

OSNZ news

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 2/362 Hereford Street, Christchurch, for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

Please note that sightings recorded in this Newsletter are subject to confirmation.

No. 12 September, 1979

NOTE: Deadline for the December issue will be 24th November.

Egret Survey 1979

The results of what will probably be our last co-ordinated count for a few years was well worth the effort. An effort it was, too, on a weekend of fiendish weather in most regions; that so little was missed is a tribute to the groundwork of many members in the preceding weeks. All but two regions have reported their totals; main result: 550 Cattle Egrets. This compares with the full national totals of 293 in 1977 and 248 in 1978. The final tally will probably be over 600.

We began in 1977 with a confused picture from 1975 and 1976 of widespread reports of CE that could not be interpreted to a total or a pattern. We knew little about arrival and departure times, plumage changes and descriptions, movements within NZ, or of habits in NZ. After 3 years' effort, we have the answers to all these questions reasonably clear and, with interested Australians aware of what has been happening here, we know also that the movement to and from New Zealand fits perfectly with the movements between South Australia and Victoria and the breeding colonies in north-east NSW (now some 2300 pairs) and south-east Queensland, and the times of plumage change also fit perfectly.

It is proposed to leave another national count for a few years, but that is up to regions and what the members want to do. We shall still need full notes on numbers, times, plumages, and habits for the Recording Scheme and Classified Summarised Notes, so don't stop watching in 1980. Perhaps we'll be organising counts of CE colonies soon?

Plans are afoot in Australia to colour-band CE this coming season; this will add spice to seeing them next year.

Regional Results

Far North: 57 CE (25 Awanui, 32 Ruawai); 7+ White Heron; 1 Royal Spoonbill, 1 Yellow-billed Spoonbill, 1 White Ibis (Awanui), 2 Little Egret;

Glossy Ibis 5 (?); some results still to come. *South Auckland:* 47 CE (7 Karaka, 9 Aka Aka, 4 Miranda, 27 Piako); 4 WH; 1 Glossy Ibis. *Waikato:* 131 CE (Lake Whangape 9, Ohaupo 2, Te Kowhai 1; Huntly/Rangiriri 119 — the BIG mob); 1 WH; 1 highly probable Intermediate (Plumed) Egret. *Bay of Plenty:* 9 CE. *Volcanic Plateau:* 1 WH. *Taranaki:* 3 LE. *South Taranaki:* 15 CE (Lake Waikato, Waitotara). *Gisborne/Wairoa:* 26 CE (Gisborne); 3 WH. *Hawkes Bay:* 5 CE (Clive, Puketapu); 1 LE; 1 Royal Sp. *Wairarapa:* 0. *Manawatu:* 41 CE (6 Santoft, 4 Opiki, 31 Foxton No. 1); 1 LE; 1 WH; 15 Royal Sp. *Wellington:* 2 CE (Lake Horowhenua).

Marlborough: 21 CE (16 Blenheim, 5 Kaikoura); 2 WH. *Nelson:* 44 CE (24 Appleby, 2 Riwaka, 18 Takaka); 9 WH; 7 LE; 7 Royal Sp. *West Coast:* 57 CE (well spread — 9 Karamea, 13 Rotomanu, 5 Longford, 2 Kowhiterangi, 6 Coal Creek, 3 Harihari, 8 Matai, 11 Arahura); 9 WH (report from colony to come). *Canterbury:* 79 CE (15 Wai-kuku, 36 Taumutu, 8+14 Ashburton, 3 Winchester); 5 WH; 2 Royal Sp.; 2 Glossy Ibis. *Otago:* 16 CE (13 Berwick, Lake Waipori, 3 Owaka); 2 WH. *Southland:* 29 CE (17 Wyndham, 4 Gummie's Bush, 1 Balfour, 7 Invercargill).

Totals: CE 579, WH 44, LE 14, Royal Sp. 26, Yellow-billed Sp. 1, White Ibis 1, Glossy Ibis 8 (?), Intermediate Egret 1 probable. The numbers of herons and spoonbills are well down, largely reflecting a concentration of effort on Cattle Egret this year.

With the addition of Cattle Egrets north of Auckland at Parakai, in Southland, and the missing 17 near Balclutha, the full total will probably exceed 600. BARRIE HEATHER

Grants for Bird Mapping Expeditions

Most of the squares for which we still lack bird lists are in remote areas which require considerable time and expense to reach. It is unlikely that many of these areas will be visited before the

scheme ends on 31 December 1979, unless people with the necessary time and competence can be persuaded to make special trips. Some otherwise willing people, particularly university students, are barred from participation mainly by lack of funds. Council has therefore applied for grants from appropriate agencies so that such people can be helped with a subsidy on costs of transport and stores. The results of these applications are still unknown and, as time is running out, Council has decided that \$2,000 from the Projects Assistance Fund should be set aside to provide subsidies for approved expeditions if funds from elsewhere fail to eventuate. This decision will enable successful applicants to plan trips in the knowledge that at least some of the required funds are assured.

Over the past ten years many people have devoted a great deal of their time and money to bird mapping without any charge on the Society, and Council gave the matter much careful consideration before agreeing to support a subsidy at this late stage. It was felt that, if some important squares could be surveyed if a subsidy were available but not otherwise, then it was in everyone's interests that the necessary subsidy be made available. Hence Council's decision.

Anyone wishing to take advantage of this decision should write as soon as possible to P. C. Bull (131 Waterloo Road, Lower Hutt) stating:

The squares to be visited.

