (M.L.B.). Virginia Lake, Wanganui, one on 12/5/57 (D.M.). Kopane, one on 7/1/57, the first seen for many years (E.D.). Several in roadside swamps between Wanstead and Wallingford on 4/2/57 (J.C.Y.). Leithfield, one in flooded pasture with Black-billed Gulls, 21/7/55 (W.C.C.). Lower Maita, quite often seen (O.S.).

ROYAL SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia regia*) — Rangaunu Bay, six on 15/9/57 (per R.H.M.). Helena Bay, one found dead, winter, 1957 (J.P.). Matakana sandpit, Warkworth, one end of May to mid-September (G.J.M.). Kennedy's Bay, one, 18/3/57-12/4/57 (per E.G.T.). Athenree, one present for some time, seen on 13/9/57 (H.R.McK.). Manawatu estuary, maximum 15; 13 in June and July reported (E.D.); 11 on 11/8/57 (M.J.B., M.S.B.); early October, nine; one on 19/10/57 (E.D.). Waimeha Stream, Waikanae, one on 25/3/55; gone next morning (C.A.F.).

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) — Matata, one on 13/9/57 (J.P., H.R.McK.). Omoto, April to August, six; later at Koiterangi (L.A.).

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*) — Mangaraki Hills, Wairapa, 18/8/57, 15 on dam (F.C.K., M.S.B.).

PARADISE DUCK (*Tadorna variegata*) — Lake Rotorua, irregular visitor; three on 23/4/57 (M.R.R., M.S.B.). Minginui, 1956-57, odd small lots of visitors; Matawai, 18/5/57, 10; Whakaki, up to 350 in early May (R.St.P.). Gisborne, Lake Repognaere, 29/1/57, c. 2200 in eclipse. Young Nick's Head, 7/4/57, c. 200 on lagoon (A.B.). Lake Rotokare, Eltham, 64 on 25/8/56 (D.M.). River Avon, Christchurch, one female, July, 1955, most unusual (W.C.C.).

GREY TEAL (*Anas gibberifrons*) — Lake Rotorua, increasing, maximum 22 (M.S.B.). 16/9/57, nine ducklings a week old seen (D.M.). Lake Okaro, 9/8/57, one pair; Lake Rerewhakaite, 12+; Pike's lagoon, Wairapa, 18/8/57, 100+ (W.J.B., F.C.K., M.S.B.).

BROWN TEAL (*Anas chlorotis*) — Kaero, 20/4/57, 184 (A.P., J.P.).

SHOVELER (*Anas rhynchos*) — Clevedon estuary, 18/5/56, three males

- and one or more females; 1957, none seen (R.T.D.). Lake Rotorua, Hamurana, c. 370 on 23/5/57 (H.R.McK.). Volcanic plateau, increasing everywhere; winter flocks of 10-20 not uncommon (M.S.B.). Young Nick's Head, c. 60 on 7/4/57 (A.B.). Wairoa (Hawke's Bay) River mouth and lagoon, 16/5/57, 70, many with white on breast and shoulders, as at Waikanae (H.R.McK.). Pihama, Taranaki, 12 on 23/5/57 (B.D.H.). Avon estuary, six on 15/8/57 (D.E.C.). Heathcote estuary, c. 500 on 7/5/55; Woodend lagoon, c. 300 on 8/5/55 (W.C.C.).
- BLUE DUCK** (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*) – Waitahaia River, East Coast, 9/1/57, four. Waingata River, 10/1/57, pair with five young and three others; seen or reported from upper reaches of most streams in district. Colour of bill in January, pale salmon (A.B.). Peg-leg Creek, Otira, one seen, 22/1/57 (D.N.F.C.).
- N.Z. SCAUP** (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*) – Lake Karapiro, 15/9/57, four below Hora Hora bridge (H.M.McK.). Lake Whakamaru, 20/4/57, one; reports of more at head of lake near Atiamuri (M.L.B.). Matata lagoon, two shot on 5/5/57 (D.M.); six on 13/9/57 (H.R.McK.). Lake Rotorua, 300+ on 6/6/57 (D.M.). 350+ in Sulphur Bay in mid-July; Lake Okareka, c. 60; Lake Rotoiti, two flocks, 25-32; Lake Rerewhakaaitu, 40+; small flocks on lesser lakes (M.S.B., W.J.B. et al.). [Correction, p. 78, for 'Rotoma', which is not a good Scaup lake, read 'Rotoiti'.] Lake Paringa, 80 on 17/5/57 (R.J.). McKenzie Domain, Cheviot, 8/1/57, 17 adults, 15 juv. (L.E.W.).
- N.Z. FALCON** (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) – Rotorua, 22/1/57, one in vicinity of gull colony, did not attack gulls and was later seen chasing sparrows (M.S.B.). Seen on Egmont at Pukeiti, N. Egmont Hostel and Holly Hut (D.M.). Waikaremoana, increasing (G.E.S.). Matawhero Bridge, Gisborne, one on 19/5/57 (A.B.). Male chasing Yellow-breasted Tit, Arthur's Pass, May 1954 (W.C.C.).
- BROWN QUAIL** (*Synoicus ypsilophorus*) – Clevedon, January 1957, nest 10 eggs (M.J.B.).
- CALIFORNIAN QUAIL** (*Lophortyx californica*) – Waerenga, three flocks of over 60 each, winter, 1957 (M.P.D.). Kaitake Ranges, 18/5/57, c. 100 in gorse at 600 feet (D.M.). Common in Red Jacks Creek and other tributaries east of Grey River, where rainfall is less than most of the West Coast (R.J.). Taumutu, four in lupins, 6/11/54 (W.C.C., E.W.D.).
- CHUKOR** (*Alectoris graeca*) – Reported from Waiho and Kokatahi, 1955-56 (L.A.).
- PEAFOWL** (*Pavo cristatus*) – South bank, Wanganui River, six on 12/5/57 (D.M.).
- BANDED RAIL** (*Rallus philippensis*) – Whitford, February 1957, one with four small chicks (per H.R.McK.). Duder's Beach, Clevedon, 14-20/8/57, nest five eggs, taken by rats (R.T.D.). Little Waihi estuary, two on 16/12/56; Wairanga swamp, Maketu, 20/12/56, several calling (F.E.G., M.R.R., M.S.B.).
- N.I. WEKA** (*Gallirallus australis greyi*) – Gisborne, numbers apparently increasing. In past two years, range has increased 10 miles southward and 12 miles westward, perhaps due to pressure of population. Corpses on roads throughout district very noticeable in last year or two (A.B.). Mangapapa, 13/1/57, one seen to chase sparrows for scraps, and when the sparrows returned, to catch one of them in its beak, kill it and swallow it whole (D.M.).
- WESTERN WEKA** (*Gallirallus a. australis*) – Seen on road between Punaikaiki and Barrytown, 3/9/55 (D.E.C.).
- PUKEKO** (*Porphyrio melanotus*) – Motutara golf links, Rotorua, 6/8/57, 48 scattered feeding (M.J.B., M.S.B.).

