



OSNZ news

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4,
for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

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

No. 15

June, 1980

NOTE: Deadline for September 1980 issue
will be 31 August.

Classified Summarised Notes

Get your notes for 1 July 1979 to 30 June 1980 ready *now*. Give them to your RR to collate for the region, or, if you prefer, send them direct to B. A. ELLIS, 33 BLEAKHOUSE ROAD, HOWICK, AUCKLAND. While RBS is still overseas, Brian has agreed to look after this year's collating so that it is well under way when RBS returns. The work can be very tedious and full of risk of error if it has to be rushed because too many members send in their records late. Please co-operate.

Remember —

1. Don't forget your notes this year.
2. Don't be late.
3. Don't include unexplained localities.
4. Don't include misspelt place names or people's names.
5. Don't assume someone else will send in a record. The collater can sort it out.
6. Don't claim 'difficult' species without evidence of indentification (needed anyway for the Recording Scheme files).
7. Don't forget behaviour and plumage notes.

If you sent in important notes late last year, it may pay to send them in again with a note to explain they are repeated. Brian will not have access to last year's records at this stage.

Records from past years are always welcome, as long as carefully dated.

Address for the notes: B. A. Ellis, 33 Bleakhouse Road, Howick.

Cattle Egret National Count 23-24 August

The meeting of RRs at the AGM weekend decided to continue the August count for one more year. Therefore, as the time draws near, establish where the flocks finally settle so that the count itself is easy. There is no sign of an influx of other egrets or of ibises, and so the Cattle Egret is the main subject of inquiry; all other species go to Recording Scheme. As before, please

send the results promptly to me, promptly because it is always close to the September newsletter deadline, and I still have to collate the results and send them in time to Gisborne.

This year, it's time for Nelson to have the bad weather and everywhere else brilliant sunshine.

I am sorry the reports for 1978 and 1979 have not yet appeared in *Notornis*. Each year I get it more or less ready, and then it's decided to continue for another year. However, at 1980 we'll stop. We're learning little new, mainly confirming the tentative conclusions of 1977 and recording rising numbers. We now have the arrival period well established, but departure dates are harder to pin down, partly because the birds melt away gradually, and partly because observers are losing interest and turning to other things at that time.

From now on, we'll need to concentrate on recording the gradual increase of oversummering birds, more evident this year and confusing arrival figures for some districts. If and when breeding starts, that will have to be closely recorded. Will the migration with Australia continue when breeding is established here?

This year, the arrival dates, as entered on a map at the AGM, fall cleanly into last year's pattern — a few early birds late March/early April followed by a marked influx mid-April to mid-May. A national count at this time, as some have suggested, would be hopeless. The birds are everywhere, coming and going. By late April, they were well dispersed down the western coasts and into Southland, a few creeping through to Hawkes Bay, Marlborough and Canterbury. This year, oversummering birds were recorded in Kaipara, Firth of Thames, Manawatu, Otago, and probably Canterbury. Where else?

BARRIE HEATHER

New Regional Representatives

Two new RRs were appointed at the AGM. Colin Scadden replaces Dave Sim in Wairarapa and Dr R. F. (Bob) Smith replaces Malcolm Foord in Otago.

OSNZ Members Honoured

Earlier this year three OSNZ members were presented with prestigious awards in recognition of their services.

ROGER and CHRISTINA SUTTON of Southland were awarded the Loder Cup, which is awarded annually to those who have done most to encourage interest in nature, especially flora.

Roger and Christina were nominated by the Southland branch of the Royal New Zealand Forest and Bird Protection Society for their work with growing native trees in their own garden. Other interests have been the establishment of the Waituna Wetlands Reserve, the development of the Redcliffs Wetlands Reserve and the development of the Lake George Reserve into a valuable wildlife and recreational area.

Victoria University have awarded DR KAZIMIERZ WODZICKI a doctorate of science to mark his services to the biological sciences in New Zealand. His publications include over a hundred scientific papers and the book 'Introduced Mammals in New Zealand.' Currently Dr Wodzicki is planning a research project aimed at controlling Niue Island's rat population during the fruit season. When time permits he goes bird-watching and his papers on the ecology of the Waikanae Estuary will be well known to OSNZ members.

OSNZ congratulates these members on their well-deserved awards.

PAUL SAGAR

Crested Grebe Survey

As advised in *OSNZ news* 14 there will be a survey of the Crested Grebe population this summer. The dates have been set as 29 November-14 December (three weekends and two weeks). This time should allow most lakes to be visited, yet minimise the effects of mobile non-breeding birds.

There has been a good response to the scheme in Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough and the West Coast; however, more observers are welcome!

If you are interested in participating in the scheme please contact Paul Sagar, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4.

AGM

The AGM was held at Massey University, Palmerston North, over the weekend of 23-25 May. Some 107 members from all over New Zealand gathered for a very interesting and enjoyable week-end of activities.

On Friday 23 May, Council had a long meeting, completing a lot of business, including essential matters regarding the Rare Birds Committee, Checklist Committee, conservation and a bird moult inquiry. We can expect announcements regarding these matters soon.

While the RRs were meeting on Saturday morning some members joined a field trip to the Marton Sewage Ponds to view Dabchicks. Saturday afternoon activities included three short talks, Peter Bull on the Bird Mapping Scheme, Dick Veitch on Little Barrier Island and Lindsay Davies on the Manawatu Estuary bird survey. Also available were 15 poster displays on a wide range of ornithological topics. Late in the afternoon Barrie Heather and Hugh Robertson led a field trip to the Longburn Freezing Works Ponds with the lure of large numbers of Black-fronted Dotterels. Despite a locked gate members were not deterred. A 3m high barbwire-topped fence was either scaled or tunnelled under in order to get to the dotterels. For once there was not a camera to be seen! Saturday evening was devoted to a happy hour and dinner before the Annual General Meeting.

In his summary of the activities of the Society during the year the President, Brian Bell, noted several important bird sightings. A Plumed Egret had been reported from Waikato and a Wood Duck had been shot in Marlborough. The establishment of a breeding colony of Royal Spoonbills at the Vernon Lagoons, the capture of the first female Kakapo seen this century, the finding of at least 70 Kokako in the Puketi Forest of Northland and the continued spread of Cattle Egrets and Spur-winged Plovers were also mentioned.