The expected timing and duration of the visit.

The names of the participants (naming the leader).

The amount of money required to make the trip possible.

How the money, if granted, will be used (e.g. for fares, petrol or stores). The name of the Regional Representative or Council Member willing to certify the ornithological and tramping competence of the people concerned.

To save time, decision on applications will be made by a Committee of Wellington members of Council who will be guided by the following ground rules:

(1) Any funds will be by way of subsidy (it is not intended to pay full costs of travel nor wages). (2) Only expeditions undertaken during the second half of 1979 are eligible. (3) Preference will be given to visits to remote areas which are unlikely to be covered without a subsidy. (4) Preference will be given to surveys of *clumps* of unvisited squares (visits to one or two blank squares surrounded by well-surveyed ones will not normally warrant a subsidy). (5) If two parties apply for subsidies to visit the same area, preference will be given normally to the party that first provides a well documented proposal unless a later proposal is for a longer or more extensive visit. (6) Payment will be limited to the amount approved in advance and will normally be paid after the bird lists have been received at the mapping office (where special circumstances so require, the executive Committee may authorise the payment in advance of up to 75% of the approved amount).

The Wellington Committee will have a difficult task in allocating the limited funds to where they will be most productive. To permit forward planning, applications must be processed promptly, but the first applications to arrive will not necessarily be the most deserving, and Committee does not know how many to expect. It is hoped, therefore, that applicants will accept the Committee's well intentioned, but doubtless fallible, decisions with understanding and tolerance.

Applications will normally be processed in order of receipt and there may be no funds left for late applicants. People intending to apply, but unable to do so immediately, should therefore advise me promptly of their intentions. Peter Gaze hopes to be able to provide inquirers with up-to-date information on the squares most in need of visits (the picture is changing quite rapidly all the time) so please advise him (and the Regional Representative) of your plans even if you are not applying for a subsidy.

P. C. BULL

Nest Record Scheme

Breeding of many species has commenced and others are taking up territories. Last year only 419 cards were contributed to the Nest Record Scheme — only a small contribution from a Society with a membership of approximately 1,200.

Nest recording is an individual activity and does not necessarily involve a lot of time and travelling. Observations can

be made any time in places as close as your garden.

Complete a card and send it to: David Crockett, Nest Record Convener, 21 McMillan Avenue, Kamo, Northland. Blank cards are available from David or from your Regional Representative.

Black Stilt in Northern Kaipara

During the Cattle Egret and White Heron count weekend a team comprising Ruth and David Crockett, Audrey and Alastair Gordon and Prue Cozens, all of Whangarei, observed a 'smudgy' Black Stilt in damp pasture near Maungaturoto. Marion Wallis also observed the bird later.

The bird was feeding in a group of 16 Pied Stilts and had all black plumage except for white around the face extending to just behind the eyes, a flash of white on the underwings and smudges of white on the undertail coverts.

DAVID E. CROCKETT

Proliferation of Plovers

A mid-winter count of Spur-winged Plovers along the pastures east of the Makaroa River on 8 July revealed 485 birds. Contrast this with 47 in 1970, 28 in 1967, 21 in 1966 and 9 in 1963 (which is the first year I have a record for this area) and one is left in no doubt as to the phenomenal success of this species. The first two birds were recorded here in 1952 (Barlow, *Notornis* 19: 208).

This census does not include the riverbed itself, the western pastures and any eastern pastures obscured from the road. Therefore the present mid-winter total for the valley (from Brady's Creek to the lakehead) could well be close to 1,000 birds.

PETER CHILD

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On 23 July BARRY and MAUREEN ARMSTRONG watched a flock of about 200 Fluttering Shearwaters flying, feeding and sitting on the water between Queens Wharf and the old inter-island ferry wharf in Wellington Harbour. At one stage the birds came right under the wharf. When feeding they would either skim low across the water then dive under or be sitting on the water with wings outstretched slightly, then dive. As Barry and Maureen were on the wharf immediately above the birds they were able to see that they actually flapped their wings when diving under the water. The dives were not timed but were about 15-30 seconds long.

Bird Mapping Scheme

The Bird Distribution Mapping Scheme is now in its tenth and final year. During the remaining few months of this year a concerted effort must be made to ensure that we have as complete a record as possible of bird distribution in New Zealand during this decade. The Provisional Atlas which was published early last year (and is still available to members for \$6.00 from P.O. Box 12397, Wellington North) showed that there were still quite a few squares for which we have no records. Several of these blank squares have since been visited, but others require urgent attention. The accompanying maps shows the squares for which we still have no records. These must take first priority in the remaining months, and some limited financial assistance may be available to encourage visits to such squares (see separate news item by P. C. Bull). Second priority is to obtain more records from squares which, though visited, remain inadequately covered. Maps in the Provisional Atlas show squares from which we have received only one list, these will certainly benefit from another card or two. In general it can be assumed that the more remote squares and those which appear to be less interesting, ornithologically, will be the ones where your efforts should be concentrated.

If you are willing to contribute some of your time to the Mapping Scheme over the next few months please contact me and also your Regional Representative so we can provide up-to-date details of coverage in your particular area and thus ensure that your time is spent most profitably.