- MARSH CRAKE (*Porzana pusilla affinis*) – Lake Rotorua, near Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 14/4/57, one seen (M.R.R.), where between August and December 1945 one to five were seen frequently (M.S.B.).
- SPOTLESS CRAKE (*Porzana tabuensis plumbea*) – Papakura, 26/6/57, one found dead on lawn of W. J. Hood, Clevedon Road (H.R.McK.).
- COOT (*Fulica atra australis*) – One appeared on Lake Pupuke, winter, 1957 (F.C.K., J.P.).
- S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus ostralegus finschi*) – Marsden Bay eight, Ruakaka 11 on 12/1/57 (R.B.S.). Pouto Pen, Tangaihi, 70+ on old wharf, 15/6/57 (J.P., R.K., H.R.McK.). S. Kaipara heads, c. 30 on 29/12/56 (R.B.S.). Kawhia, c. 12 on 1/12/56 (B.D.H.). Clevedon River mouth, two in mid-May 1957 (G.K.McK.). Taumutu, two pairs, November–December 1954; Heathcote estuary, c. 2000 on 7/5/55 (W.C.C.).
- N.I. (VARIABLE) OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus unicolor reischeki*) – Pouto Pen, Tangaihi, 18, including three Black, on old wharf, 15/6/57 (J.P., R.K., H.R.McK.). Maketu, three (Black) on 17/10/56; Ohau estuary, four (Black) on 17/8/57 (W.J.B., R.V.R., M.S.B.). Waikanae estuary, two or three, not always the same individuals, generally present, even in breeding season, though last record of successful breeding was in 1952–53 (C.A.F.). Taruhera River, Gisborne, 20/4/57, two (A.B.). Muriwai lagoon, two (Black) on 21/5/57 (M.F.). Kopuawhara River mouth, 14/10/56, two (Black) (A.B.).
- BLACK OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus u. unicolor*) – On West Coast one in 20 estimated to have an injured foot (R.J.). Heathcote estuary, one in flock of 800 S.I. Pied Oystercatchers, 7/5/55 (W.C.C.). Sandfly Bay, Otago, 3/11/56, nest of two eggs; 10/11/56, second nest of two eggs; 30/12/56, only one pair without nest, eggs or young (W.A.W., D.N.F.C.).
- SPUR-WINGED PLOVER (*Lobibyx novae hollandiae*) – One arrived Matata lagoon, Bay of Plenty, apparently early October 1957, the most northerly record of this bird in New Zealand (per H.R.McK.).
- PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius dominicus fulvus*) – Muriwai lagoon, Gisborne, 10/12/56, six (A.B.).
- BANDED DOTTEREL (*Charadrius bicinctus*) – Clevedon, winter, 1957, c. 150 arrived on my farm; 150 on 15 July; c. 50 on 11 August; none on 29 August (G.K.McK.). Tarawera estuary, one pair breeding, 8/8/57; Lake Rotorua, 14/9/57, c. six pairs preparing to breed (M.S.B.); Whangara, Gisborne, 23/12/56, 20 (J.W.B.). Muriwai lagoon, 26 on 19/5/57 (A.B.). Bell Block sandhills, New Plymouth, six on 26/12/56, 12 on 26/1/57 (P.W.L.). Kawhia, 30/11/56, several pairs, some with flying young (B.D.H.). Taumutu, three nests with clutches of three eggs on 9/10/54 (W.C.C.).
- RED-BREASTED (N.Z.) DOTTEREL (*Charadrius obscurus*) – Hawai River mouth, Bay of Plenty, one pair breeding (per H.R.McK.). Waikato estuary, five on 14/7/57 (B.D.H.).
- WRYBILL (*Amarhynchus frontalis*) – Marsden Bay, one on 12/1/57, up to 12 reported; Ruakaka, four (H.R.McK., R.B.S.). Tarawera River mouth, two on 12/10/57 (F.C.K., M.J.B., M.S.B.). Waikawa, five on 17/8/57, harried by a pair of Banded Dotterels (R.V.R., W.J.B., M.S.B.). Waikanae, one on 3/4/55 (C.A.F.), Taumutu, eight on 16/10/54; Ashley River, five on 24/10/54 (W.C.C.).
- ASIATIC WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – Inlet near Parkhurst, Kaipara, eight on 29/12/56 (R.B.S., D.A.U.).
- BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica baveri*) – Marsden Bay, c. 1000; Ruakaka, c. 60 on 12/1/57 (R.B.S., H.R.McK.). South Kaipara heads, some thousands on 30/12/56 (R.B.S.). Lake Rotorua, Silica Flat, one

- female harried by breeding Stilts (W.J.B., M.S.B.). Little Waihi Lagoon, 27/1/57, 15, three reddening (M.S.B.). Ohiwa, c. 50 on 5/5/57; Muriwai, Gisborne, 13 on 28/10/56; Mahia, two on 14/10/56 (D.M.). Kopua River mouth, seven on 14/10/56 (A.B.). Aotea, January 1957, 700-800 (G.R.B.). Nelson, 16 on 11/1/57 (L.E.W.). Heathcote estuary, c. 500 on 7/5/55, two in breeding plumage (W.C.C.).
- TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*)—Waipu River mouth, six on 12/1/57 (H.R.McK.). Tarawera River mouth, one on 12/10/57 (F.C.K., W.J.B., M.S.B.).
- KNOT** (*Calidris canutus*)—Marsden Bay, c. 60; Ruakaka, c. 40 on 12/1/57; South Kaipara heads, only six noted, 29/12/56 (R.B.S.).
- SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris acuminata*)—Awapuni Lagoon, Gisborne, 16/1/57, four (M.F.).
- PIED STILT** (*Himantopus l. leucocephalus*)—Raepere Creek, Kaiwaka, c. 120 on 17/12/56 (R.B.S.). Lake Rotorua, 14/9/57, c. 10 pairs mated and preparing to rest (M.S.B., W.J.B.). Lake Whakaki, early May 1957, best count 1100+ (R.St.P.). Bell Block, New Plymouth, seven on 15/12/56 (P.W.L.). Taumutu, six nests with C.4, 11/10/54 (E.W.D., W.C.C.).
- ARCTIC SKUA** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)—Foxton Beach, 17/2/57, two (E.D., I.G.A.).
- BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus dominicanus*)—Clevedon River mouth, 8/12/56, increasing, 27 nests with eggs or young (M.J.B.). Lake Rotorua, two-three pairs raised young to flying stage; many arrive annually in February-March from the coast (M.S.B.). Muriwai, Gisborne, 28/10/56, laying just started (D.M.). Ocean Beach, 3000-4000 near freezing works, 4/1/55; Taumutu, breaking and eating eggs of White-fronted Terns, 7/11/54 (D.E.C., W.C.C.). Mt Davy colony estimated at 800 pairs; between 7 and 14 January most of the young try to fly down to the coast (R.J.). Arthur's Pass, January 1957, three pairs daily; Sandfly Bay, Otago, 10/11/56, two nests with C.3 (D.N.F.C.).
- RED-BILLED GULL** (*Larus novae-hollandiae scopulinus*)—Whakatane, November-December 1956, large colony on steep rock to west of harbour; Lake Rotorua, c. 150 pairs bred; many young successfully flew (M.S.B.).
- BLACK-BILLED GULL** (*Larus bulleri*)—Lake Rotorua, c. 200 pairs bred; many early nests robbed; second attempt succeed (M.S.B., M.R.R.). Muriwai Lagoon, Gisborne, 25/5/57, 30 (M.F.). Taumutu, several cleaning up contents of Tern eggs broken by Black-backs, 7/11/54 (W.C.C.). c. 150 nests below Waimakariri Bridge, 11/10/54; later abandoned (E.W.D., W.C.C.).
- BLACK-FRONTED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida albostratus*)—Pouto Pen, Tangaihi, 14 (nine adult, five grey juv.) on old wharf, 15/6/57 (J.P., R.K., H.R.McK.), c.f. *Notornis* VI, 244. Tarawera River mouth, 31 on 10/5/57 (D.M.). Okarito, few, October 1956 (L.A.). 15 on 16/5/57 at Karangarua River mouth (R.J.). Lake Pukaki, two pairs, 12/11/54; Taumutu, four juv., 7/1/55 (W.C.C.).
- WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)—Whau estuary, one in partial breeding dress on 16/7/57 (J.P., B.D.H.). Waikanae, one, autumn, 1957 (C.A.F.).
- CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*)—Lake Rotorua, one pair nested among gulls; first clutch lost to vandals; then a single egg laid and hatched and the youngster flew (M.S.B., M.R.R.). Muriwai Lagoon, Gisborne, 9/1/57, five (J.W.B.). New Plymouth, a few scattered along coast (D.M., P.W.L.). Lake Ellesmere, commonly seen, 1954 (W.C.C.).
- WHITE-FRONTED TERN** (*Sterna striata*)—Three Sisters, Waiheke, 8/12/56, c. 50 nests; hatching just starting (M.J.B.). Harbour groyne,