The Society now has 1320 members, an increase of 25 on last year. Royalties from the new field guide have been received and there was a grant of \$1,500 from the Wildlife Service for the publication of two or three papers on the Paradise Shelduck.

There were increased contributions to the Nest Record Scheme, while 1979 was a good year for the birds in the Beach Patrol Scheme, with 4,000 birds being picked up from about 1,000 km of beach. The final year of the Bird Mapping Scheme was very successful and about 97% of squares now have

at least one card completed for them. However, there may be some problems with producing the final atlas.

The Projects Assistance Fund was used to grant \$500 to the Miranda Banders and about \$1,000 was used to help members reach remote areas of the country for the Bird Mapping Scheme.

A reassessment of the Rare Birds Committee is underway, a full set of guidelines is near and a full committee will be formed in November. The continuation of checklist work will be completed by a new committee of six members. The main aim of this committee will be to produce a new checklist in 1985. In the meantime a list of checklist amendments, prepared by F. C. Kinsky and J. A. Bartle, will be published in June.

The Junior Members Award went to Murray Quinn of Kaikohe, for his participation in all activities of the Society in Northland and the Chathams.

The meeting elected Professor B. J. Marples as a new Honorary Life Member of the Society. The four proposed amendments to the constitution were lost.

The meeting closed with a full round of applause for Lindsay Davies and his organising committee.

Local members certainly had the birds of the Manawatu Estuary well trained for Sunday's field trip. Royal Spoonbills, Red-necked Stints and a Terek Sandpiper were among more common birds to face a battery of telescopes. Later in the morning a Cattle Egret, a Little Egret and a White Heron were in view at the same time at Foxton No. 1 Pond.

Thus ended a very successful and enjoyable weekend.

PAUL SAGAR

Recovery in New Zealand of Banded Cattle Egret

The Banding Office reports the news that we have been waiting for. From Australia comes the information that a Cattle Egret, banded in Australia as a chick on 24/12/79 was recovered on Taharoa Beach, south of Kawhia Harbour.

The bird was washed ashore, dying, on the morning tide and was recovered by D. Phillip of Auckland. The bird had been banded by Jack Willows at a colony north-west of Grafton, near the border of NSW and Queensland (see paper by Ella Pratt, *Notornis* 26 (4) 1979). The distance travelled was 2128 km.

BARRIE HEATHER

Nest Record Scheme

Report for the year ending 30 April 1980.

There are now 13,295 Nest Record Cards covering 150 species. This year 51 members contributed 512 cards covering 72 species.

A major contribution to the scheme was received from Colin O'Donnell of Christchurch who completed 190 cards of 43 species. John Lusk continues to provide a large number of cards and this year has contributed 101 cards covering 32 species.

Other significant contributions were received from G. S. Dumbell (11), M. Lane (20), C. Lusk (14), B. W. H. MacMillan (30), G. M. H. Peterson (15), M. H. and R. G. Powlesland (10) and C. R. Veitch (23).

Three species included in the scheme for the first time this year are Australian Little Grebe, Royal Spoonbill and Black-backed Magpie. 45 colonial cards were received covering the following 14 species:— Australian Gannet, Black Shag, Little Black Shag, White-throated Shag, Spotted Shag, Pied Stilt, Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black-billed Gull, Black-fronted Tern, Caspian Tern, White-fronted Tern, Goldfinch and House Sparrow.

The Nest Record Scheme provides an ideal opportunity for individual members to contribute valuable information to a permanent store of facts that are available at any time to research workers. Cards of many species have been used by authors preparing scripts for the forthcoming Readers Digest Book of New Zealand Birds.

My sincere thanks to all contributors to the scheme and to those who have encouraged members to take part and to my wife, Ruth, whose assistance has been most valuable.

List of contributors: D. J. Bettsworth, B. Brown, K. P. Brown, W. Cash, S. P. Chamberlain, M. Clarbrough, W. Cooper, J. A. Cowie, M. T. Craven, G. S. Dumbell, B. Elliot, M. S. Field, K. J. Fisher, G. Foreman, R. Genet, B. J. Gill, A. J. Goodwin, M. Grant, S. Grant, A. Habraken, B. Hatch, T. Hatch, R. N. Holdaway, J. R. Jackson, M. Lane, R. D. Larrity, S. Lauder, J. Lloyd, C. H. Lusk, J. R. Lusk, B. W. H. MacMillan, C. Miskelly, G. Moon, I. Nicholson, C. O'Donnell, G. M. H. Peterson, M. H. Powlesland, R. G. Powlesland, S. M. Reed, I. Robb, W. A. Rogers, P. M. Sagar, C. Saxby, B. Seddon, J. Seddon, A. Sim, R. Spranger, M. J. Taylor, K. V. Todd, M. K. Twyman, C. R. Veitch.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, Concener

Wanted — Checklist amendments

With this issue, you have received a copy of the amendments and additions to the 1970 *Checklist of NZ Birds*. If you don't have the 1970 *Checklist*, these new amendments will probably be of little use to you.

If you don't want your copy, please don't throw it away. Give it or send it to any RR, member of Council, or to Mrs H. Hagen, 53 Minnehaha St, Titirangi, Auckland 7, who is in charge of back numbers. See inside covers of *Notornis* for whatever address suits you best.

Every OSNZ member is, by constitution, entitled to a copy of any OSNZ publication, but if you do not need this one, we do, to meet orders from non-members or from overseas. Your donation will be very welcome.

It is surprising how much has changed since the 1970 *Checklist* was produced. Council is well aware of the need for a thorough new *Checklist* and has made the first moves towards its preparation. It is not a quick or easy job, however, and so in the meantime the old *Checklist* has been updated to bring us in line with species recorded in New Zealand since 1970, changes in known breeding distribution, and revised nomenclature in several groups; at the same time errors of fact or printing are corrected. Please do not judge this publication as if it were a totally new complete listing; it is not. It is merely as its title says, amendments and additions to the 1970 list, following the style and conventions of that list.