PETER GAZE (Ecology Division, DSIR, Private Bag, Nelson)

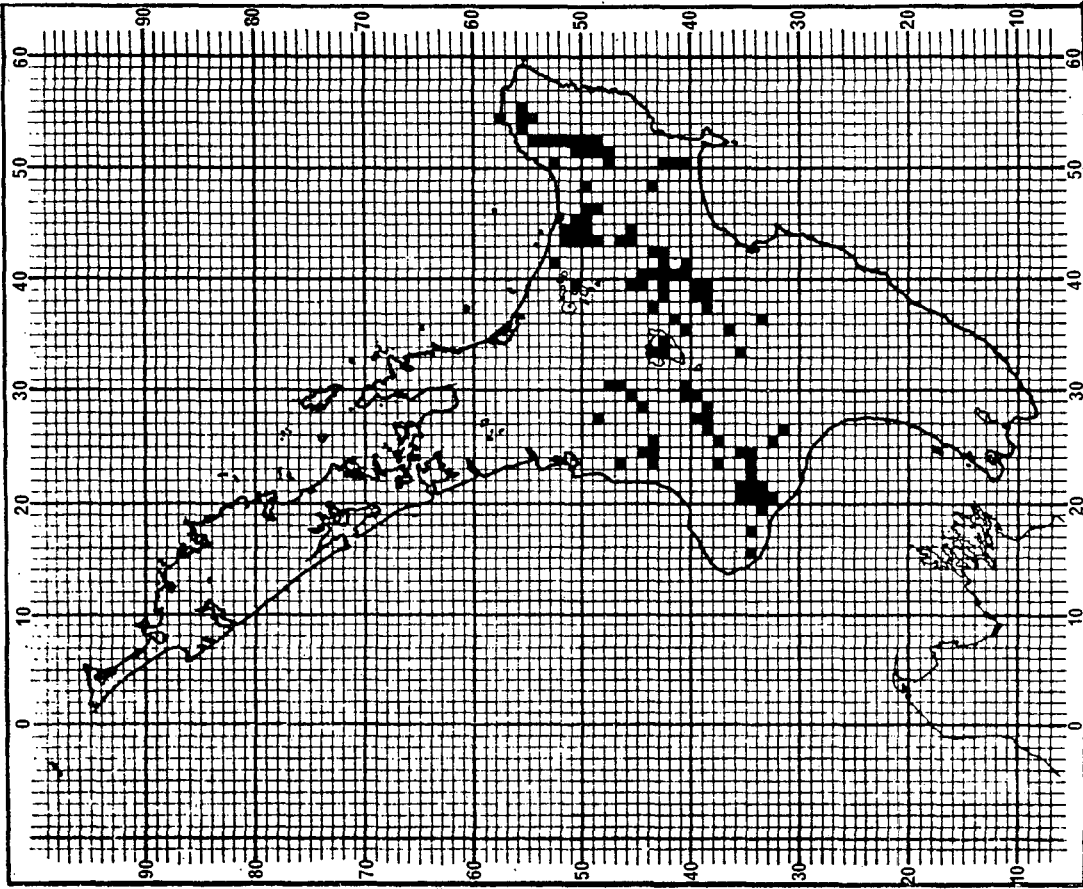
Black-fronted Dotterel

KATHLEEN TODD reports that Black-fronted Dotterels continue to consolidate and spread through Hawke's Bay. Every riverbed has many pairs and 80 birds were counted in one locality last August.

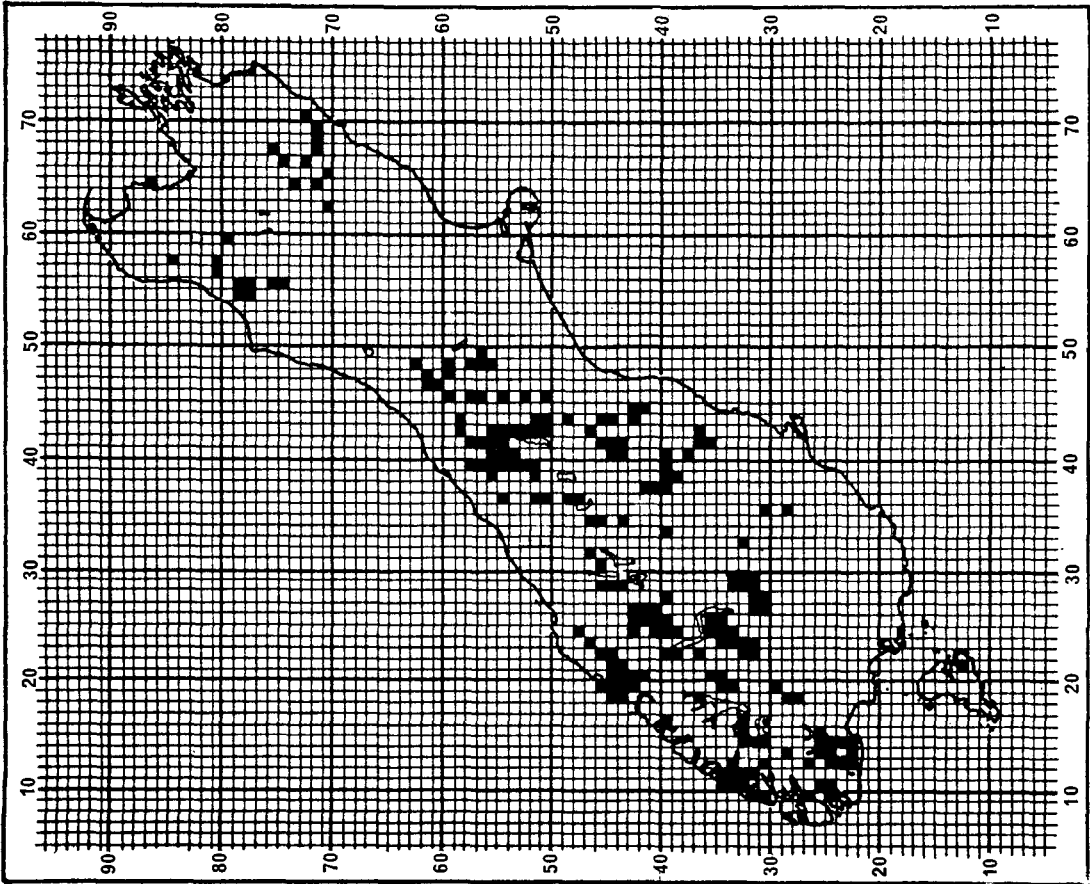
These dotterels continue to be seen in the Bay of Plenty. KATHLEEN FLETCHER found two at the north-east end of Tauranga Harbour in early June. BRUCE GOFFIN found three there a week later and PADDY LATHAM increased the total yet again when he found four birds on 19 August 1979.

