

In size it was a little larger than a Song Thrush. The bill was curved down a little towards the end. It was of an indefinite colour, as also were the legs. The overall upper colour was more like that of a Fernbird (*Bowdleria punctata*) without the dark streaks. The tail was a good length, rounded at the end, with lighter fawn edging. It was turned down, more so at the end, not straight like that of a Song Thrush. The throat was white, the breast fawn with a few irregular darker markings. In correspondence with H. R. McKenzie we related this event and he told us of the "*Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*," by Falla, Sibson & Turbott, in which is an illustration of the two native thrushes. On Plate 16 we noted that the figure marked "b," the North Island Piopio, had the upper surface too dark and that it should have been more like the figure "a," featuring the South Island Piopio. The throat and breast of "b" as pictured is matched by that of our bird. The downward bend of the tail has been missed on the plate.

We commented at the time on the lateness of the season for young birds. Perhaps this pair had lost an earlier clutch or brood and nested again. It was indeed gratifying that there was a very good chance of the young of this rare species being successfully reared.

REFERENCE

FALLA, R. A.; SIBSON, R. B.; TURBOTT, E. G. 1970. A field guide to the birds of New Zealand and outlying islands. 2nd ed. 256 pp. London: Collins.

REG. BELL
LAURIE SINGLETON



LETTERS

The Editor,
Sir,

BLACK FANTAIL IN THE WAIRARAPA

Following Mr Stidolph's contribution (December 1973) on the occurrence of the Black Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) in the Wairarapa, it may be of interest to record a further sighting in the area. On 17 March 1974, I observed a Black Fantail feeding vigorously in the garden of Mr Ralph Garland, Miro Street, Masterton. It was accompanied by a normal pied bird and after being watched for several minutes both fed away to the north. I was told that the Black Fantail had not been noted previously about the home.

REFERENCE

STIDOLPH, R. H. D. 1973. Black Fantail in North Island. *Notornis* 20 (4): 380.

W. J. WINSTANLEY

89 Thackeray Street,
Upper Hutt
28 March 1974