

NOTES & NEWS

A recent visitor to New Zealand was MARGERY FISHER, widow of the celebrated ornithologist and natural history writer James Fisher who was killed in a car accident on 25 September 1970. Mrs Fisher, a writer of children's books and a noted authority on children's literature, was in Wellington during May to open the Second Annual Children's Book Show. This is Mrs Fisher's first visit to New Zealand since the days of her youth here. She is the daughter of Sir Henry and Lady Turner and was born in London but came to New Zealand in 1922 at the age of nine when her father left the Civil Service and joined the NZ Refrigerating Company in Christchurch. After her school days in Christchurch and Amberley, she returned to England to study at Somerville College, Oxford. Her distinguished career, which includes many literary awards and the establishment of her own magazine of reviews of children's books, "Growing Point," rivals her late husband's in his field of natural history. James Fisher had always regarded a visit to New Zealand to be one of the highlights of his career but, to our loss as readers and ornithologists, his busy life never allowed this experience.

Recent numbers of that well-known entertaining and informative journal, the *NZ Woman's Weekly*, have carried articles of interest to OSNZ members. One tells of the habits of a White Heron which has visited the home of Mrs Ethel Muir of Gladstone, 7 miles south of Greymouth, since 1954 (see also article in *Forest & Bird*, May 1972: 19, "White heron a regular visitor to West Coast garden"). Another discusses and illustrates the new series of bird habitat groups in the Auckland Museum designed by Graham Turbott and Leo Cappell. A press button system allows visitors to listen to the birds portrayed in their characteristic surroundings.

References: SNOW, FRANK. 1972. The widow's white heron. Peter Kotuku has spent much of the last 18 years with Mrs. Ethel Muir. *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 15 May 1972: 46, 1 fig.; YOUNG, BEATRICE. 1972. Press a button — and the birds sing. *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 22 May 1972: 8-10, illus. (photos by Michael Willison).

EAGLE IN WELLINGTON DISTRICT

Another report of an eagle sighting comes from near Wellington. The observers are cautious to the extent that they do not wish to prejudice identification from any future sightings.

"A large bird of prey, believed to be an Australian eagle, was seen in the Akatarawa Valley between April 3-7. The bird may have come across the Tasman with Cyclone Emily."

Reference: Australian eagle. in Newsletter, Wellington Branch, Ornithological Society of New Zealand, May 1972 (ed. J. A. Fowler), p. 3.

NEWS FROM THE DOMINION MUSEUM

The latest newsletter of the Dominion Museum issued to Friends of the Museum and others contains a few items of interest to ornithologists.

"Preliminary discussions are taking place regarding the possibility of a joint Dominion Museum - Fiji Museum intensive study of the bird fauna [of Fiji] which would involve collecting in the field and ultimate sharing of the collections. Such a systematic study is a pre-requisite for understanding the systematic status of the birds of Fiji, their variation from island to island and estimates of relative abundance. It would also result in permanent study collections being available in the South West Pacific."

A note on the Department of Birds reads: "The policy of the Curator of Birds, Mr Fred Kinsky, in building up the Museum's collection of selected foreign birds with emphasis on certain groups has resulted in another influx of material including 57 skins from the University of Michigan, 14 from the Puget Sound Museum of Natural History, 28 from the University of Florida and 2 from the South African Museum (one a Jackass Penguin). The important collections from the University of Florida, for example, represented over 20 species of waders, gulls, swallows and herons and included a Cattle Egret in full breeding plumage."

Seven members of the Museum staff visited Port Pegasus and the southern Stewart Island area with Mr A. J. Black in his new research vessel RV *Acheron* from 17 February to 4 March 1972. Dr C. A. Fleming, Chairman of the Dominion Museum Management Committee, accompanied the expedition and was responsible for co-ordinating bird observations. It now seems likely that there may be a review forthcoming of the status of the birds of southern Stewart Island over the past 25 or so years based on the collected observations of a number of visitors over that period.

Reference: YALDWYN, J. C. 1972. Dominion Museum Newsletter No. 9, May 1972, pp. 1-17.

CLASSIFIED SUMMARISED NOTES

Classified Summarised Notes will once more appear annually, beginning with the production of a Supplement to Volume 19 of *Notornis*, covering the period 1963 to 1970, compiled by Mr A. T. Edgar and edited by Dr R. A. Falla, which will appear shortly and may be bound at the end of the volume; thereafter the annual summary will appear in each December issue. The cooperation of all members is requested to make this scheme as successful as before.