What other localities do Black-fronted Dotterels occur in, besides Wairarapa and South Canterbury?

Squares with no Species Lists



Squares with no Species Lists



Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) Inc. has two major projects underway — Operation Gretel, to assist the Grey Teal population and Operation Pateke (see *OSNZ news* 11). In addition the organisation is continuing Operation Branta in an endeavour to establish the Canada Goose in the North Island.

Operation Branta began in 1977 with a small shipment of geese to the North Island. This was followed by another in January 1978 and other small consignments have been made and the geese distributed to various farmers in the Wairarapa and central North Island.

Operation Gretel is a project to raise the numbers of Grey Teal. This species introduced itself into New Zealand from Australia about the middle of last century and its present population is considered to be less than 20,000.

Ducks Unlimited believes that the main reason for the non-expansion of the Grey Teal population is the acute shortage of suitable tree nesting sites. Hollows in trees are used mostly in Australia. Ducks Unlimited decided that nest boxes would be suitable for Grey Teal and Operation Gretel began in 1975 with the erection of 100 nest boxes of three types in the Waikato region. By the 1977 breeding season more than 200 boxes had been erected and the Grey Teal had established a preference for a specific box type. That year 50 boxes of a particular type were used and over 400 eggs were hatched. Another good breeding season followed and the Wildlife Service has agreed to carry out a long-term study of the nest box project.

This year further nest boxes have been erected in Dunedin and the Wairarapa.

(Summarised from *It's a Ducks Life* by Paul Pirani, N.Z. Journal of Agriculture, July 1979: 55-56).

Buller's Mollymawk Successfully Treated

On 2 June 1979 an adult Buller's Mollymawk was found on D. J. McLaren's farm at Glenomaru, which is 16 km from Balclutha and 9 km from the coast. The bird was in poor condition and appeared to be completely blind, with one eye closed and the other with a film over it.

Mrs Greta Norris, the lighthouse keeper's wife from Nugget Point, who is a trained chemist and has a wide knowledge of wildlife, was notified and she took care of the bird. After first treating the eyes with eyedrops but with no success, she then applied Albuclid

ointment, which is made up primarily with Sulphacetamide Sodium BP. The result was very good with the eyes healing up and full eyesight being restored within a week.

The mollymawk was resident with the Norris family for about a fortnight. During this time it was fed mainly on red cod fillets, but took corned beef and egg when the fish was in short supply.

It took off out to sea on its own accord on a day that was not particularly windy.

TIM JACKSON

Obituary - Bob Stidolph

We are sad to have to record the death in August of Bob Stidolph of Masterton. A foundation member of the Society, Bob was for many years a member of Council, North Island Vice-President, and from 1946 to 1955, editor of *Notornis*. His book *The birds around us* is well-known to most and embodies much of his life-long experience as an amateur ornithologist of boundless wisdom and enthusiasm. As readers of *OSNZ News* and *Notornis* will know, age did not deter his activities and publishing in recent years, and we still have a review contribution of his to publish shortly. The many members who have known "Stid." extend sympathy and best wishes to Nora and the Stidolph family.

(B.D.H.)

MALCOLM FOORD writes that during the first week of July a White Heron paid a brief visit to the main Dunedin rubbish dump, which is situated close to the estuary at Green Island. The bird was there only two hours but this was time enough for the alert photographic unit of TV1 to obtain some very good shots of the bird stalking prey along the outskirts of the tip face. What it was catching was not seen. This habitat is a far cry from the pristine beauty of Okarito.

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GEORGE GRANT reports an example of bird behaviour which he found interesting. He saw a Black Fantail hawking over a pond in which crack willows were growing. The fantail was flitting about and swooping down, and seemed to be taking insects from the surface of the water. George watched it for some 15 minutes and had never seen a fantail to do this before. Have other members noticed similar behaviour in this species?

Oparau Camp

A Waikato region weekend camp at Oparau on 18 and 19 August was also enjoyed by members from Auckland, South Auckland and Bay of Plenty. Small groups explored the many different habitats in the area, and some useful work was done for the Mapping Scheme. Perfect weather on the Saturday made the trip to Taharoa very worthwhile. A dinghy was taken onto Lake Taharoa to get a better look at the prolific bird-life of this interesting lake. Beach patrols were completed and the swamps revealed good numbers of Fernbirds and Spotless Crakes. The local native bush was explored on the Sunday and the usual bush birds, including Tomtit, Whitehead and Kokako were seen. A Black Shag breeding colony in a large Rimu, a hundred metres from the Opupata Stream (the nearest water) was an interesting discovery.