- Gisborne, 25/12/56, c. 500 in early stages of nesting (D.M.). 15/1/57, eggs just hatching; 5/2/57, groyne deserted; no young reared (A.B.). Cape Kidnappers, Black Rock, 3/11/56, 300+ nests on cliffs and adjacent islets; Black-backs were taking eggs and chicks (W.J.B., R.V.R., M.S.B.). Waikanae, one pair laid a single egg about 30/12/55; destroyed by high tides (C.A.F.). Lake Ellesmere, colony unsuccessful, 1954; Diamond Harbour, some juv. just flying, 2/1/55 (W.C.C.). Seal Island, breeding, January 1955; Okari River mouth, 27/11/55, c. 500 nests; Punakaiki, eight nests; Twelve Mile Island, c. 300 nests, 4/12/55; Okarito, 10/12/55, c. 700 nests; and at the same time many idle Terns at most river mouths: e.g., Taramakau, c. 100; Arahura, c. 100; Hokitika, c. 150; Mikonui, c. 100; Waitaha, c. 150; Wanganui, c. 100. Though the weather continued fine, the Punakaiki and Twelve Mile Terns had deserted on 18/12/55, leaving eggs and chicks. Totara mouth, Ross, 24/1/56, c. 500 nests; 18/2/56, a few flying juv. Usually a few winter at the Grey mouth; 16/8/56, c. 200 appeared, remained about a fortnight, then disappeared, except 12, till November (R.J.). Okarito, mid-October, nesting started (L.A.). Wanganui River mouth, plentiful since August, the beginning of the whitebait season, which is their usual time of appearance; c. 1200 nesting on 9/12/56; at the same time at other river mouths: Taramakau 7, Arahura 20, Hokitika 60, Totara 6, Mikonui 6, Waitaha 300 and many more fishing a mile offshore; 200 idle Terns at Wanganui. If Red-billed Gulls are in the area, they prey on the eggs; if there are no Red-billed Gulls, then Black-billed Gulls act as predators; juv. Black-backs also harry the returning Terns; the adults keep their distance from the Terns and in flight avoid the colony (R.J.).
- N.Z. PIGEON (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) – Moumoukai, Clevedon, fewest seen for years (J.W.St.P.). Aotea, August 1957, one chased a Caspian Tern from near the shore for a mile over the harbour. The Tern outflew it, and the pigeon came back and perched on top of a macrocarpa, where it looked as much out of place as it did chasing the Tern (C.R.B.). Minginui, August 1956-January 1957, scarce; February-March, up to 40; down to odd ones in July. Food, August-December, mainly leaves; January-February, konini; February-April, tawa, miro, matai; May-July, miro (R.St.P.). Waikaremoana, increasing (G.E.S.). Pehiri Valley, Gisborne, increasing (A.B.). Oxford, two in beech forest, Cooper's Creek, 23/2/57 (D.E.C.).
- N.I. KAKA (*Nestor meridionalis septentrionalis*) – Moumoukai, Clevedon, 1957, only a few (J.W.St.P.). Minginui, August-September 1956, very scarce; October-June, 9 to 12; more plentiful in high country. Food: grubs and fruit of matai, totara, miro and hinau (R.St.P.). Waikaremoana, increasing (G.E.S.). Gisborne, 2/11/56, one near town (J.W.B.). Nuhaka, 20/2/57, one in school grounds (A.B.). August 1957, several between Maungataniwha Mill and Te Hoe H.B. (D.M.). Makatawa Valley, Egmont, colony reported (D.M.).
- KEA (*Nestor notabilis*) – Temple Basin, Arthur's Pass, five on 5/6/55 (D.E.C.). Fox River, north of Greymouth, adult seen at 750 ft. a.s.l. in broken limestone country, 21/4/55 (R.J.).
- YELLOW-CROWNED PARAKEET (*Cyanoramphus auriceps*) – Minginui, 1956-57, one pair constantly, sometimes more; up to 12 in high country (R.St.P.). Parakeets in Te Hoe bush, H.B., most likely of this species (D.M.).
- SHINING CUCKOO (*Chalcites lucidus*) – Kaitaia, first song 13/10/57 (R.H.M.). Moumoukai, Clevedon, first song 8/10/56; last song 10/1/57 (J.W.St.P.). Clevedon, first songs 6/9/56 (Miss K. Browne); others in early October (H.R.McK.). Aotea, first song 26/9/56, early for here (C.R.B.). Rotorua, first song 16/10/56 (C.D.B.). Always scarce in Rotorua town; not uncommon in exotic forests (M.S.B.). Minginui, first

song 29/6/56; last seen and heard 8/2/57 (R.St.P.). Aniwanuiwa, 18/11/56, pair seen mating (G.E.S.). Ngatapu, Gisborne, 14/1/57, fully fledged youngster fed by Grey Warbler; and in same locality on 28/1/57 a Grey Warbler seen feeding two young Shiners (M.F.). Waikanae, first song 30/9/56 (C.A.F.). Te Karaka, Poverty Bay, 30/9/57 (D.M.). North Taranaki, several heard in December 1956 (D.M.). First calls heard near Dunedin, Leith Valley, 18/9/56; Three Mile Hill, 23/9/56; Vauxhall, 22/10/56; heard in mid-January Takaka Hill, Maruia and Hanmer River (L.E.W.).

LONG-TAILED CUCKOO (*Eudynamis taitensis*) — Minginui, first heard 7/10/56; last seen and heard 19/2/57; more this season (R.St.P.). Egmont, Pouakai Ranges, eight on 27/1/57; North Egmont, two at 2000 ft. on 23/2/57 (D.M.). Waikanae Beach, one on 6/1/56, eating weta; one on 19/11/56 (C.A.F.). Otira, one on 19/1/57 (D.N.F.C.). Welcome Flats, Copland Valley, one frequently in a rata with a Kea, Kakas and Waxeyes on 13/1/55; present at Seven Mile and Ten Mile Creeks, Greymouth, 8/1/56 (R.J.). Kokiri, late January 1957, an egg found with a Yellow-breasted Tit's egg in a deserted nest (J.P.).

MOREPORK (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) — Volcanic plateau, relatively common (M.S.B.). Westport, several heard early September 1955 (D.E.C.).

LITTLE OWL (*Athene noctua*) — Tainui, Dunedin, 30/12/56, one young found out of nest and kept till next morning, when parent enticed it away (L.E.W.).

N.I. RIFLEMAN (*Acanthisitta chloris granti*) — Aniwanuiwa, few left since winter, 1956 (G.E.S.).

S.I. RIFLEMAN (*Acanthisitta c. chloris*) — Cooper's Creek, six in beech forest, 23/2/57 (D.E.C.).

S.I. BUSH WREN (*Xenicus l. longipes*) — Seen below Casey Stream, Poulter River, Arthur's Pass (R.C.).

ROCK WREN (*Xenicus gilviventris*) — A pair maintained a territory of about 25 yards radius from 3/2/57 to 3/3/57 in Crow Valley, Arthur's Pass (R.J.).

PIED TIT (*Petroica macrocephala toitoi*) — Waiatarua, Waitakere, 14/7/57, one singing (K.M.P.G.). Moumoukai, Clevedon, 1957, scarce (J.W.St.P.). North Egmont, 19/5/57, one at c. 4000 ft. (P.W.L.). Spiral Hill, Rau-rimu, 24/11/56, trilling vigorously, a contrast with lowland bush, Wellington, at this season (H.L.S.).

YELLOW-BREADED TIT (*Petroica m. macrocephala*) — Cooper's Creek, 23/2/57, several in beech forest (D.E.C.). Hen seen adding to nest, returning every two minutes; 12/9/57 at Arthur's Pass (R.J.).

N.I. ROBIN (*Petroica australis longipes*) — Has colonised Whaka State Forest, Rotorua (F.E.G., J.C.D.). Minginui, not uncommon in high country; one usually attends at lunch-time, sometimes with its larger mate; very fond of butter (R.St.P.). Aniwanuiwa, Waikaremoana, spreading; now seen four miles up the valley; three lots of two seen near my house on 26/1/57 (G.E.S.).

FERN BIRD (*Bowdleria punctata*) — Wairanga Swamp, Maketu, 20/12/56, two calling (M.R.R., M.S.B.). Lake Rotokawa, Taupo, 3/8/57, two; R. Whareroa, West Taupo, plentiful, September 1957 (D.M.). Lower Maitaia, occasional in coastal swamps (O.S.).

BROWN CREEPER (*Finschia novaeseelandiae*) — Arthur's Pass, 31/8/57, in flocks and calling; 14/9/57, mostly paired or single and quiet (R.J.).