(BDH)

Easter Weekend, Blenheim

Seventeen members from Canterbury, Marlborough, Nelson and Wellington regions attended an informal bird study weekend in Marlborough during Easter 1980. The group was based in Blenheim and made a count of birds at the Vernon Lagoons (at the Wairau River-mouth), visited Lakes Grassmere and Elterwater, and started a crake distribution survey.

A preliminary visit to the lagoons on Good Friday produced 3 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, a Southern Skua and an Australian Tree Martin, amongst the commoner species. The Tree Martin conveniently flew very close to the party, almost too close for good viewing. Several members also saw a Little Owl out in full daylight.

On Saturday the count was carried out over a midday high tide in the continu-

ing fine overcast weather. Allowing for the difficult terrain, a good coverage was achieved and valuable data were obtained on bird numbers and distribution. Notable were the 4-5,000 Black Swans, 13 Royal Spoonbills and 157 Black-fronted Terns. It was decided that another count at this interesting lagoon complex will be done next summer.

The group went to Lake Grassmere on the Sunday morning. Highlights there were an immature Black Stilt, 2 Cattle Egrets and 8 Red-necked Stints; 1150 Black Swans were on the lake with many Mallards, Grey Duck, Shoveller, Grey Teal and Paradise Shelduck.

Farther south, Spotless Crake responded from the raupo at Lake Elterwater to taped calls. Very heavy rain forced the party to return to Blenheim after lunch but not before Spotless Crake were found at the Vernon Lagoons. Traffic noise prevented adequate searches of several interesting swamps near the Dashwood Pass on State Highway 1.

Heavy rain continued during a trip to Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve on Monday morning. The downpour defeated a search for Kokako but the crake survey continued in improving weather later in the day. At the Kaituna Estuary in Havelock a Marsh Crake answered Les McPherson's original recording from Lake Tekapo. Another bird responded to the same tape, from rushes on mudflat in the Mahakipapa Arm of Pelorus Sound. In the Para Swamp, near Picton, both Marsh and Spotless Crakes responded to the Wildlife Service Marsh Crake tape after first 'ignoring' a recording of a Spotless Crake. These birds were in dense raupo. During this trip 3 Cattle Egrets were found with a dairy herd at Linkwater, between Pelorus and Queen Charlotte Sounds.

When the weekend ended on Monday evening the objectives had been achieved and good groundwork for continued study in the area completed.

RICHARD HOLDAWAY

Native Pigeons Breeding in Christchurch

In his chapter on birds of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens (*A Garden Century, 1863-1963*) Turbott commented . . . 'so far pigeons have only been occasional visitors to the Gardens. Edgar Stead recorded that one stayed for about six months in 1926: the more recent visitors appear to have been in 1954.'

Native Pigeons are now resident in the Gardens and have nested there at least since the 1968-69 breeding season.

Preliminary observations by Jim Bagstrom (Park Ranger), myself, and more recently by J. Rolfe (Education Officer) have given us a general insight into some of their activities within the Gardens. Native Pigeons breed throughout the Gardens but most nests have been found in the Native and Australian sections. Of 14 nests found, nine were built in introduced trees and shrubs viz yew, redwood, *Eucalyptus* sp., plum pine, *Rhododendron* sp., lime and Japanese fir while the remainder (5) were in natives viz kohuhu, five finger, wharangi and kahikatea.

Usually nests are sited on the north to north-east aspect of a shrub or tree, which shelters them from the prevailing southerlies. Twelve nests averaged 2.8 m above the ground. Two nests were dismantled and the number of twigs and their length recorded. One of these incorporated 134 twigs, averaging 180 mm in length; the second nest comprised 120 twigs averaging 219 mm in length.

Seven nests were observed during the 1979-80 season. Initially, all contained one egg; however, only two produced young. Of the remaining five, two were known to have been destroyed by humans and broken eggs were found beneath the remaining three nests. Some of these eggs could have been broken as a result of strong winds.

During 1979-80 a nest site in a kohuhu was used twice. The first nest was successful but the nest disappeared soon after the chick fledged. A second nest was built and an egg laid but this was destroyed. As none of the pigeons in the Gardens are banded we are not able to prove that this was the second laying of the same pair. Future plans include a banding programme to enable us to gather more precise field data.

G. A. TUNNICLIFFE

Bird Census Symposium

The Symposium on 'Estimating Populations of Terrestrial Birds' will be held from 26-31 October 1980, at Asilomar, near Monterey, California. The invited papers, given by authors from the USA, Canada, Europe, New Zealand and Australia, will cover a wide range of subjects. The principal topics will be the problems, methods and analyses of bird censusing. There will be a variety of field trips during and after the Symposium to explore methods of censusing and habitats of coastal and inland California.

For further information write to the conference organisers: Dr C. John Ralph and Dr J. Michael Scott, Bird Census Symposium, P.O. Box 43, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii 96718.

Female Kakapo Captured

Following Richard Henry's example of 90 years ago, the Wildlife Service have successfully used tracker dogs to help capture Kakapo. A six-week search was made on Stewart Island this autumn and the results exceeded expectations when 11 Kakapo were caught, including two females. Five birds were caught just outside the 15 square kilometre study area, east of the Tin Range. One of the females and a male are now roaming free on Maud Island, in the Marlborough Sounds.

Three dogs, two Labradors and a Spaniel, muzzled and specially trained for bird hunting were used (see *OSNZ news* 14). The dogs located 10 birds and many track and bowl systems.

To be certain of the sex of the supposed females, samples of feather pulp and droppings were sent airmail to Auckland for analysis. A week later the results confirmed that the captured birds were indeed females.

The Kakapos transported from Stewart Island to Maud Island were released after a few days. They were left with a mixture of baby food, honey and concentrated nectar, as well as bracken roots and kumaras. The male weighed about 1.6 kg and the female about 1.1 kg and both were in good health.

Now the Wildlife Service plan to place transmitters on six wild Kakapo on Stewart Island. These transmitters cost about \$120, have a line of sight range of some 5 km and a battery life of four months. If these are successful the results should show how far these flightless birds move and enable a lot to be learnt about the birds' habits.

Poor Knights Islands Studies

Despite being delayed six days at Tutukaka by gales and heavy rain, Sandy Bartle, Shane Cotter, Derek Onley and Joy and Paul Sagar had a successful stay on Aorangi Island of the Poor Knights from 19 February to 9 March.