BETTY SEDDON

New Zealand Dotterel takes fish

At Karaka on 13 May 1979 I noted a group of three loafing New Zealand Dotterels. One bird noticed a movement in some shallow water nearby, flew over and proceeded to chase a small fish. A second bird flew over also but did not show much interest. The third bird then took up the pursuit. The fish dodged but was caught and lifted from the water. The bird then took a better hold of the fish and must have killed it at this stage as it was dropped into the water but made no attempt to escape. The dotterel then picked it up and went onto the sand. Here the bird put the fish down, picked it up, shuffled it around in its bill a little, carefully manoeuvred it into position and swallowed it whole. The fish was about twice the length of the bird's bill and about five or six mm in width. The dotterel then fed in the usual way.

A. HABRAKEN

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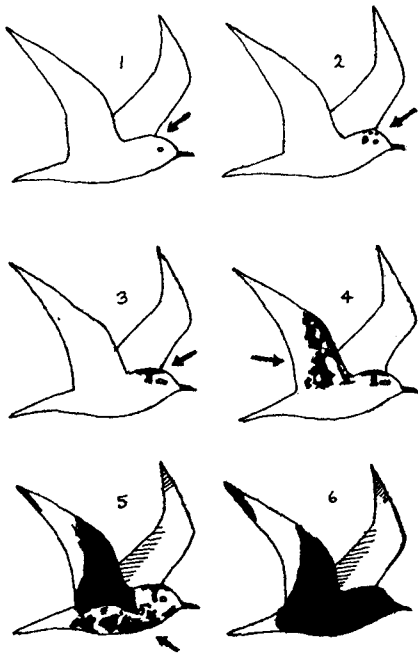
BETH BROWN reports that the Dunlin found at Karaka on 23 June by Tony Habraken is still there and is a real eye-catcher among the dull grey wintering Knots and godwits. Its back is brilliantly rufous, underparts snowy white, except for the large solid black belly patch. Various photographers have been trying hard, as can be imagined.

The Great Knot did not stay for the winter census, but was at Karaka only from 18 March to 1 April. However, one each of Terek, Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers did winter over, along with a small flock of Red-necked Stints.

Requests for Information

(1) WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN

Knowledge of seasonal changes in the plumage of both juvenile and adult White-winged Black Terns is scanty. The situation is particularly complex in New Zealand where, although most birds are migrants from Asia (and follow a northern hemisphere moult cycle), some birds have adapted their breeding cycle to the southern summer. Hence during late summer in New Zealand some birds are gaining while others are losing their breeding plumage, and both can appear similar (see diagram 5 below). The same overlap appears to occur in late winter, but there are relatively few records at that time of year. A sequence of observations over two or three months in regular White-winged Black Tern localities can be very rewarding as has been shown by Messrs R. B. Sibson (Auckland) and F. M. Hamilton (Queensland), who studied pre-nuptial moult of northern hemisphere migrants in New Zealand and Australia respectively. Regular observations in winter would be especially revealing.



Many sightings in New Zealand are of birds in type 3 plumage from December to March, probably representing early pre-nuptial moult of northern hemisphere birds. But the majority of sightings are documented as birds in 'non-breeding' or 'eclipse' plumage (which may span diagrams 1-4) and are of little value in assessing plumage changes. When making future observations could members please pay attention to markings on (1) the head (especially around the eye, ear coverts, crown and nape), (2) underwing and (3) mantle which in juveniles

is dark brown for some months after fledging.

I am interested in the following information for each bird seen: (1) locality name, (2) distance from the sea (km), (3) date, (4) time of day, (5) weather (e.g. light, wind), (6) feeding, (7) prey (if known), (8) other behaviour and (9) plumage (preferably detailed description/diagram, or e.g. 'bird as in diagram 3' if indistinguishable from type 3).

I am very grateful to those people who have already sent in detailed accounts of their observations, some of birds seen decades ago. All contributions will be formally acknowledged in a publication.

Please send details of new records (and additional information on old sightings) to OSNZ Recording Scheme or direct to me.

RAY PIERCE (Glenmore Station, Lake Tekapo)

(2) AUSTRALASIAN GANNETS

ELSPETH WAGHORN, a Ph.D. student who is working on the Australasian Gannet, hopes to find the feeding range of birds from three colonies over the 1979/80 summer. These colonies are on Gannet Island off Kawhia on the North Island west coast, White Island in the Bay of Plenty and on Bush Island in the Hauraki Gulf. As many adults as possible will be marked on the breast with paint in late September-early October. Adults from Gannet Island will have a blue mark, White Island a green mark and from Bush Island a red mark.

If anyone sights coloured gannets, the date, time, location, weather, number of coloured birds and their colours, the activity of the birds e.g. feeding, flying or resting, should be recorded. Please send this information to: Elspeth Waghorn, Zoology Department, Victoria University, Private Bag, Wellington.

Godwits show curiosity

At Mataitai, Clevedon, on 14 October 1978 I found a New Zealand Dotterel with two day-old chicks. The dotterel began doing the broken wing display very actively. A nearby flock of 50+ godwits saw this and marched towards it with great curiosity and much chattering. When they were about 75 cm away the dotterel ran and then flew away but was followed by the godwits. As I stood on the shellbank it flew over me and the godwits flew after it. The latter did not see me until they were above me, about 5 m away, when they veered off but still followed the dotterel, finally losing interest only when it ceased displaying.