WHITE HEAD (*Mohoua ochrocephala albicilla*) — Rainbow Mountain, 9/8/57, c. 10 feeding with Waxeyes on nothopanax; common in the larch forests, often with Fantails and Waxeyes (M.S.B., W.J.B.). Motu, Gisborne, fairly common; Galatea, 18/3/57, frequent (A.B.). Minginui, feeding flocks, often attended by the local pair of Yellow-fronted Parakeets

- and some Fantails (*R.St.P.*). Kaitake Ranges, 19/8/56, 16 between 800 ft. and 2250 ft. (*D.M.*).
- YELLOW HEAD** (*Mohoua o. ochrocephala*) – From 4/9/56 to 22/9/56 a pair stayed within 200 yards of the junction of Edwards and Mingha Rivers, Arthur's Pass (*R.J.*). 1000 ft. above Otehake Hut, Arthur's Pass, c. 30, March 1957 (*R.C.*).
- GREY WARBLER** (*Gerygone igata*) – Rotorua, 4/8/57, pair observed collecting nesting material; but nest not completed (*M.S.B.*). Ngatapa, Gisborne, an apparent increase (*M.F.*). Aniwikiwa, 12/11/56, an obvious increase (*A.B.*). Arthur's Pass, 14/9/57, singing, paired and chasing (*R.J.*).
- BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus merula*) – Manurewa, 22/9/56, one albino, all white, yellow bill and legs; Ruatahuna, 11/11/56, one albino, all cream, bill and legs not seen; Waimihi, King Country, 22/8/56, one albino, all white, yellow bill (*H.R.McK.*).
- BELLBIRD** (*Anthornis melanura*) – Mōmoukai, Clevedon, 1957, a few, not increasing (*J.W.St.P.*). Waerenga, 19/7/57, one, the first recorded here (*M.P.D.*). Upper Aotea Harbour, September 1957, plentiful (*C.R.B.*). Minginui, song throughout the year, less in July-August 1956, but strong and frequent to July 1957 (*A.St.P.*). Cooper's Creek, 23/2/57, common in beech forest (*D.E.C.*). Often feeding on montbretia in January (*R.J.*).
- TUI** (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*) – Mōmoukai, Clevedon, 1957, fewest known (*J.W.St.P.*). Waerenga, 1957, numerous; five pairs on my farm (*M.P.D.*). Upper Aotea Harbour, September 1957, plentiful (*C.R.B.*). Ngongotaha, not common (*R.E.W.F.*). Minginui, add matai to last year's food list (*R.St.P.*). Aniwikiwa, increasing; very numerous March to May (*G.E.S.*). Ngatapa, Gisborne, 28/11/56, nest of willow twigs in willow tree (*M.F.*). Kopane, feeding on totara berries in February (*E.D.*).
- SILVEREYE** (*Zosterops lateralis*) – Rotorua, 1957, usual winter irruptions (*M.S.B.*). Minginui, August-December 1956, none; four on 26/1/57; February, none, but small flocks at head of Waiau River; March-July, small flocks up to July; apparently losses were heavy in winter, 1956. Reports from Te Whaiti to Waikaremoana are similar (*R.St.P.*). Aniwikiwa, nearly wiped out since winter of 1956 (*G.E.S.*).
- LESSER REDPOLL** (*Carduelis flammea cabaret*) – Minginui, present in varying numbers; August 1956 - April 1957, few; May, small parties and a flock of c. 400 on 26/5/57; June, up to six, and two flocks of 30 and 50; July, odd small lots (*R.St.P.*). Aniwikiwa, 12/5/57, first large flock of c. 500 (*G.E.S.*). S.I., common in upper beech forest and sub-alpine scrub, 23/2/57 and 14/8/57 (*D.E.C.*).
- YELLOW HAMMER** (*Emberiza citrinella*) – Gisborne, apparent increase all over the district (*A.B.*). Aniwikiwa Valley, 10/5/57, many flocks, one of c. 100 (*G.E.S.*).
- WHITE-BACKED MAGPIE** (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) – Clevedon, 21/5/57, two on farm in district where normally none (*G.K.McK.*). Mangapapa, Gisborne, 29/9/56, nest with one half-grown chick (*D.M.*). Paekakariki, 16/8/57, pair carrying nesting material (*M.S.B.*). Pike's Lagoon, Wairarapa, 18/8/57, one incubating eggs on nest in leafless willow (*F.C.K.*, *W.J.B.*, *M.S.B.*). Karitane, 26/8/55, one seen, the first here (*J.W.*). Waipori, mouth of gorge, two in February 1956, first recorded (*E.A.H.*). Lake McKenzie, Canterbury, December 1956, numerous, often 12 per tree; first call 4 a.m. (*L.E.W.*). Present at Carrington, Mingha Junction, Lagoon Saddle and in the head of Poulter River, Arthur's Pass (*R.C.*).
- N.I. KOKAKO** (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*) – Mōmoukai, Clevedon, 1957, numbers apparently stable (*J.W.St.P.*).

ANNUAL LOCALITY REPORTS

FIRTH OF THAMES

The Firth of Thames has again been under constant observation, and a further gap in its long alluvial coastline has been filled by Rev. W. M. Garner, who has reported on the south-east corner, Parawai.

PRION (Sp?) — One alive in a Thames garden, 29/5/57.

FLUTTERING SHEARWATER — Big flock milling round off Puru, 24/2/57.

WHITE HERON — One at Thames on 27/5/57.

BLUE HERON — Not recorded for some years on the Miranda coast. One at Thames during June.

WHITE-FACED HERON — Not more than two during the spring at Miranda; five on 9/6/57; six in May at Parawai, but only two seen in June.

ROYAL SPOONBILL — Two at Thames on several occasions between 5/6/57 and 26/6/57.

BLACK SWAN — Nine on 21/1/57; 16 on 21/5/57.

SHOVELER — Three at sea off Miranda on 5/1/57; duck with four flappers on Miranda pools on 20/1/57.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — The hundreds of winter had decreased to 76 on 9/9/56. There was a further decline to c. 31, of which 15 were at Parawai. After the New Year numbers grew quickly; 111 on 5/1/57; 320 on 20/1/57; c. 600 on 17/2/57; c. 730 on 3/3/57 was the highest count. c. 460 on 3/6/57. At Thames the autumn increase was from 21 on 18/2/57 to 97 on 25/5/57; on 1/10/57, 27 still remained.

N.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — One from 22/12/56-3/6/57; two on 3/8/57.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER — These favour the stony beaches at Kaiaua. Four on 3/6/57 and five on 3/8/57.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER — One on 22/12/56; nine on 17/2/57 at Miranda. Near Waitakaruru, on former saltmarsh now ploughed, there were c. 40 on 3/3/57 and c. 30 on 7/4/57.

BANDED DOTTEREL — Only eight to ten pairs bred on the Kaiaua-Miranda stretch. On 5/1/57, while three pairs were still on territory, two flocks were seen totalling 81 birds, of which only seven were juv. The influx continued c. 178, including many juv. on 20/1/57; c. 230 on 3/3/57 and c. 500 on 7/4/57 near Waitakaruru. None seen on 3/6/57, 9/6/57, 3 and 4/8/57.

N.Z. DOTTEREL — One or two pairs may have attempted to breed. On 12/12/56 there were at least five birds at Whakatiwai, and on 3/6/57, six between Kaiaua and Miranda. Parawai usually has a few, seven on 12/4/57 being the best count.

WRYBILL — c. 70 are known to have summered: e.g. 66 on 25/11/56 and 72 on 9/12/56. After the New Year numbers rapidly increased: e.g. 370+ on 5/1/57; 865+ on 20/1/57; c. 2000 on 17/2/57 on Miranda lagoon with an 11ft. 8in. tide; 2200+ on 7/4/57 near Waitakaruru; 2350+ on 9/6/57. Considerable numbers also gather at Parawai: e.g. 80 on 18/2/57; 400 on 11/3/57; but big tides may drive these to the Miranda side.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW — One seen several times during the summer; two on 17/2/57.

ASIATIC WHIMBREL — Seven (? nine) on 17/2/57.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT — Only c. 200 between Kaiaua and Waitakaruru on 9/9/56. Census, Kaiaua-Thames, 8200 on 25/11/56; 6000+ at

Miranda on 17/2/57. Of c. 500 present on 7/4/57, less than 2% were males in nuptial red. 510+ wintered. On 3/6/57 a very red godwit was seen near Waitakaruru; and c. 200 pale birds were seen some way inland on the Hauraki Plains.

ASIATIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT — At least two were present throughout the summer. One in full nuptial dress on 25/11/56 was evidently the aberrant bird first recorded at Miranda on 30/8/52. One in grey plumage was seen on 22/12/56 and 5/1/57, when it was resting with stilts in a hollow among the Miranda shellbanks, exactly where two were seen during the previous summer. (v. *Notornis* 7, 58-59.) One in nuptial red near Kairito Creek on 7/4/57 was this bird, rather than the aberrant bird.

TURNSTONE — Five closely watched on 13/10/56 were adults in quite bright breeding dress; 10 on 24/10/56; 22 on 25/11/56, census; 24 on 17/2/57; 18 wintered being seen on 3/6/57 and 9/6/57; 15 on 3/8/57; 26 on 29/9/57.

KNOT — Census, Kaiaua - Thames, c. 5400 on 25/11/56. Only c. 40 remaining by 7/4/57; c. 200, many red, on 2/6/57.

SIBERIAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER — Four on 8/10/56; seven on 25/11/56; ten on 5/1/57; nine on 20/1/57; four on 3/3/57, one with well-developed crescentic spots on the flanks; six on 29/9/57.

CURLEW SANDPIPER — Of five found on 9/10/56, three were still partly red, and two were very pale juv. Presumably these five stayed all summer, being located several times till 3/3/57, when one was more reddened than any other yet seen in the Firth of Thames, and another was heavily blotched with red on the underparts. Two wintered with the Wrybills; being seen twice in June. There is only one previous record of wintering.