Sandy and Shane became nocturnal and concentrated their efforts on finding breeding Black-winged Petrels. However, despite seeing and hearing several birds flying around and over the island every night, none were found ashore. They did catch and band eight Pycroft's Petrels, including one banded by Sandy in 1964.

Derek developed crepuscular habits during his study of the population, distribution and behaviour of Spotless Crakes. These birds proved to be most approachable in the early dawn, often feeding to within 2m. A census of this

species located 44 adults and 29 young; territories were also mapped. Casual observations on nearby Tawhiti Rahi suggested that there has been a marked increase there in Spotless Crake numbers. During a brief visit to the island in March Spotless Crakes appeared to far outnumber Banded Rails.

Joy and Paul Sagar continued the Bellbird population, movements, behaviour and feeding project they had started in January 1978 (*OSNZ news* 6). A further 680 Bellbirds were individually colour-banded and again fewer females than males were caught. However, this was probably the result of behavioural differences, for males are much bolder and more likely to fly straight into a mist-net than females. Adults had completed their moult and were in beautiful plumage while juveniles were in heavy moult. By the end of the trip more than 10% of the Bellbirds sighted on Aorangi were carrying bands. A rough estimate of the population in March 1980 was 8,000 birds, not bad for an island of only about 70 hectares! Appropriate refinements and confidence limits for this estimate have yet to be calculated.

85 Red-crowned Parakeets and a few Fantails, Kingfishers, Blackbirds and Starlings were also measured, weighed and banded during this study.

Shining and Long-tailed Cuckoos were seen on several occasions. These birds were probably on migration to the Pacific islands for the winter.

PAUL SAGAR

Miranda Naturalists' Trust Open Day

An estimated 1,000 people crowded in and around the Miranda Hall on 24 February making the Trust's first Open Day an overwhelming success. Simultaneous sessions on natural history were held from 10.30 until mid-afternoon. Short talks, followed by field study were given on marine biology (John Morton), botany (Jim Beaver), birds (Dick Sibson) and archaeology (Lady Aileen Fox). Joan Coles showed and discussed shells and Tim Lovegrove demonstrated drawing nature. Other specialists in attendance were Joan Robb (herpetology), Sylvia Reed with bird skins from the Auckland Museum and John Cheyne and Dick Veitch, of the Wildlife Service. Frank Thompson (Acclimatisation Society) had live displays of waterfowl and native freshwater fish. Members of the Trust Council worked hard to keep up with innumerable questions and supplied huge quantities of tea. A cloud of dust heralded the

first of an endless stream of arrivals an hour before the starting time. They came, they stayed, they supported the Trust generously and enjoyed it hugely. A painting by Douglas Heath was auctioned and went to a local resident who was pleased to get this portrayal of Miranda wetland.

The Council for the Trust was delighted with the interest shown and hopes to have further Open Days on an annual basis.

BETH BROWN

Waikato Weekend

During the weekend of 19-20 April members from Waikato enjoyed perfect weather for their camp at Kiritehere, just south of Marokopa. This area has many different habitats and so provided a variety of activities. Some members explored the west coast ocean beach and Marokopa Estuary, finding more fascinating fossils than beach wrecks! Others found Spotless Crake and Fernbird in the many good raupo swamps up the valley. Spur-winged Plover were also heard.

A bush walk, off the Awakiro Road revealed the usual bush birds, including Whitehead, Kokako, and parakeet were heard. Three Cattle Egrets were seen during the weekend and camera enthusiasts were able to photograph a Cattle Egret, a Little Shag and a White-faced Heron standing together on a fence.

The accommodation in the Kiritehere School Lodge was adequate and comfortable and members hope to return to this interesting and rather remote area.

BETTY SEDDON

Eagle seen in Manawatu

A bird fitting the description of a dark-phase Little Eagle was seen at the Silverthorpe Reserve, just south of Hunterville on 25 May by Ken Bond, Anthea Goodwin and Beth Brown. The bird had broad, parallel-sided wings with broad 'fingers' widely spread, the wings were held horizontal and not tilted, as in those of a nearby Harrier. The head and forepart of the body extended further than with the Harrier, while the hind part was comparatively shorter and the tail square-ended, not rounded as with the Harrier. It was a heavy bodied bird, generally deepish brown with some cinnamon-rufous underneath. The bird was wheeling and gliding over the reserve during the period of observation.

All the observers have some experience of various raptors overseas.

Members passing through the area should keep an eye out for large raptors.

Treasurer's Report for Year Ended 31 December 1979

At the end of 1979 the membership total stood at 1320, an increase of 25 for the year. The classes of members are 82 life, 797 ordinary, 58 junior, 14 family, 125 corporate bodies and 122 husband and wife members, counting as two, to make the total of 1320. During the year 128 new members were admitted, 60 left by resignation and 43 were struck off unfinancial.

The income for the year was \$16,371, an increase of \$4,823 on last year's total of \$11,548. \$3,828 of the increase was due to the very satisfactory sales of Christmas cards. An extra 15 850 cards were sold. The profit increased from \$992 to \$4,820. Without this worthwhile amount the deficiency on the year's working would have been substantial. The Society is greatly indebted to the Card Committee for their work and efforts to achieve this result. Donations from members increased from \$216 to \$476 and thanks goes to those members who gave additional donations when it was pointed out at the beginning of the year that our ordinary income was not going to meet the year's expenditure. Sales of back numbers increased slightly. Interest earned on investments increased from \$1,959 to \$2,334. \$575 of the amount was credited direct to the Projects Assistance Reserve Fund and \$1,759 as investment income in the Income Account.

Expenses for the year, \$17,046, were \$2,610 more. Printing and distribution of *Notornis* increased by \$2,682 to \$13,781, the cost of *OSNZ news* decreased by \$194 to \$1,432. Taken together, the increase was \$2,488. Since balance date we have received a payment of \$1,500 from the Dept. of Internal Affairs as subsidy towards the cost of the articles on Paradise Shelduck which appeared in the September and December issues. The other expenditure, the cost of running the Society, increased from \$1,711 to \$1,833.