A. HABRAKEN

Symposium on Estimating Populations of Terrestrial Birds

A symposium will be held during 27-30 October 1980 at the Asilomar Conference Grounds near Monterey, California, to bring together biologists and statisticians interested in estimating bird populations in terrestrial communities. Expected to sponsor the symposium are the Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Service, as well as other agencies and organisations. The symposium will focus on: (1) the methods of estimating populations (both absolute and relative measures of density); (2) design of censuses and sampling; (3) data collection and analysis; (4) assumptions and biases; and (5) special problems of species groups.

Additionally, a series of papers will assess the validity and applicability of various census methods in areas of current active research. Interchange of ideas will be made easier by invited and voluntary papers, poster sessions and field trips. The proceedings of the symposium will be published promptly.

For further information contact the co-chairmen, Drs. Ralph or Scott at: Bird Census Symposium, P.O. Box 43, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii 96718.

Kea Flocks

What numbers of Keas have members seen in recent times? A friend of mine recently saw an exceptionally large mid-winter congregation of 65 at Quail Flat, Mueller Valley, South Westland. Personally the largest flock I have seen was of 27 birds in the upper Routeburn in December 1972. In my experience groups of four to eight are about usual.

PETER CHILD

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SHANE COTTER reports seeing a Black-winged Petrel flying into a strong southerly just 30 m off Petone Beach on 30 March. A dead specimen of this species was found by Peter Bull on Otaki Beach about a week later.

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ALAN WRIGHT reports that a White Ibis was seen with two Cattle Egrets on 21 April at the Shag River estuary and has been seen there frequently since.

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Nelson members completed their mid-winter count of the Moutere Estuary in June. Counts included 1200+ SIPO, 5 Banded Dotterel, 168 Pied Stilt, 12 Royal Spoonbill and 46 Turnstone.

Readers may be interested in an appendix to a recent paper by Diamond and Marshall in the *Journal of Animal Ecology* (1977, 46: 703-727). The paper deals with the distribution of birds on islands of the New Hebrides, and Appendix 3 gives Song Thrush and Redpoll as recently recorded vagrants. Apparently these birds can have come only from New Zealand, since they occur nowhere else in the south-west Pacific (except for Song Thrushes at Melbourne). Cyclones are the likely agents of dispersal, but still the distances are remarkable.

Another paper of interest to New Zealand ornithologists is Cody, M. L. 1966 (A general theory of clutch size. *Evolution* 20: 174-184). One half of Table 2 gives data purporting to show that New Zealand birds on offshore islands have smaller clutches than their relatives on the mainland. The data are quoted here:

'For temperate islands off the coast of New Zealand'

Species or genus	Average mainland clutch	Average island clutch
<i>Anas</i>	8 (3 spp.)	3.5 (1 sp.)
<i>Bowdleria punctata</i>	3.1	2.5
<i>Gerygone</i>	4.5 (1 sp.)	4.0 (1 sp.)
<i>Petroica macrocephala</i>	3.5	3.0
<i>Miro australis</i>	2.6	2.5
<i>Anthornis melanura</i>	3.5	3.0
<i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae</i>	6.5	4.0

Species considered were either indigenous to the offshore island and had a mainland relative in the same genus, or were sub-specifically distinct on the island. The difference between the mainland and islands means is 90% significant, by t-test'.

For me an interesting question is not the truth or otherwise of Cody's theory, but rather the source of his data. No mention is made of this, and the only New Zealand reference cited is Oliver's *New Zealand Birds*. This is puzzling because in 1966 the clutch-sizes of our passerines were not known with one-decimal place accuracy (nor are they much better known today). Whatever their source the data must have been good to justify t-tests.

BRIAN GILL

AGM Election of Officers

In the last *News*, the name of Beth Brown was mistakenly omitted from the list of Councillors elected in May. The full list, therefore, is Councillors: Dr Ben D. Bell, Mrs Beth Brown and Mrs Sylvia Reed, all unopposed. Mr F. C. KKinsky was appointed to Council for a one-year term.

White Heron

Over 23 years ago Peter Kotuku had a broken wing and with the permission of Wildlife, was cared for by a Mr Keogh. When his wing had healed, he was banded on each leg before being released.

In 1956 Mr Muir of Gladstone, near Greymouth, was cleaning an eel in his garden and this White Heron landed beside him. Since that time, Peter has visited the Muir's home every year, calling in at least each morning and evening during the months he makes Gladstone his home.

Usually he arrives in January, though has come for Christmas sometimes, and on occasions has called in temporarily with a mate as early as November. His final departure date is always around 14-17 August. After the first five years he became much more tame, responding to his name and at that time used to tap on the kitchen window to be fed. Now he merely claps his bill when he wants food.

Mrs Muir has a diary and notes all the arrival and departure dates of her friend Peter. On 19 November 1967 it reads 'He ate two pounds of steak as well as liver before he went. I saw him fishing along the river bank at low tide; whitebait were still running.' He has caught Silvereyes and eaten them whole and also has eaten dead mice given to him.

For many years during July he would fly in with dry twigs in his bill, which the Muirs would hear rattling on the roof, this meant that his departure for Okarito must be near.