RED-NECKED STINT — As usual, odd birds straggled in during the spring: five on 5/1/57; four on 3/3/57, one showing some red; three on 7/4/57, one with neck well reddened; two on 2/6/57; two on 29/9/57.

PIED STILT — Census 25/11/56, Kaiaua - Thames, 152; Kaiaua - Miranda, 22/12/56, 162+; 5/1/57, 251, including juv. Successful breeding season, 3/3/57, Kaiaua - Waitakaruru, c. 1110. The biggest numbers are found on the southern stretch: e.g. c. 5000 on 18/2/57; 3000+ on 5/3/57.

BLACK-BILLED GULL — c. 400 on 9/9/56; c. 150 on 24/10/56; 18 (including 12 at Parawai) on 25/11/56; one on 22/12/56; three on 5/1/57; c. 40 on 3/3/57; 125 on 7/4/57; c. 330 on 3/6/57.

[WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN] — A tern, believed to be of this species, at Parawai on 1/10/57 (W.M.G.).]

CASPIAN TERN — 59 on census, 25/11/56, rather a large number for the season. c. 100 on 17/2/57.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN — c. 1000 at Whakatiwai and a few prospecting the Miranda shellbanks on 13/10/56. c. 700 nests, Kairito shellbank, 25/11/56, where breeding was unusually successful. Some young were just airborne on 5/1/57. A later colony at Miranda had 105 nests (14 with two eggs and the rest with one) on 5/1/57. This colony was not very successful. On 20/1/57 it contained c. 15 'live' nests and 15 chicks just hatched. At the Kairito colony there were still c. 150 young at all stages and c. 30 eggs. Many flying young were foraging up and down the Firth.

MANUKAU — (α) UPPER MANUKAU

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — 21 at Tararata Creek on 28/9/56; eight on 4/11/56; four on 24/12/56; six on 19/9/57; 27 on 30/10/57.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT — Some hundreds on 2/10/56; 2000 - 2500 on 5/11/56 and during the ensuing months; few remaining on 21/3/57; c. 100 at Tararata Creek on 19/9/57.

KNOT—Some hundreds on 5/11/56; c. 1000 on 10/1/57; 1000+ on 13/3/57; c. 100 on 21/3/57; 11 on 19/9/57 at Tararata Creek.

STILT—As usual, many non-breeders were present throughout the spring, and there was a steady influx after breeding. Not a single pair is known to nest locally. 150+ at Harania Creek on 2/10/56; 200+ on 5/11/56; 400+ on 19/11/56; young stilts of the year had appeared on 13/12/56; 500+ on 1/1/57; c. 600 on 10/1/57; 1000+ on 13/3/57; and immense numbers estimated at c. 4000 by several observers on 24/3/57; c. 350 on 15/9/57; c. 200 at Tararata Creek on 19/9/57.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN—The single bird first reported in Upper Manukau on 30/10/54 spent a third summer about Harania Creek. After escaping notice for three months, it was rediscovered associating with stilts at Westfield on 5/11/56. Between then and 26/4/57 it was seen many times by many observers. Between 10 January and 29 January it changed from winter plumage into almost full breeding dress.

TERN (Sp?)—A very small tern, either *albifrons* or *neris*, was watched at Harania Creek on 13/3/57. It flew in with Knots and rested on the mud while they fed busily. A light rain was falling and visibility was poor. Its cap appeared black and clear cut, the cap of a tern assuming breeding plumage rather than of one losing it.

SHINING CUCKOO—One reported in a Mangere garden, 23/3/57.

LONG-TAILED CUCKOO—One seen at Mangere, 5/11/56.

MANUKAU — (b) PUKUTUTU

The quiet of this area has been disturbed throughout the year by the roar of heavy lorries and earth-moving machines. In 1956 the 'explosion crater' which lies below Mangere Mountain in the corner of the Puketutu flats was cut off by a new sea-wall, so that tidal water was virtually excluded. As a result, at the highest tides flocks of waders resorted to its very even muddy floor, a thing which they could not do in the past when tidal water covered it. In October 1957 another sea-wall linking Puketutu Island with Farm Point was thrown up, so that the flats to the north of the causeway will now gradually dry out.

BLUE HERON—One on 22/2/57; two on 24/3/57.

WHITE-FACED HERON—One on 10/3/57; four on 11/8/57.

ROYAL SPOONBILL—Three on 15/11/57.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER—c. 135 on 31/1/57. Varying numbers later.

BANDED DOTTEREL—10+ on 22/2/57.

WRYBILL—One on 24/12/56; 114 on 10/1/57; c. 250 on 31/1/57; 450+ on 4/2/57; 627 on 23/2/57; 700+ on 9/3/57; c. 700 on 24/3/57.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT—Some hundreds on 31/1/57; 3500+ on 9/3/57; a mixed flock of Godwits and Knots off Ihumatao on 24/3/57, estimated to contain 7000 birds; c. 500 on 18/4/57.

TEREK SANDPIPER—One among the Wrybills on 22 and 23/2/57; and again on 16/7/57. This bird evidently flitted between Karaka and Puketutu.

GREY-TAILED TATTLER—One standing quietly among Stilts and Wrybills in the explosion crater on 18/4/57. It is likely that this bird was the same as the one which has frequently been recorded at Karaka.

TURNSTONE—c. 40 on 1/1/57; 45 on 23/2/57; four on 24/3/57; 13 on 10/6/57.

KNOT—2000+ on 22 and 23/2/57; c. 4000 on 9/3/57; 3000+ on 24/3/57; c. 50 on 18/4/57.

CURLEW SANDPIPER – One with Wrybills on 6/4/57 and 28/4/57, a grey first-year bird.

PIED STILT – Few had returned to this corner of Manukau by the end of January: e.g. only 12 on 31/1/57; but by 9/3/57, 350+ had appeared and on 18/4/57, 400+ were present.

CASPIAN TERN – 26 non-breeders at a high tide roost at Ihumatao on 4/11/56. There was the usual influx after the breeding season. Significant counts were 131 on 31/1/57 and 174 on 18/4/57, 168 of which were in the explosion crater.

MANUKAU – (c) KARAKA - PUHINUI

WHITE-FACED STORM PETREL – Dr O. F. Lamb saw two in mid-harbour in mid-October.

LITTLE BLACK SHAG – 120+ at Weymouth on 21/7/57.

WHITE HERON – Five on 8/5/57 and 21/7/57, and probably throughout winter.

WHITE-FACED HERON – Four at Clark's Beach on 22/12/56; one at Kidd's on 17/3/57; three at Shark Island, their usual winter headquarters, on 20/4/57.

ROYAL SPOONBILL – One in Waiuku Creek on 7/4/57, photographed by Dr S. R. West; four on 21/7/57 and till 14/9/57 between Weymouth and Papakura. Apparently only three in October.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER – c. 400 on 22/10/56. Probably some hundreds of non-breeders summered. 330+ on 18/12/56; c. 850 on 19/1/57; 1000+ on 17/3/57; 500+ on 29/10/57.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER – 31/7/56-4/11/56, one reported several times between Weymouth and Karaka.

ASIATIC GOLDEN PLOVER – 22 on 4/11/56; 23+ on 11/1/57; 34 on 26/1/57; 50+ on 16/2/57; 45+ on 17/3/57, many being in almost full nuptial dress.

BANDED DOTTEREL – One on 4/11/56; 17 on 18/12/56; c. 150 on 1/2/57; 300+ on 16/2/57 and 20/4/57, when three were already in breeding plumage with lower band in full colour.

RED-BREASTED DOTTEREL – One on 17/3/57 and 20/4/57.

WRYBILL – 24 on 22/10/56; 16 on 11/4/56; c. 100 on 11/1/57; c. 600 on 1/2/57; c. 800 on 17/3/57; 600+ on 20/4/57; 1200+ on 4/8/57 may have included the Puketutu birds.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT – 8000-10,000 on 22/10/56 after the main influx. Between November and February numbers appeared to be rather fewer, perhaps 7000. Some hundreds at least wintered.

GREENSHANK – One closely watched with Stilts in Higham's paddocks, 17/3/57.

TEREK SANDPIPER – The first to be recorded in Manukau was found on 1/2/57, when it had come into Higham's paddocks with Wrybills. Subsequently it was seen on numerous occasions and was still present in October. Evidently the same bird visited Puketutu causeway from time to time.