The deficiency for the year was \$675. As mentioned previously, it was only the profit on the Christmas cards which saved the deficiency from being much more substantial. The increase in the subscription rates, which came into effect from the beginning of this year, should allow the year's expenses to be covered without dependence on Christmas card sales, as has happened in the past.

Sales of the *Bird Distribution in NZ Atlas* totalled \$884. All costs have now been recouped and the excess of sales over the cost, \$297, appears as a reserve in the Balance Sheet.

The Projects Assistance Reserve Fund balance is \$7,239. Details of receipts into and payments from the Fund are detailed in the notes to the accounts.

H. W. M. HOGG, Hon. Treasurer

Donations 1979

The following donations of \$1 or more received during the year are gratefully acknowledged.

L. S. Rickard \$4; Mrs R. Cochrane \$4; Miss B. Bird \$4; G. I. Hunt \$14; J. H. Smith \$4; R. E. Satherley \$4; G. Watola \$2; Dr E. J. Kirk \$5; Mrs P. A. Howlett \$5; Miss N. Macdonald \$10; C. H. Parkin \$10; Mr & Mrs G. W. Wells \$1; C. S. Lauder \$4; A. MacCulloch \$2; F. Cardon \$4; A. B. Coster \$4; Mrs M. Divers \$2; Mrs J. B. Hamel \$16; Dr M. J. Bycroft \$4; Dr & Mrs E. T. Dawson \$3; E. St. Paul \$4; Mrs E. Spragg \$2; K. J. Taylor \$4; W. M. Burrows \$2; D. M. Cunningham \$4; Mrs M. E. Power \$50; Mr & Mrs K. J. Fisher \$1; G. Guy \$2; Mr & Mrs A. B. Cochrane \$6; Mrs C. E. Armstrong \$20; J. C. Davenport \$4; C. R. Slack \$4; Mrs H. S. Newton \$10; S. R. Emmens \$24; R. Jackson \$10; Mrs L. Collingwood \$4; N. S. Davy \$5; H. F. Heinekamp \$4; Mr & Mrs P. A. Prichard \$5; P. Warren \$4; A. M. Habraken \$10; Mrs J. McDonald \$4; J. Berry \$4; Mrs W. H. Rolson \$10; E. Bodley \$6; Dr G. I. Nicholson \$2; R. G. Mueller \$19; Miss N. D. Tanner \$10; Mr & Mrs G. B. Dyson \$5; M. Neilsen \$2; Mrs O. M. Newton \$10; C. J. Foreman \$10; Mrs E. M. Graham \$10; H. A. Robertson \$4; Mr & Mrs L. E. Kelynack \$3; M. Heine \$4; Mrs D. G. McRae \$10; Mrs N. K. Whall \$4; Mr & Mrs W. P. Coleman \$3; Mrs E. M. Hannah \$2; Dr M. N. Clout \$4; J. F. Castle \$4; Mrs D. Shand \$4; A. Brett \$4; R. Cometti \$10; D. Garrick \$4; C. W. Devonshire \$1; Mr & Mrs D. McGrath \$10; D. Robertson \$4; R. Silvester \$4; Anonymous \$10; Ms J. Presland \$2; Mr & Mrs R. C. Pullen \$1; Dr C. N. S. McLachlan \$2; Lt-Cdr D. P. Fairfax \$2; Mrs P. M. Graham \$4; Dr H. Grossman \$6.

Little Grey Kiwis

I was rather surprised to hear the Wildlife Service suggestion that Little Grey Kiwis are extinct on the mainland. I have used taped calls of both Great and Little Grey Kiwis in the Punakaiki area of the Western Paparoas, and have attracted several of the larger species and had one reply from the Little Grey. Below, I have tabulated the records of Little Grey calls heard in the area. In all cases they were directly comparable with Great Grey calls on the same night — Great Grey Kiwis are very common in the area.

9/3/77 Upper Porarari Valley, 1 male;

July 1977 Lower Punakaiki Valley, 2 males calling often, in two distinct territories; 16/10/77 Upper Punakaiki Valley, 1 male; 26/11/77 Lower Punakaiki Valley, 1 male and female called briefly to each other after tape was played; 14/6/78 Paparoas, 1 male; 9/7/78 Upper Porarari, 1 male answered by 1 female; 11/7/78 Upper Porarari, 1 male.

Despite spending many weeks in the Upper Porarari in the winter of 1979 I heard only Great Grey Kiwis.

Ecology Division staff report that they found kiwi calls in the Ohikanui River (East Paparoas) very confusing, so I have included above only those calls that corresponded well with the taped calls of the Little Grey. The calls where male and female answered each other were especially convincing.

The Little Grey Kiwi is certainly not common in this area; however, I would be surprised if it were extinct!

DEREK ONLEY

Brown Teal Breed in England

A press release from Ducks Unlimited reports that the Wildfowl Trust in England has just announced that the Brown Teal which were sent to them last year by Ducks Unlimited (N.Z.) are breeding successfully and they have hatched three ducklings. More eggs are being incubated and are due to hatch shortly.

The Wildfowl Trust is assisting Ducks Unlimited's major project, which aims to save the endangered Brown Teal from extinction, by breeding birds in captivity and distributing them to five Wildfowl Trust centres in the U.K., in an effort to build up a 'bank' of birds as a safety measure.

In New Zealand Ducks Unlimited aims to breed over 1,000 Brown Teal and release them into suitable areas. The project is going very well and 45 birds were reared in the past year.

Currently only about 1,000 Brown Teal survive in the wild.

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LEN PARKES reports that although several species of seabirds are often seen from the deck of the coastal tanker 'Erne' the sightings are usually brief. However, while anchored off Mount Maunganui, Bay of Plenty, last October a white phase Southern Giant Petrel sat on the water alongside the vessel for two days, feeding off food scraps thrown overboard. The bird was seen to be banded. Several dark phase Southern Giant Petrels were in the area at this time, also the commoner Northern species.

South Auckland Bird News

The late summer into autumn period has brought some interesting sightings. Tuakau Sewage Ponds had a Whiskered Tern from 8-10 March. Miranda had 31 Curlew Sandpipers on 8 February and still 21 on 22 April. On the same day over 300 Black Shags fished in a great flock offshore, leap-frogging like Little Black Shags do. A Pectoral Sandpiper and 25 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were near Taramaire on 31 January and the most recent rarity is a Marsh Sandpiper, seen on 4 and 7 May. The last Marsh Sandpiper seen in the Firth was reported in the summer of 1963.