When I called to see Peter on 27 July this year he landed at the top of a tree in the garden. After stretching his neck out and scanning the landscape very carefully (mainly for stray cats I was told) he finally came down and landed about 3 m from me. He did not mind the Muirs' cat being there and soon advanced to the margarine container of steak and fish which he finished up, piece by piece. His nuptial plumes hung from his back, almost touching the ground, and his bill was yellow except for the black tip. He flew up onto the rain barrel for his usual drink before flying to his customary roost by the river.

PEN SMITH

Banded Dotterel Study

Studies of Banded Dotterels are continuing in Victoria (Australia) on measurements, fat deposition, plumage sequences, local movements and winter feeding. The Victorian Wader Study

Group had had some success in cannon-netting dotterels and this has provided information on the age and condition of dotterels wintering in Victoria. The dotterels appear to moult all their primaries in New Zealand as even adults with traces of breeding bands still remaining have new primaries on arrival in Victoria. Very few birds remain in Victoria during the breeding season (less than 1% of the wintering population) and none of those that remain here develop breeding plumage. Larger catches in the future will add to these data and by using colour combinations for discrete areas, it is hoped to increase the knowledge of local and trans-Tasman movements. Further publicity in Australia may result in more organised searching for N.Z. colour-banded dotterels.

Feeding studies have been carried out in Westernport Bay (40 km SE of Melbourne) and have concentrated on the diet, feeding behaviour and interactions with other species of dotterels e.g. Hooded, Red-capped and Mongolian. The Banded Dotterels prefer lightly vegetated and sandy mudflats and use terrestrial areas such as paddocks and saltmarsh only during rough weather and particularly high tides. They feed during both tides each day and their diet consists mainly of molluscs and crustaceans.

Last year I took the opportunity to spend several months in the South Island looking at the breeding biology of the Banded Dotterel. Following the advice of Rod Hay and Paul Sagar I was soon working at Lake Ellesmere and on the Cass River, Lake Tekapo. Both areas provided a great deal of useful information on the ecology and breeding behaviour of the dotterels. Fortunately I met Ray Pierce early in the study and enjoyed several weeks of his hospitality at Glenmore Station. I participated in Ray's colour banding study of the dotterels and was introduced to many of the South Island birds. The success of the trip was due largely to the help of local OSNZ members and I should like to extend my thanks to them.

PETER DANN

Crossword Solution

I wonder how many members got the solution to last issue's crossword. After much head-scratching, muttering and thought I got all but two correct. Gillian Guest has confirmed the following solution. Across: 1 Skuas. 4 Rook. 6 Saddleback. 8 Nankeen. 9 OK. 10 Pio. 11 Shoveler. 13 Onk. 14 Toll. 15 Siskin. Down: 2 Kea. 3 Silvereyes. 4 Robin. 5 Kokako. 7 Dunnocks. 8 Nestor. 9 Oi. 10 Prion. 12 Ale. 14 Ti.

During a recent trip to Australia BETH BROWN spent an interesting day at the Werribee Sewage Farm with Clive Minton, of the Wash Wader Banding Group, who is in Australia for two years. He has an enthusiastic band of helpers in the Victorian Wader Study Group and is banding waders using both mist and cannon nets. Beth saw about 44 species of birds at the farm, including 200-300 Red-necked Stints, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Curlew Sandpipers, Wood Sandpipers, Spotted Crake and Red-capped Dotterels. The cannon net was set with great care on a shell bank and the party of 15 huddled in a scrim hide to wait. After quite a long wait in complete silence, during which Clive twitched a line to shepherd birds into the correct place, the net was fired and 28 Pied Oystercatchers and some Silver Gulls were caught. The whole operation was planned with great skill and precision and without fuss or harm to the birds. The oystercatchers were covered individually with soft cloths until the gulls were removed and released, then placed carefully in scrim holding pens. Then each was measured, weighed and banded before being released. The teamwork was first rate and only experienced people handled the birds.

After this Beth had to leave but the rest of the group stayed behind to set up tents on the shell and spend the night with the mist nets.

Publications

Foods of feral house cats (Felis catus L.) in forest of the Orongorongo Valley, Wellington, B. M. Fitzgerald & B. J. Karl (1979), N.Z. Journal of Zoology 6: 107-126. Cats are primarily predators of small mammals and now eat few birds, but they may have been responsible for reducing the numbers of some forest birds in the past.

Feral sheep and cattle and Royal Albatrosses on Campbell Island; population trends and habitat changes, P. J. Dilks & P. R. Wilson (1979), N.Z. Journal of Zoology 6: 127-139. Population trends for these species are shown and discussed in the context of changes to the flora in grazed and stock-free areas. Counts of albatross pairs show that numbers increased greater in the stock-free area. However, a detailed analysis of results shows that removal of sheep cannot be assumed to be related solely responsible for the difference.

Identification and breeding biology of the diving petrels Pelecanoides georgicus and P. urinatrix exsul at South Georgia, M. R. Payne & P. A. Prince (1979), N.Z. Journal of Zoology 6: 299-318. Several new characters are recognised

for distinguishing these species. At South Georgia the species bred in different habitats and at different times of the year. *P. georgicus* breeds later and its chicks fledge faster than those of *P. urinatrix exsul*, which may be a more recent colonist of these higher latitudes.

Breeding biology of Rooks (Corvus frugilegus L.) in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, T. P. G. Purchas (1979), N.Z. Journal of Zoology 6: 321-327.