GREY-TAILED TATTLER – One seen several times between 1/2/57 and 17/3/57. At full tide it sometimes perched conspicuously on the posts of a partly submerged fence. It is likely that this is the same bird as was first recorded on the Karaka shellbank on 25/4/55. One on 29/10/57, probably the same bird.

TURNSTONE – One of the characteristic waders of the Karaka coast. c. 108 on 22/10/56; c. 130 on 18/12/56; c. 160 on 26/1/57; c. 180 on 3/2/57

and 17/3/57; 14 on 20/4/57. No winter counts made. 100+ on 29/10/57.

KNOT — Only five on 22/10/56, when Godwits were in thousands. None recorded on a census on 4/11/56; 15+ on 18/12/56; some hundreds on 11/1/57; 2000+ on 1/2/57; perhaps 5000 on 16/2/57; c. 2000 on 17/3/57; 300+ on 20/4/57.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER — One on 29/10/57.

CURLEW SANDPIPER — One with Wrybills in Higham's marsh on 4/8/57, perhaps the same juvenile as was seen at Puketutu causeway in April.

RED-NECKED STINT — One on 22/10/56; two on 11/1/57 and 26/1/57; three on 23/2/57 and 17/3/57; four on 20/4/57; one on 4/8/57 had evidently wintered; five on 29/10/57.

PIED STILT — 22/10/56, Oaklands Road, four pairs on winter floodwater, one on nest, one brood of three seen. c. 12 on 4/11/56 near Yates' dam, a regular spring resort for non-breeders. The open Karaka coast is generally without Stilts in spring; but some are coming back by Christmas: e.g. 41 on 18/12/56; c. 500 on 17/3/57 in Higham's marsh. In winter hundreds frequent the more sheltered creeks: e.g. c. 200 near Shark Island; some non-breeders may linger near here: e.g. c. 50 at Whangamaire Creek on 14/9/57.

CASPIAN TERN — c. 30 non-breeders on 22/10/57; c. 83 on 18/12/56; 160+ 17/3/57, 60 being in Kidd's marsh.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN — Six on Karaka shellbank making noises which sounded like a nesting colony on 22/10/56; c. 40 at Puhinui on 4/11/56; 26 on 1/2/57 on derelict jetty at Kidd's; c. 10 on 17/3/57. There are breeding colonies on the outer Awhitu coast and at Manukau heads.

HARRIER — Two nests located in rushes by the sea, both had clutches of four eggs in mid-October.

OBITUARY

W. R. B. OLIVER

New Zealand lost one of its most versatile naturalists by the death on 16 May 1957 of Walter Reginald Brook Oliver, D.Sc., who was Director of the Dominion Museum from 1928 to 1947.

Practically all phases of natural science claimed his interest, and although he had the cool, calculated outlook of the scientist, he was always ready to listen and to assess any information forthcoming from an amateur observer. His quiet, unassuming nature and a certain coldness of manner somewhat obscured his undoubted genuineness. In the thirty years in which I had known Dr Oliver I had never found any difference in his demeanour — he was always courteous, ever ready to be helpful and most approachable. His scientific training and background were no deterrent to his seeking the advice or the opinion of the amateur naturalist on any problem that was exercising his mind. His enthusiasm was remarkable, especially when in the field. Although many years my senior, it was an effort to keep abreast of him when he was climbing a hillside, intent on a botanising or bird observing quest. Only about five years ago he told me that he had planned work to occupy him for another fifteen years. Had he lived that time, he undoubtedly would have planned another fifteen years ahead.

Born in Tasmania in 1883, he came to New Zealand in 1890, and later to Tauranga, where he told me he remembered Mount Maunganui when there was one house there — the pilot's. After attending the Tauranga High School, he went to Victoria University College, where he graduated M.Sc. with honours in botany. For some years he was engaged as a Customs officer in Auckland. After serving with the Forces in the First World War,

he rejoined the Customs, but soon afterwards was appointed to the staff of the Dominion Museum, becoming director in 1928. Ever since, the name of Oliver has been a prominent one in New Zealand scientific circles. Among the honours he attained was the award in 1936 of the Hector Medal for botanical research. He was president of the Royal Society of New Zealand, 1952-54, of which body he was also elected a fellow; president of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, 1934, and New Zealand State secretary for the Union from 1914 until his death—43 years—and a foundation member of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

To the general public, perhaps Dr Oliver is best known as the author of *New Zealand Birds*, published in 1930, in which he presented all the vital information available up to that time on the native and introduced birds of New Zealand, a work entailing a prodigious amount of research and compilation. This book he enlarged to a much bigger and practically rewritten second edition, published in 1955. He also published in 1949 *The Moas of Australia and New Zealand*, a monographic work, and *Genus Coprosma*. The most important of the many papers he wrote on scientific subjects was perhaps his presidential address to the R.A.O.U., 'Avian Evolution in New Zealand and Australia' (*Emu*, 1945). He also edited a revised edition of Cheeseman's *New Zealand Flora*, 1945.

He was twice married and is survived by his widow and by a son and two daughters of his first marriage.

R.H.D.S.

SHORT NOTES

SOUTH ISLAND PIED OYSTERCATCHERS AWAY FROM THE SHORE IN THE NORTH ISLAND

In the South Island, particularly in the southern parts, Pied Oystercatchers (*H. o. finschi*) resorting to green fields or ploughlands are not an unusual sight. In the North Island, however, where large numbers are present between January and August, and smaller flocks of non-breeders remain between August and December, they are almost entirely birds of the tideline; and I had been familiar with them for more than a decade in several localities before I saw any away from the shore.

In recent years these oystercatchers have started to frequent Upper Manukau above the Onehunga-Mangere bridge, where there are two or three miles of shore ideally suited to them, except that there is no shellbank, reef or coastal roost from which they will not be driven by the highest tides. On 22/11/53 I was surprised to see eleven S.I.P.O. fly over the high stone wall which separates the extensive sports-ground of Waikaraka Park from the rocky fore-shore. When I looked over the wall I found that others had preceded them, so that nineteen were resting unconcernedly on one of the cricket pitches. Red billed and Black-backed Gulls habitually use this sports-ground; and sometimes, during big tides, a few Stilts, Godwits and Caspian Terns resort to it. On 31/12/54 about thirty S.I.P.O. had come up into a freshly ploughed field with many Red-billed Gulls and a few Godwits and Stilts. Again on 7/10/55, a big tide had driven twenty-four S.I.P.O. into the same ploughed field; and with them were three of the larger N.I.P.O. (*H. reischekii*), which seemed curiously out of their element in such an agricultural setting.

The winter of 1956 was exceptionally wet. On the south shore of Manukau the wintering waders spent more time than usual in the low-lying paddocks on the landward side of the sea-wall. On 15/7/56 more than 4000 waders, Godwits, Knots, Wrybills and Stilts, had flown inland, where a single oystercatcher joined them, while a flock of about 800 S.I.P.O. remained faithful to their shellbank. But on 12/8/56, although the tide was not unduly high, the shellbank was deserted and about 600 S.I.P.O. and a single Black Oystercatcher (*H. unicolor*) flew into the rain-sodden paddocks. I was told that during August many S.I.P.O. made a habit of leaving the shore for these green pastures.

It may be significant that all these instances of S.I.P.O.'s forsaking the tideline occurred at a season when the bulk of the population is moving inland in the South Island or is already breeding on the riverbeds.

R. B. SIBSON

NESTING WHITE-FACED HERON, WAIKANAE, 1956

White-faced Herons have become regular at Waikanae during the past 10 years and probably bred before nests were first observed. Up to seven, perhaps more, have been seen together. Mr H. V. Olliver, local Acclimatisation Society ranger, located single nests in tall pines beside Waikanae River in 1954 and 1955, and nearby residents reported in early spring that herons picked up fallen cabbage-tree leaves and flew off with them.

On 14 September 1956 Mr Eric Weggery reported nesting on his property a good deal further upstream than previous sites. Up to 4 birds had been seen near the 70ft pine in which he eventually found a nest. The tree is the westernmost in a shelter-belt separating pastured terraces and dunelands from low river flood-plain with willows and poplars. It is 50 yards from the river, about a mile from the coast. The nest was about 45ft up, barely visible from below through a confusing network of twigs and branches when the observer lay prone beside the unclimbable main trunk.