Karaka had 6 Terek Sandpipers (a record) on 9 April and 35 Red-necked Stints the previous day. Turnstone numbers were up to 529 for the summer census on 4 November and there were 250+ still in late March. David Walter found 2 Little Egrets at Port Waikato on 2 March and they were still there in April.

A new member, Len Buchanan, who teaches at Mangatarata, has undertaken to watch the Piako Cattle Egrets and reports c12 on 3 May. Juliette Urquhart waited in considerable suspense to see whether 'her' Cattle Egrets would come back this season. Two arrived on 27 April and there were four on 29 April. Ken Fisher, across the Pahurehura Inlet from these Karaka birds had his first Cattle Egret in a paddock next to his house on 2 May. Alas, the shooting season has upset all these birds and they have vanished, perhaps only temporarily. Tony Habraken counted 29, some of them just arrived, in the Rangiriri area on 26 April. These had increased to 61 by 3 May. Jack Wootton had one at Kaiaua on 4 April, but this could have been an over-stayer. Two Spur-winged Plovers have remained on his property from last season.

Joan Trollope reports that two Hedge Sparrows have arrived in her garden during April, for the second year. She wonders whether there is some form of migration.

Beth Brown was delighted to help catch Stitchbirds on Little Barrier Island from 2-7 April. Under Dick Veitch's direction 30 were transferred to Hen Island and 4 went to Mt. Bruce Research Station. Peter Gaze, Tim Lovegrove and Nick Torr were other OSNZ members on this trip.

Finally, three Black-fronted Dotterels have been seen near Miranda and two on the beach between the Waikato mouth and Karioitahi. A beach patrol at Port Waikato on the same day (11 May), produced 16 Sooty Shearwaters,

1 Short-tailed Shearwater, 1 Black-winged Petrel and 1 Gould's Petrel. Checking back I can find only three records of Black-fronted Dotterels in South Auckland.

A card from Dick Sibson says that he is now familiar with Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses and has had a three-island trip at Hawaii. After this California, where there were Avocets, Dowitchers, Kildeer and Stilts.

BETH BROWN

Laughing Owl Search

From 4-6 April, five members of the University of Canterbury Biological Society camped in the Seaward Valley area, North Canterbury. We were interested in following up reports of large owls being seen in the area. Saturday was spent tramping up the Woolshed Stream from the Esk Head sheep station, over a saddle and into the head of the Trumper Stream. Although that night was clear and still and we spent some time listening up on an exposed hillside, no owls were heard. Next morning we searched the beech forest and rocky bluffs in the Trumper Stream area without finding any sign of owls or falcons. In the afternoon we tramped down the Trumper and camped where it flows into the Seaward River. Again no owls were heard, this time during a night of light misty drizzle. Next morning we walked down the Seaward Valley to where it flows into the Hurunui River.

Birds seen during the tramp were Keas on the saddle, Bellbirds, Yellow-breasted Tits, Grey Warblers, Riflemen and Fantails (pieds only) in the beech forest, and Redpolls, Chaffinches, Paradise Shelducks, Harriers, Skylarks and White-backed Magpies along the stream and riverbeds. We hope to make another trip to the area in the near future.

R. G. POWLESLAND

The Continuing Search for the Taiko

Although the last six month expedition (November 1978-May 1979) failed to locate the breeding grounds of the Chatham Island Taiko (see *OSNZ news* 9, 10 and 11), much valuable information was gathered. Now that these results have been evaluated the next phase of the search can be developed.

The finding of a vasculated brood pouch on one of the Taiko caught, studied and released on 1 December 1978 suggests that the breeding season could be between September and April. Most of the previous field work has

been conducted between mid-November and May.

A major expedition is planned for the period August 1980 to February 1981 to coincide with the postulated breeding season. A party travelled to the Chatham Islands in January 1980 to establish the Tuku Base Camp. This camp is necessary to alleviate much of the tedious setting-up and commissioning chores for the August-October field parties, which will be without Landrover transport as the track to the camp is impassable to vehicular traffic in the spring.

The work party consisted of David and Ruth Crockett, Alastair and Audrey Gordon, Reg Cotter, Russell Thomas, Tim O'Brien and David and Lynne Lawrie.

A large roof was erected over the kitchen area with the prime function of collecting water. The roof also provides cover for the kitchen, pantry, wood-storage area, shower and clothes-washing facilities.

Four 3.66 x 1.83 m Christie 'Burbank' sheds with plywood floors were erected. These sheds will provide dry and sheltered accommodation for expedition members.

A Christie 'Avon' shed was erected near the net site for the storage of the net and other equipment associated with nocturnal birdwatching.

David Lawrie and Russell Thomas surveyed the area and established a number of beacons which will enable field parties to plot their positions accurately by triangulation.

Sir William Gilbert, Director of the World Wildlife Fund/New Zealand joined the January expedition for six days. During this time he was able to see at first hand various aspects of the Taiko Research Project and visit several key sites on the south west coast of the main Chatham Island.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, Expedition Leader

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ANNE YOUNG writes that while in California recently her husband bought her an Audibon Bird Call. When twisted this simple birchwood-pewter instrument produces sounds which attracts birds very quickly and successfully.

Having a few spare minutes on the edge of Wellington Town Belt in Hataitai she gave the bird caller a twist. All the birds came very fast, but also many cats! She leapt from her car, frightened away the cats and did not bother to look what birds came.

Perhaps the instrument should have a warning — to be used only in forests.

Publications

This section has become a regular feature of *OSNZ news* and provides a useful service in advising members of ornithological literature beyond *Notornis*. When searching for items to include in this section my choices are (1) papers and notes with N.Z. content and (2) papers I think would be of interest to other members, also I do not have access to all journals. Obviously my preferences do not reflect all interests of all members. Therefore members with access to ornithological publications are invited to contribute items for the Publications section. All that is required is: author, year, title of paper, journal and a brief abstract of contents.

