

Parakeet; Reischek's Parakeet; Long-tailed Cuckoo; SI Rifleman; Welcome Swallow; White-winged Triller; Dunnock; Whitehead; NI Fantail; Pied Tit; Yellow-breasted Tit; NI Robin; SI Robin; Silvereye; Cirl Bunting; Chaffinch; Canary; NI Saddleback.

## REFERENCE

MACPHERSON, L. B. 1972. Recordings of New Zealand birds. *Notornis* 19 (4): 373-374.

LESLIE B. MACPHERSON

P.O. Box 21-083,  
Edgeware,  
Christchurch  
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The Editor,  
Sir,

## OYSTERCATCHER PROBLEMS

Reading Dr A. J. Baker's paper on the different oystercatchers in New Zealand has been an informative exercise; but I must confess that I am puzzled by the last sentence of the 'Abstract' — "This density effect may be alleviated for some time if the species expands its recent tendency to remain inland at breeding localities throughout the year, and adopt a terrestrial mode of feeding."

a. Is it possible to "expand a tendency"?

b. Surely oystercatchers adopted a terrestrial mode of feeding a very long time ago, possibly in the Lower Miocene, if *Paractiornis* was an ancestral oystercatcher. Whether *finschi* oystercatchers are probing Mother Earth deeply and vigorously on tidal flats or in grassy paddocks, or fossicking about on ploughed land, riverbeds or mountainsides, they are feeding terrestrially. Has anyone ever seen an oystercatcher feeding aerially like a Swift or Swallow; arboreally like a Kaka or Whitehead; aquatically like a Grebe or Scaup; pelagically like a Shearwater or Storm-Petrel? Dr Baker seems to be narrowing the meaning of the word "terrestrial" and restricting it to something like "entirely inland or non-littoral."

May I offer another correction? The first histogram, A on p. 141, is wrongly attributed. Manakau, with a central 'a,' is a harbourless settlement of no great distinction between Otaki and Levin in the province of Wellington. The large harbour to the west of Auckland, which is a very important wintering-ground for *finschi* oystercatchers, is Manukau, with a central 'u.' The spellings for which I am arguing are backed by tradition and vindicated by, for example, the N.Z. Index of 1930 and A. H. McLintock's "Descriptive Atlas of New Zealand," 1959.

## REFERENCE

BAKER, A. J. 1973. Distribution and numbers of New Zealand oystercatchers. *Notornis* 20 (2): 128-144, figs 1-8.

26 Entrican Avenue,  
Remuera,  
Auckland, 5  
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R. B. SIBSON

[The official publication on New Zealand place names (*Gazetteer of New Zealand Place Names*. 576 pp. Wellington: Department of Lands and Survey, 1968 [=1969]) lists the geographic locations of all places called either Manakau (p. 215) or Manukau (p. 231) — Ed.]