

LETTERS

The Editor,
Sir,

CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE AT THE AGM

The original constitution of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand undoubtedly served its purpose.

Drafted in the 1950s this constitution was effective in its time and place and adequate for those days.

However, the OSNZ has progressed far in the last twenty years. We should ask ourselves whether the original constitution as drafted is adequate for the present day, and if not, what should be done to modify it for modern requirements.

The Council who represent the members of the Society considered this point most earnestly and brought forward the constitution adopted in Christchurch.

It is understandable that members who formulated the original constitution would be loath to have it superseded but time marches on and what was sufficient in the 1950s is not necessarily so in the 1970s. No doubt the present constitution will be adjusted again in the future just as the original one was amended from time to time to meet changing conditions.

Mr Cunningham mentions that he "fought tooth and nail against certain proposed alterations to the constitution." That is his prerogative especially as he was the drafter of the original constitution, but it is more than doubtful if his presence in Christchurch would have prevented the new constitution being adopted.

A society whose membership is spread over the whole of New Zealand is seldom able to express itself vocally at an Annual General Meeting where numbers rarely exceed ten percent of the membership who therefore express their confidence in Council by postal ballot and entrust to them the business of conducting the affairs of the Society in a fair and equitable manner.

I do not see the point to Mr Cunningham's claim that members have "surrendered control of their own Society to the ruling Council." Surely it is a fact that members are elected to Council to conduct the affairs and business of the Society for the benefit of all and for the progress of ornithology.

Frankly, I cannot see that disruptive hair splitting over procedural matters will advance the study of ornithology.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

Pakowhai
RD3
Napier

Mr J. M. Cunningham, to whom this letter was referred, replies as follows —

The Editor,

Sir,

My good friend Norman Mackenzie says that "disruptive hair splitting over procedural matters" will not advance the study of ornithology. This being so, why did the Council introduce disruptive and highly contentious matters at three Annual General Meetings in a row until they were passed as part of a package deal of an entirely new constitution on which members had to vote for the complete passing or rejection of it?

J. M. CUNNINGHAM

"Illawarra,"

5 Kotari Road,

Days Bay,

Wellington

30 October 1972

(This Correspondence is now closed. — Ed.)

The Editor,

Sir,

MIGHT NORTHERN SHOVELERS IN NEW ZEALAND
BE ESCAPES ?

The report of three drake Northern Shovelers, *Anas clypeata*, collected or observed in New Zealand in different years during May or August was surprising (Kinsky & Jones 1972), for in those months one would expect males in breeding dress to be on or near their breeding grounds. The fact that the New Zealand birds showed no sign of moult led the writers to suggest that, having strayed so far, they had remained long enough in New Zealand to adapt to the Southern Hemisphere moult cycle. It would be useful to learn from southern zoo keepers and aviculturists how long it takes northern *Anas* ducks in captivity to shift their moult cycle. Considering that occurrence of Northern Shovelers in New Zealand would be the most southern recorded, one wonders why the writers did not mention the possibility that these ducks might have escaped from captivity, and moulted thereafter.

E. EISENMANN

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REFERENCE

KINSKY, F. C.; JONES, E.B. 1972. Northern Shovelers (*Anas clypeata*) in New Zealand. Notornis 19 (2): 105-110, 1 fig.