PAUL SAGAR

The influence of age on laying date, clutch size, and egg size of the white-fronted tern. ...J. A. Mills and P. W. Shaw. *N.Z. Journal of Zoology* 7: 147-153. 1980. The terns were studied at Kaikoura Peninsula. A small number bred as 3 year-olds but most not until after they were 6 years old. Laying date and egg size varied with the age of the parent.

Colour vision in the Procellariiformes (Note). P. C. Harper. *Mauri Ora* 7: 151-155. 1979. Observations at sea showed that some petrels see colour. The advantages of colour vision for these birds are discussed.

The food and feeding ecology of Blue petrel (Halobaena caerulea) and Dove prion (Pachyptila desolata). P. A. Prince. *Journal of Zoology* 190: 59-76. 1980. The diet of these two species was studied at South Georgia by quantitative analysis of food samples regurgitated by adults about to feed chicks. Dietary differences are examined, as are differences in bill structure. Data on frequency of chick feeding are used to indicate that the Blue petrel feeds farther away from the breeding colony.

Wildlife — A Review No. 10. P. Morrison (ed.). Wildlife Service 88p. 1980. The work of the New Zealand Wildlife Service is reviewed and as to be expected most of this involves birds. This publication is a must for all those interested in our rare and endangered birds, and what is being done to save them.

Rabbit bait acceptance by birds in a southern Victorian forest. Hans Brunner. *The Bird Observer* 576. A study of the comparative effects of 1080 used in carrots, pellets and oats.

Dispersal and predation of wing-tagged Semipalmated Sandpipers & an evaluation of the technique. David Lank. *Wader Study Group Bulletin*: 41-46. 1979. Wing tags were found to be the

most easily read marker in the field and did not appear to interfere with the birds' movements. However, it could make them more conspicuous to predators.

The life-history tactics of mustelids and their significance for predator control and conservation in New Zealand. Carolyn M. King and Philip J. Moors. *N.Z. Journal of Zoology* 6: 619-622. 1979. The life-history tactics of mustelids introduced into N.Z. suggest that stoats in national parks cannot be exterminated by trapping, and that the first priority for the conservation of rare native birds is active management to stimulate breeding.

At the AGM, our librarian, ANTHEA GOODWIN, had a display of many of the journals that the OSNZ library receives regularly, either by subscription or, usually, by exchange with *Notornis*. Many of these journals are specialised, but others are not; most have something of interest for someone, and yet few members ever see them. Council has decided that a system will be started as soon as possible whereby members can receive regularly such journals as might interest them. The first stage of this scheme will be announced in the September issue of *OSNZ news*.

While looking through the journals from the AGM display, I came across these papers, which will surely interest someone. Remember, you have only to ask the librarian for what you want and you will receive it.

BARRIE HEATHER

Food of three waders at Lake Reeve, Victoria. G. C. B. Poore, A. H. Corrick, F. I. Norman. *Emu* 79: 228-229. 1979. *Daytime habitats of waterbirds at four swamps on the northern tablelands of New South Wales.* S. V. Briggs. *Emu* 79: 211-214. 1979.

A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Colorado, with notes on plumage and behaviour. B. E. Webb, J. A. Conry. *Western Birds* 10: 86-91. 1979. A meticulous comparison with Pectoral Sandpiper, including colour and b/w photos.

Field identification of the Hawaiian Creeper on the island of Hawaii. J. M. Scott, S. Conant, H. D. Pratt. *Western Birds* 10: 71-80. 1979. A fine colour plate comparing with similar species.

The winter feeding of the Turnstone in North Wales. P. R. Harris. *Bird Study* 26 (4): 259-266. 1979. Diet and feeding routines; helpful cross references and study methods.

The 1975 census of the Great Crested Grebe in Britain. S. W. M. Hughes, P. Bacon, J. J. M. Flegg. *Bird Study* 26

(4): 213-226. 1979. A lesson in how such a study can be made and reported. *Shorebirds of coastal Buenos Aires Province, Argentina.* J. P. Myers, L. P. Myers. *Ibis* 121 (2): 186-200. 1979. Much new material here.

Territory size in wintering Sanderlings: the effects of prey abundance and intruder density. J. P. Myers, P. G. Connors, F. A. Pitelka. *Auk* 96 (3): 551-561. 1979. Some heavy but rewarding reading; could be applied to other waders in NZ.

Results of beach patrols conducted in 1978. G. Avery. *The Cormorant* 6: 4-12. 1979. South African patrols covered 1073 km to recover 1227 birds (1.1 per km). Main species Jackass Penguin, White-chinned Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Cape Gannet, Cape Cormorant, Kelp Gull. Among many others, 7 Ostriches!

Identification of Royal and Wandering Albatrosses. P. Harrison. *The Cormorant* 6: 13-20. 1979.

Pelagic birds in the South Atlantic Ocean and at South Georgia in the austral autumn. J. R. Jehl, F. S. Todd, M. A. E. Rumbold, D. Schwartz. *Le Gerfaut* 69 (1): 13-27.

Distribution and migration of two species of the genus Pterodroma in the northern Pacific. K. Nakamura, Y. Tanaka. *Misc. Reports Yamashina Inst. for Ornithology* 9 (1): 112-119. 1977. Concerns *P. inexpectata* and *P. solandri*.

Suspected botulism poisoning of waterfowl at Seven Mile Lagoon, South-east Queensland. P. F. Woodall. *Sunbird* 10 (1): 17-20. 1979.

Observations on the ecology and ethology of the Cirl Bunting (Emberiza cirrus) in a wintering place near Basel. T. Salathe. *Orn. Beobachter* 76 (5): 247-256. 1979. In German, with French summary. Habitat requirements and feeding in winter.

Biology of the Greenshank in Southern Africa. A. J. Tree. *The Ostrich* 50 (4): 240-251. 1979.

Study of the song of the Cirl Bunting (Emberiza cirrus) — repertory, characteristics and distribution. M. Kreutzer. *Behaviour* 71 (3-4): 291 etc. 1979.

Distribution and population changes in the Wandering Albatross Diomedea exulans at South Georgia. J. P. Croxall. *Ardea* 67 (1-2): 15 etc. 1979.