Food of the Rook (Corvus frugilegus L.) in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, R. E. R. Porter (1979), N.Z. Journal of Zoology 6: 329-337. The main foods were invertebrates during the warmer months and walnuts and acorns in autumn and winter. When these foods were scarce cereals were taken, mainly from stubble.

Tane 24 (1978) includes papers resulting from the Auckland University Field Club scientific trip to Farewell Spit in May 1977. Topics include the geology, vegetation (both terrestrial and aquatic), intertidal life and vertebrates of Farewell Spit. These provide background data about the area and should be a useful base for future ornithological studies. The vertebrate paper adds Grey Teal to the impressive list of birds already recorded from the Spit and describes a bird tentatively identified as a Grey Gull!!

Bird Photography, K. W. Gardiner (1978), Western Birds 9. The author describes methods for black and white action shots; ten striking examples are illustrated.

Feeding strategies and population size in tropical seabirds, A. W. Diamond (1978), The American Naturalist 112: 215-223. Prey abundance determines population size, pelagic migrants being more numerous than resident species.

Temporary preservation of specimens, H. J. de Disney (1979), Corella 3. What to do with freshly dead birds until they can be sent to the nearest provincial museum. Several methods are described, stressing the value of such specimens when essential details are attached.

Colour banding of Sacred Ibis, Corella 3 (1979). K. Lowe of Melbourne University is colour banding Sacred Ibis in Western Port Bay. Colour bands are on either tibia or tarsus of the left leg, a metal band is on the tarsus of the right leg.

Notes from The Bird Observer, No. 570 (May 1979). Alan Morris suggests that the wings extended position of shags is used to indicate successful fishing.

Bird Call Recording

During the first week of August I spent some time at the Mount Bruce Native Bird Reserve where I was lucky enough to tape record the calls of several species of birds. The morning of 2 August was wet and cold; however, I tried a test recording in between showers and was lucky enough to capture the sounds of a Brown Teal and then a Mallard. While recording the Mallards I heard a strange call, which on investigation turned out to be a Grey Teal in with the Mallards. That afternoon the calls of Stitchbird, Morepork, Native Pigeon, Robin, Saddleback, Blue Duck and Paradise Duck were captured on tape. During the following two days Forbes Parakeet, Rifleman, Antipodes Parakeet, Takahe, Dunnoek, Silvereye, Starling, Large Spotted Kiwi and Brown Kiwi were added to the list.

The following week I took delivery of a new Uher 4200 report stereo IC tape recorder and then spent a few days in Tauranga testing it out. Paddy Latham acted as my host and guide and we managed to record the calls of Myna, Black-fronted Dotterel, Fernbird and Black Shag. Grey-faced Petrels were recorded on Mount Maunganui on the evening of 10 August, after two previous attempts had failed.

LES MCPHERSON

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First Hoary-headed Grebe in Canterbury? On 22 July Kathleen Harrison, Geof. Tunnicliffe, Don Braithwaite and Phil Howell saw a small grebe on a pond in the Bromley Sewage Farm. Inspection through Don's telescope resulted in its tentative identification as a Hoary-headed Grebe. Since then this bird has been kept under almost continuous observation by members of OSNZ. The original identification has been confirmed as the bird has developed breeding plumage during the winter.

Kawhia Harbour Winter Census

Canoes, dinghies and boats were used by a combined force of OSNZ members and Hamilton Junior Naturalists to complete the winter census of Kawhia Harbour on 30 June 1979. This, together with a land party covering Ocean Beach to the North Head Lagoon gave good coverage of the harbour. The count showed an increase in the numbers of Pied Oystercatchers (1,600) over last year (1,200). Six Black Stilts, one Asiatic Whimbrel and one lonely Wrybill were other interesting sightings.

BETTY SEDDON

Joan Morris reports a population explosion of Cattle Egrets at Murwillumbah (NSW) — 500 nests in 1977-78, 1000 in 1978-79. One bird, banded at Grafton, was found dead in Tasmania three months later.

OSNZ Library

The library is indebted to Mr E. G. Turbott for a large collection of reprints and the following new books. *Handbook of New Guinea Birds* by A. L. Rand and E. T. Gilliard, 1967; *A Field Guide to the Birds of Southern Africa* by O. P. M. Prozesky, 1970; *Before Nature Dies* by Jean Dorst, 1970; *Birds of the World, their life and habits* by Paul Bauael, translated by P. Barclay-Smith, 1954.

ANTHEA GOODWIN

Reprints of Notornis papers

For some years now, OSNZ has supplied its contributors with 25 free reprints of their papers. This has become an expensive service, which has been discontinued by many societies. However, Council does not want to discontinue it but instead to curtail unnecessary expense. Therefore, in future reprints will be issued as offprints, run off straight after *Notornis* is printed — this is why each paper now starts on a right-hand page. Also, the 25 offprints will be sent *only* if they have been ordered by the author, and only 25 per paper instead of 25 per author of multi-author papers. Very little is gained by printing, say, 5 copies rather than 25; it is the setting up that is the main cost, not the running off of copies. The main saving

to the Society will be from printing offprints rather than reprints, and from not supplying free reprints to authors who do not want them and to professional authors whose department makes a large order anyway.

Therefore, if you write a paper and want 25 free reprints, order them before *Notornis* is printed — the best time is when you receive the galley proofs from the editor for checking. Orders are still made direct to the printer, not the editor: Te Rau Press Ltd., P.O. Box 945, Gisborne. If you want more than 25, order the extra also, at cost price.

BARRIE HEATHER

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