

The Editor,
Sir,

A PLEA FOR A STANDARD CENSUS METHOD

Bird censusing has received little attention in New Zealand in the past. Those ornithologists who have studied bird densities have nearly all used different methods.

Turbott's method was to count in observation periods (Turbott & Bull 1954). Gibb (1961) counted birds sighted per hour, and Kikkawa (1966) indicated relative abundance percentages by the total number recorded.

Although all systems have obvious merits, they could contribute considerably more to our knowledge and, therefore, to the conservation of the New Zealand land avifauna if results were comparable. It should, therefore, better serve the interests of ornithology if the Society were to promote a standard census method.

The same can be said for counting birds at sea. A paper was offered for general discussion at the XV International Ornithological Congress at the Hague in 1970. A useful reference is that of Bailey & Bourne (1972).

I would like to see a discussion of this problem in the pages of this journal.

REFERENCES

- BAILEY, R. S.; BOURNE, W. R. P. 1972. Notes on seabirds, 36. Counting birds at sea. *Ardea* 60: 124-127.
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- TURBOTT, E. G.; BULL, P. C. 1954. A bird census and some recent observations on birds on Great Island, Three Kings group. Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum 4 (4): 245-262, pl. 43, tables 1-2.

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