First record of Little Stint Calidris minuta for Papua New Guinea. B. W. Finch. *PNG newsletter* 163/164. Jan-Feb 1980: 10-15.

The avifauna of Lifu (Loyalty Achipelago), New Caledonia. M. D. Bruce. *Alauda* 46 (4): 295-308. 1978. In French, English summary.

Ecological notes on the Black-browed Albatross (Diomedea melanophrys) in the Kerguelen Archipelago, M. Pascal. *Alauda* 47 (3): 165-172. 1979. In French. English summary.

The distribution and abundance of sea-birds at sea and on islands near the Mid- and North-western Coasts of Australia, I. Abbott. *Corella* 3 (5): 93-102. 1979.

The Palaearctic wader presence of the Port Moresby area in 1979, B. W. Finch. PNG newsletter 162. Dec. 1979: 4-17. Invaluable account of migratory movements and an enviable variety of 29 palaearctic-breeding species.

News from North Solomons — new species, new records and new breeding records, Don Hadden. PNG newsletter 163/164. Jan-Feb 1980: 21-23. Includes Black-headed Gulls, Australian Pelican, Terek Sandpiper, and apparently breeding Heinroth's Shearwater (*Puffinus heinrothi*).

Notes on the waders of Mongolia, A. Kitson. Wader Study Group Bulletin 27: 34-35. 1979.

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CHRIS ROBERTSON advises that the request for colour slides for the Readers Digest book of New Zealand Birds has produced a good though rather patchy response. If you have not sent your material yet get it away today so that it may be included in the slides for selection. Main areas where photos seem a little few and far between are KIWIS, DABCHICK, PETRELS and SHEARWATERS, WADERS, SKUAS, KAKAS, CUCKOOS, NATIVE PASSERINES.

As the object is to get as many as possible of the photos from New Zealand sources, can you help?

Material to be sent to MANAGING EDITOR, NEW ZEALAND BIRDS, P.O. BOX 12397, WELLINGTON NORTH.

Remember, each slide must show Photographer, Name of Bird, and Locality. Please send packets by Registered Post.

Cory's Shearwater

A bird identified as a Cory's Shearwater was seen off the coast of Banks Peninsula from 2-9 June 1979 by GEOFF. TUNNICLIFFE, while he was working on the research trawler *W. J. Scott*.

His attention was drawn to the bird by its unusual flight pattern and the colour of its bill. It was a large, heavy-bodied shearwater, with ash-brown upperparts, white underparts, grey head and a deep, long yellow bill with a dark

tip. The bird had a wing span of about 112 cm.

Geoff. made several sightings of the bird between 50 and 80 km south-east of Banks Peninsula. It came close enough to be photographed and it is only recently that the bird has been identified from colour slides and field notes. There has been only one previous record of this species in New Zealand, a bird washed up dead on Foxton Beach in 1934. This species breeds in southern Europe, on the islands off north-east Africa and on islands of the Mediterranean.

Requests for Information

(1) N.Z. DOTTERELS

Since February 1980, Sylvia Reed has been collecting counts of this species from all over the country. The survey will continue for twelve months in an attempt to estimate the population and compare it with the 1967-69 survey completed by Sandy Edgar. It is suspected that numbers have dropped considerably and the N.Z. Dotterel may well be an endangered species. Please send ALL notes of sightings to: Sylvia Reed, 4 Mamaku St., Meadowbank, Auckland 5.

(2) ROYAL SPOONBILLS

Richard Holdaway is collating all sightings, past and present, of this species in New Zealand. This is an attempt to try and establish the history of this species in the country, with special regard to the recent breeding of a few pairs at the Vernon Lagoons. Please send notes of sightings to Richard Holdaway, 4/573 Hereford St., Christchurch 1.

Aged Red-billed Gull

At Christmas we spent a few days at Kaikoura during a period of relentless heat and flat-calm seas. A number of productive beach patrols were done and several species found wrecked. An unusually high proportion of the total were Red-billed Gulls, many of the specimens being quite fresh. We encountered Jim Mills at the gull colony and were told that many gulls, both chicks and adults, were dying from starvation this season. Of the gulls we found, three were banded, one male as an adult two years previously, and one female as a chick eleven years ago. The third, a female, was a particularly interesting recovery as it had been banded as a chick on the colony on 21/12/59 and recovered dead by us exactly twenty years later, on 21/12/79. The banding office informs us that this is the oldest recovery yet of a Red-billed Gull.

ROB and GILLIAN GUEST

Common Sandpiper

On 13/4/80 while completing a regular beach patrol from the Waikato River-mouth to Karioitahi on the west coast near Waiuku, I saw a Common Sandpiper. The bird was feeding near the high tide line on the sand beach, just below the vegetation. The coast in this area has several small streams running onto the beach and the bird was seen to feed by picking at the surface of the sand near these wet areas. It had a characteristic action, with both head and tail bobbing. When flushed or in flight it gave a piping call of three syllables. Flight was irregular with a few rapid wing beats then a short glide with long, pointed wings held downward. A broad white wing bar and dark terminal to the wings was seen clearly.

Upperparts were light brown, while underparts were white with small brown tabs on the side of the lower throat. There was a white eyebrow stripe, with a darker stripe through the eye. Leg and bill colour were not clearly seen but appeared dark.

The unusual bobbing motion and flight clearly indicate that the bird was a Common Sandpiper.

D. A. LAWRIE

(This appears to be only the seventh sighting of this species in New Zealand. Ed.)

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During a trip up the Hope River (Lake Sumner State Forest Park) on 14/5/80 we recorded single White-faced Herons on the valley floor at about 600 and 700 m, quite a high altitude for this species.

Also, on the return journey, a Kingfisher was seen on a beech tree above a swampy tarn inside the forest margin.

We conjecture that the existence of these birds in such atypical habitats is probably sustained by the presence of the little Australian Whistling Frog *Hyla ewingi*.

PETER CHILD

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R. THOMAS, Senior Ranger on Stewart Island, reports that 7 Cattle Egrets have taken up residence in the Horse-shoe Bay-Halfmoon Bay area of Stewart Island since 27/5/80. Their favoured haunts are on the lawn adjacent to the local hotel and around beside the Post Office. In the past two years only three Cattle Egrets have appeared about this part of Stewart Island.