No adults were about at 10 a.m. on 15 September, but preening movements of grey birds could be seen through gaps in the nest, and odd down feathers floated down. The nest seemed to be lined with dead poplar leaves from flood debris. Once a pair of herons flew downstream above the pines and croaked as they passed the nest, and later a single bird flew towards the nest but veered off without perching, calling loudly. On 23 September, 6.30 a.m., a heron flew out of the nest tree and lazily away, and another passed over 15 minutes later. Nest occupants now showed themselves as two well-grown fledglings; one wandering 18 inches from the nest, with a white hairy-looking head, otherwise fully fledged, with young quill feathers in its wings, which it exercised freely, its companion remaining barely visible on the nest. The birds pecked off pine needles and nest leaves and let them fall. On 29 September, 8.30 a.m., the nest was empty, but two fledglings sat together six feet away. On 6 October, 5.30 p.m., they sat together on a branch about 12 feet from the deserted nest. The tree was quite deserted on 13 October, but three herons were feeding on a nearby backwater pond and flew down the river when disturbed. It is suspected, but not proved, that more than one nest was occupied on the Waikanae River in 1956.

C. A. FLEMING

UNUSUAL MOVEMENT OF SPOTTED SHAGS ON OTAGO HARBOUR

During the week 12-18 May, Dunedin and Otago generally experienced extremely wet and stormy weather. The following week was, by comparison, calm and pleasant, and the following bird movement was noted daily by a number of people.

Small flocks of Spotted Shags (*Phalacrocorax punctatus*) flew up the Otago Harbour from low water till full tide. On the falling tide these birds, in the company of a few Red-billed Gulls and some Black-backed Gulls, drifted down the harbour with the tide, feeding on some marine creatures. The feeding area would be not more than half an acre in extent and only in the deep water of the channel (W.A.W.). The feeding pattern was simple. Shags would dive and, on coming to the surface, swim with the flock until diving again. Birds which lagged behind for a few yards would flap their wings dry while sitting on the water and then fly to the front of the flock, there to land and dive again.

The number of Red-billed Gulls was noticeably small (W.A.W.), not more than 100, and not more than a dozen Black-backed Gulls were seen with the flock on the one occasion that W.A.W. had it under observation,

and 125 Spotted Shags were counted as the 'raft' drifted past across a line. That there were at least 150 birds would be a conservative estimate, as diving was going on as they passed. In 16 years I have never seen anything like this (W.A.W.).

L.E.W. observed these 'rafts' on 23, 24 and 25 May. Mostly they consisted of 150 to 200 shags, but on 25 May a very large 'raft' drifted from near the Southern Endowment to the main channel near the Oil Berth. It was impossible to make an accurate count, due to the taking off and alighting of the birds and the packed mass of the raft itself, but a thousand shags would be a conservative estimate of the number in this 'raft' together with about 150 Black-backed Gulls. If a launch arrived close to the birds, they rose in front of it and immediately settled behind it. In some instances the 'rafts' drifted right up into the steamer basin. It appeared that once feeding was exhausted in one area, the birds in front lifted one by one and settled in a new position, often quite some distance away. Gradually the birds took off until eventually the whole mass had shifted and was now feeding in the new area. Sometimes long lines of shags could be seen moving to another feeding ground. Then they would settle on the water and the whole procedure would be repeated.

The master of the tug *Otago* told L.E.W. that in all the years of his experience on Otago Harbour he had never seen such a congregation of shags. He added that they were feeding on a species of small fish (unidentified) and that the Black-backed Gulls were enjoying some free feeds by annoying the shags so much that the shags disgorged the fish.

Renewed rough weather from 27 May broke up any further runs.

L. E. WALKER, W. A. WILLIAMSON

AUSTRALIAN BARN OWL IN WESTLAND

The first New Zealand record of the Australian Barn Owl (*Tyto alba delicatula*) was from Barrytown, Westland, in August 1947 (Falla, 1948). The present, apparently the second such observation, was about one mile south of the Haast River mouth, and one half-mile from the sea. In October or November 1955, J. Buchanan and his father, both residents of Okura, struck an owl down with their car as it rose ahead of them from the road, with a black rat in its talons. The bird was then examined and found to be larger than the Morepork and of considerably lighter colour. No one in Okura township, including the schoolmaster, had ever seen anything like it. With Mr F. Delaney, who was also curious about the bird, J. Buchanan recently visited the Dominion Museum, where he had the chance to discuss briefly the birds of this area. In describing the owl to us he was very clear on the following points: (1) it was much larger than the Morepork; (2) it was lighter in colour than either the Morepork or the German Owl; (3) it had very large white eyes with a darkish ring about them; and (4) although the breast was light, there were small dark spots on it. This description was confirmed in writing by H. J. Buchanan (letter, 15 June 1957). J. Buchanan was shown several birds in the study collection. First the Morepork, which he instantly recognised. Next the Laughing Owl (a specimen with a light face), which he not only did not recognise, but pointed out the differences between the Laughing Owl specimen and the bird that he had seen. Finally, he was shown a miscellaneous collection of owls from outside New Zealand and he unhesitatingly pointed to the Barn Owl, lying in a box containing several other species of owls all larger than any New Zealand owl. On this and on still another (mounted) specimen he pointed out the special points mentioned above which he had observed for several days (before the carcass had to be disposed of) in the Westland casualty. We, therefore, have no hesitation in putting on record the occurrence of the Australian Barn Owl one mile south of the Haast River near its mouth.

This specimen is of interest in that it is another example of the process of steady drift to New Zealand of even more birds from Australia. We suspect that, with numbers of bird-watchers increasing, such records of stragglers will increase.

We are especially pleased to see such an accurate record come from a junior member (14 years), and this record should bring again to the attention of members of the Society the great value in encouraging in every way the keeping of careful records by even its most junior members.

R. A. FALLA, T. RINEY

SPUR-WINGED PLOVERS IN SOUTHERN NEW ZEALAND

Spur-winged Plovers (*Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*) are now well established in Southland. Frequently, when one is motoring and spies a swampy area, a searching look will reveal some. For instance, on the much used road (18 miles) from Invercargill to Bluff, in each of four areas, Clifton, Awarua (two wet areas) and at Ocean Beach, a pair may usually be seen (30/10/57).

I have notes on the following breeding areas:

1. Colac Bay — at least three pairs nested July 1956; two pairs 1957 (30/10/57).
2. East end Lake Waituna — one pair nested 1957.
3. Invercargill aerodrome — one nest 1957 (three nests 1956).
4. Scott's Gap — 2; one nest 1957, 8/10/57 chicks seen; one nest on farm adjoining school.
5. Nicol's farm, Dunearn, on Aparima River flat — many birds in area, three nests.
6. Naylor's farm, Cromel River, Lumsden — one nest: four eggs 14/9/57.
7. Riverton — one nest.
8. Gummies Bush — one nest.
9. Fosbender's farm, New River Ferry — at least three pairs nesting, 17 counted on 30/4/57.
10. Lower Maitara, Erin Park Farm — one pair nested 1956; 15 birds seen on one day; two regularly in one paddock.
11. Bainfield Road, Invercargill — one pair nested, chicks on 13/10/57.
12. One Tree Point — one pair 'obviously nesting'.

Other reports of the presence of Spur-winged Plovers have come to me from: Waiwera, Otago, 2; South of Te Anau, 2; New River Ferry, 2; Lake Hayes, 2; Prison Farm, Otatara, 5; Dipton, 2; Otatara, 2; Lake Wanaka (head of lake), 1; Greenhills, 2; Lake Manapouri, 5; Awarua (Jamieson's farm), 3; Tisbury, 3; Lumsden, 2; Wallacetown (Price's farm), 7.

OLGA SANSOM

CRESTED GREBES ON THE LOWER MATAURA

The unexpected sight of two Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) on the Maitara River near Erin Park in late September 1957 caused Mr S. Lobb to put a toll-call through to the Southland Museum. Many local residents saw them, and Mr Lobb visited the museum to confirm the identification with the aid of a stuffed specimen. This is what Mr Lobb says about them: 'One bird has a darker mark under the throat and a lighter body colour than the other. They are similar in size. In flight they have a fast wing-beat, low on the water, and show white on the upper wing. I saw one bird flatten its crest before diving. The time they were under the water varied from twenty to thirty-five seconds, and when they were feeding they surfaced for only short periods. The Black-billed Gulls (*L. bulleri*) which breed locally often harried the grebes, but when harried, a grebe would dive and often come up with something in its bill. They were still on the river in early October.'

OLGA SANSOM

[European Great Crested Grebes habitually resort to estuaries and tidal waters in winter. It may well be that New Zealand Crested Grebes desert their mountain lakes for the coast more often than is realised. One was recorded in Blueskin Bay on 29/1/53. — Ed.]

OCCURRENCE OF 'RED-LEGGED' HERONS IN NEW ZEALAND

In *Notornis* (Vol. 5, No. 4) I gave some details regarding reports of varying intensity of red appearing in the legs or bills of herons, a phase which is believed to be associated with breeding. At that time I asked for reports of any changes in colour of legs or bill of any species of heron to be sent to me, but the only reports received came from Otago, with the exception of one from Waimate, in South Canterbury. Mr Hudson in his article on 'the White-faced Herons breeding in North Auckland' mentions that the birds had pink legs (*Notornis*, Vol. 7, No. 6).

Now that the White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novaehollandiae*) is seen in increasing numbers throughout New Zealand, more members are in a position to make observations. Would members seeing variations in the colour of legs or bill in any species of heron, please communicate with the writer, 15 Cornwall Street, Vauxhall, Dunedin, E.1, giving species, date, where seen, degree of redness (pale, dull, bright) of legs, feet or bill.

L. E. WALKER

A RECENT SOUTH ISLAND RECORD OF THE MYNA

On 22 June 1956, when driving on the main road between Nelson and Richmond, I was surprised to see two Mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*) on the roadside just beyond Stoke. In fact, I was so surprised that I had the driver of our car (Mr D. V. Zumbach, the ranger of the Nelson Acclimatisation Society) turn back for another look. The two Mynas were now in a paddock a few yards in from the road edge and were positively identified by both of us. This occurrence of Mynas in the South Island is of considerable interest, for, according to Cunningham (*Notornis*, 3: 57-64 and 4: 66-67), the species has not been recorded there previously this century. The nearest places in the North Island where they do normally or occasionally occur are around Wanganui or in the Wairarapa — both at least 130 miles away. If Mynas are established again in this locality it is surprising that they have not been recorded before, but perhaps other observers feel rather like I felt at the time — that someone else must surely have noticed them and already reported their presence. I have to thank Mr P. C. Bull for finally convincing me that the observation was even now still worth the making; and I wonder how many observations of a similar kind have not appeared for the same reason.

G. R. WILLIAMS

BUSH-HAWK TAKING YOUNG STARLINGS FROM NEST

On 6 December 1956 I saw a Bush-hawk (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) fly to a Starling's nest in a dead tree in the open. It secured a large youngster and flew away with it. At intervals of seven minutes it returned and took two more, using its foot to pull them out of the nest-hole. It appeared that the young Starlings heard the Bush-hawk alight and came forward in the hole expecting a parent with food. The parents did not come near at the time and I did not see them about the nest later.

G. E. SOPP

A NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF WEKAS NEAR GISBORNE

We are situated 11 miles from Gisborne and the house is on the flat with a fairly large rough garden. There are also 200 acres of hill adjoining. As a rule there are between ten and a dozen wekas in the garden and surroundings, and a large number on the hills. They are increasing. One pair mainly was under observation. This pair brought out four chicks on 15 October. On 16 November they were mating again and old chicks were chased out of the garden. One I had to rescue, as it was bleeding about the head, injuries administered mainly by the cock bird. The cock bird carries its tail mostly up, the hen droops hers. The hen started to sit within a week, the cock bird carrying scraps of bread and meat to her. I don't look for nests, as on the occasions when nests here have been found

the parent birds desert them. There were no results from this hatch. On 10 January two young chicks appeared from the same two adults. Two of the young ones from the October hatch frequent the fowl run, but are kept out of the garden by the old birds. On 12 February they were mating again, but in this case I think it was a different hen, though the cock bird was the old one. I was then away for a year, and since coming back have only noticed one clutch of two. I found a weka's egg in the vegetable garden which had been punctured and contained a half-grown chick. As they are inveterate egg-eaters, I am wondering whether this is stopping their increase. One I found in the fowl house had speared an egg and was running off with it. Usually they suck them in the nests. Some few years ago I was having about twenty acres of dense scrub fallen on the hill. The scrubcutters found freshly constructed wekas' nests, and just as they were finishing they found a third nest with two young wekas a day or two old. From the first nest to the last was a distance of about seven chains, and I am convinced that the parent birds had successively transferred their eggs from one nest to another. The egg is a big egg for the size of the bird, but apparently they can carry an egg in their bill. J. M. MONCKTON

REVIEW

E. G. TURBOTT: Notes on the plumages and breeding cycle of the Spotted Shag, *Phalacrocorax (Stictocarbo) punctatus punctatus* (Sparman 1786). Rec. Auck. Inst. Mus. 4 (6): 343-363 (1956).

Details are given of the distribution of this species on some islands in the Hauraki Gulf, on the west coast mainland of the Auckland Peninsula and off-lying Oaia Island. An account then follows of the various plumage sequences, and, since it conforms to data on the colony at Bethells, Murphy's terminology for South American Shags is followed. Adult plumage is divided into three phases — pre-nuptial, nuptial and post-nuptial, correlated respectively in New Zealand with pair formation in April and May, nest building in June and July, and egg laying and hatching in August and September. All the sequences are very fully described and illustrated with some excellent field photographs by O. Petersen. Juvenile plumages are also divided into three sequences — nestling, juvenal and sub-adult. These, too, are fully described, or rather the first two are, for the third is ill-defined, but eventually seems to resolve into a plumage very similar to the contemporaneous adult post-nuptial.

A table summarises details of the breeding cycle in the eastern (Hauraki Gulf) and west coast colonies, and makes obvious some interesting differences which are briefly discussed. However, Mr Turbott emphasises that satisfactory explanations for these differences in the timing of the breeding cycle will have to await the collection of more data.

It is extremely useful to have this painstaking and accurate account of a complicated problem in natural history, though I found the general clarity of the account a little clouded by the occasional use of 'fledgling', 'immature' and 'post-juvenal' without it being stated in what way, if any, the meaning of these terms differs from the apparent equivalents used to describe the plumage phases. May we hope that Mr Turbott will soon be able to extend his attention to the Spotted Shag populations of the South Island and Cook Strait?

G.R.W.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are asked to pay their subscriptions promptly. Delay in paying not only adds to the costs of running the Society, but also greatly increases the burden of work borne by the Honorary Treasurer.

NOTICES

The Twelfth International Ornithological Congress will be held in Helsinki (Finland) from 5 to 12 June 1958. The Congress is to take place in one of the residences of the Institute of Technology. The price of a room in the dormitories is about £1 per person per day, food not included. The Congress fee is £4. The prospectus, containing registration form and detailed information, will be distributed early in the autumn of 1958.

During the Congress two one-day excursions will be arranged. Before and after the Congress (31 May - 4 June, and 13 to 24 June) excursions will be arranged to representative places in the country, including its northernmost parts.

Applications to attend the Congress, and to contribute scientific papers, should be sent in before 28 February 1958, and addressed to the General Secretary, who is ready to answer any inquiries. Would any member likely to be attending please advise the Secretary of the O.S.N.Z. so that Council can consider appointing an official delegate?

BACK NUMBERS OF 'NOTORNIS'

Members are reminded that back numbers of *Notornis* and the earlier N.Z. *Bird Notes* are obtainable from the Society. Enquiries about costs and the parts still held in stock should be made to J. C. Davenport, 5 Belfast Street, Hilsborough, Auckland, S.E.5.

Other publications available are: *Checklist of New Zealand Birds*, 1953 (10/6); Reports and Bulletins prior to 1943 (5/-); *The Takahe* (5/-); *Gannet Census* (5/-); *Measurements of Birds* (6d); *Identification of Albatrosses* (1/-).

NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Members are asked to forward records for the 1957-58 season to the Organiser, Mr H. L. Secker, 14 Clyma Street, Upper Hutt, by 28/2/58.

DONATIONS

DONATIONS TO GENERAL FUND

Dept of Internal Affairs, £50; Prickett J., £11; McKenzie G. K., back numbers £2/4/-; Lenz Mrs, £1/15/-; Fagan J. A., £1/10/-; Tattersall C., £1/2/6; Gorbey A. G., McDougall Miss B., £1; Parsonson C. F., Poulton M., 12/6; Edmond J., 11/-; Boulton A.A., St Paul E., Seymour E., 10/-; Austin L. W., Moore J. T. F., Crew N. J., 7/6; Annabell A. B., Black M. J. S., Bourke P.A., Bielecki R. L., Dodd D.M., McLatchie C. W., Watson A. H., 5/-; Jones J., 4/1; Colegrove R., 3/6; sundry, £2/10/-.

ILLUSTRATION FUND: McDougall Miss B., £2; Davenport J. C., Mills B. D., 10/-; Heather B. D., 5/-; Amiet L., 3/3.

RINGING FUND: Dept of Internal Affairs, £25; Anonymous, £5/5/-; Abernethy F., £3; Davenport J. C., £2; Sladden B., £1/1/-; McDonnell S. S., Murray T. F., 10/-; Bellis H. C., 7/6; Bull P. C., 5/-.