

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wellington, 28th May, 1966

About 60 members and friends attended.

Mr. A. Blackburn delivered as his Presidential Address a further paper on the Nesting of North Island Fantails.

Mr. H. R. McKenzie presented O.S.N.Z. and Card Committee accounts and report by Hon. Treasurer, which were adopted. The President explained the Kermadec Sub-Committee account. The Nest Record Scheme report was read by Miss M. M. Neill, and the Library report read on behalf of Mrs. H. M. McKenzie. Mr. C. J. R. Robertson summarised the Banding Report, and the Secretary summarised reports of Recording Scheme and Beach Patrol Scheme. The last-named showed a sharp drop since last year, but a member explained that a large batch of records had not yet been sent to the organiser.

It was announced that membership as at 31st March, 1966, was 918; that the Field Guide is expected to be published in June in U.K.; that Council has appointed a sub-committee to study the possibility of producing a small book on New Zealand ornithology, based on work already published by Mr. B. D. Heather; and that negotiations are in progress for a projected second expedition to the Kermadec Islands. It is hoped to hold 1967 A.G.M. in Dunedin; Field Study Courses are planned for Nelson (October 1966), Farewell Spit (January 1967) and Hawke's Bay (October 1967).

The Bailey Prize for the best contribution by a Junior member to the Recording Scheme has been awarded to T. R. Calvert; the Peter Child Prize has been awarded to J. Hilton for his sustained and outstanding contribution to the Nest Record Scheme.

There being no other nominations, Messrs. Edgar, Heather, McKenzie and Sibson were declared re-elected. Mr. H. R. McKenzie announced his intention to retire when a replacement becomes available.

A number of motions to alter the Constitution were put to the meeting. Minor motions of a routine nature were passed without comment. The major motions provoked much useful comment and discussion by members, including Mr. J. M. Cunningham, who was largely responsible for drafting the original constitution, and gave freely of his knowledge and talent in re-casting the motions set out in the Agenda to a form in which they were acceptable to the meeting. The major motions, as passed by the meeting, were as follows:—

(1) "That the Constitution be amended to replace the offices of North Island Vice-President and South Island Vice-President by the office of Vice-President, but without reducing the present size of the Council or interrupting the term of service of the present holders of these offices."

(2) "That paragraph 14 of the Constitution be deleted and that a new paragraph 14 shall read as follows:—

14. (a) The Council of the Society shall consist of not less than twelve officers: a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, an Editor of the Society's journal, and not less than seven other officers.

(b) The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined, thus creating a vacancy which may be filled in the usual manner.

(c) Council shall have power to co-opt additional officers.

(d) Officers shall be members of the Society."

The President announced that two members resident in South Island would now be invited to accept office as co-opted members of Council for a period of one year.

Dr. R. A. Falla proposed that Mr. H. R. McKenzie be elected Honorary Life Member of the Society. This proposal was seconded by Dr. G. R. Williams, supported by Mr. J. M. Cunningham, and was received with acclamation. In the course of proposing the motion, Dr. Falla read a citation, as follows:—

"Members are well aware of Ross McKenzie's services to the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. He is a foundation member of the Society who has served it as Recorder, North Island Vice-President, President and Treasurer. Administrative service to O.S.N.Z. is of itself no criterion for the honour of Life Membership; there is no suggestion to create a precedent; Ross McKenzie is in a class by himself not only as an administrator but as a distinguished field ornithologist. During the last 27 years he and others have done much valuable work on ornithological investigation of northern harbours. His travels throughout the Dominion have enabled him to make contact with a vast number of people; through these personal contacts his enthusiasm has encouraged and stimulated innumerable individuals to an interest in field ornithology, and has helped to produce many good observers and a great volume of useful information. Distinguished overseas ornithologists visiting this country regard Ross as highly as do his own countrymen; to meet him is a "must"; to be conducted by him to places of ornithological interest is a highlight of a New Zealand tour. Over the years, no single person has contributed so much to the growth and 'mana' of the Society. Honorary Life Membership is the highest honour the Society can bestow. Truly and with certainty it can be said of Ross McKenzie that he has rendered distinguished service to the Society and to ornithology, and is deemed worthy of the honour."

Mr. McKenzie thanked the meeting for this mark of appreciation of his services to ornithology and to the Society, but stated that he was obliged to decline the honour, as a matter of principle. The meeting accepted Mr. McKenzie's decision with regret, and signified the warmth of its regard for Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie by further acclamation, led by Mr. J. M. Cunningham.

Under General, Mr. M. J. Williams drew attention to reproduction of tables and listing of references in a recent issue of *Notornis*. Mr. R. B. Sibson briefly replied. Mrs. M. Barlow, speaking for Southland and Otago Regions, extended congratulations to Council and to the Editor on the balanced content and continuing standard of *Notornis*. Members raised the matter of possible alterations to Nest Record and Beach Patrol cards, for consideration of Council. Messrs. J. M. Cunningham and E. Dawson spoke on the Reviewing Panel (Ornithological Abstracts). The President explained that part of this material is now

ready for publication. Dr. Westerskov recommended for consideration of Council the formation of a Rare Birds Committee. Mr. D. Dawson drew attention to bird paintings by Mr. Digby Graham.

The President extended a vote of thanks to Dr. Falla, Mr. J. A. Bartle, and the committee of ladies who kindly provided tea.

A conference of Regional Representatives was held on the morning of 28th May, and produced useful results. In the afternoon of 28th and on the morning of 29th May members had the privilege of listening to six talks, as follows:

Utilisation of Nest Record Schemes —	Mr. A. Blackburn
Southland Spur-winged Plover Study —	Mrs. M. Barlow
Introduced Birds of New Zealand —	Dr. P. C. Bull
Recording Abundance of Forest Birds —	Dr. J. A. Gibb
Banding Schemes — Red-billed Gulls —	Mr. L. Gurr
Penguin Studies —	Mr. F. C. Kinsky

In addition, two films by Harold Pollock were shown, one on Herons, one on the Superb Lyre Bird. Thanks are due to Dr. Westerskov for bringing these splendid films from Dunedin.



HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

Year Ending 31/12/65 (Nine Months)

The financial period of nine months ending 31/12/1965 shows a surplus of £37/9/9.

The Christmas Card Committee's statement is submitted separately as usual. The present project is being wound up, the results being no longer worth the free labour and management involved. The Scheme has provided £1467 in cash at no expense to the Society, a splendid effort by Mr. B. S. Chambers and his helpers. A similar scheme is being inaugurated in Wellington by Council.

No audited statement has been supplied by the Kermadecs Expedition Committee but a memorandum of its affairs shows that the loan of £720 to it is adequately covered at present.

The total investment in ordinary shares in public companies is now £2500/10/-, being almost exactly the amount of the cash portion of the Lenz legacy. The market value at 31/12/65 is £2353/15/-, being down £146/15/-. Steady recovery is expected. Charts of the shares position are available for study and copies will be supplied to members on request.

Messrs. Chambers, Worth & Chambers are heartily thanked for again auditing the books free of charge.

On behalf of the Society and myself I thank Mr. D. F. Booth for his work as Asst. Treasurer and he and Mr. B. S. Chambers for instituting a new method of dealing with cash receipts.

H. R. McKENZIE,
Hon. Treasurer, O.S.N.Z.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1965

March 1965		December 1965	
		£	s. d.
	Current Liabilities		
323	Sundry Creditors	216	6 0
75	Subscriptions in advance	74	14 7
398		291	0 7
	Reserves		
700	Life Subscriptions, Special Appeal and Christmas Card Scheme	700	0 0
	Special Publications Fund	139	2 6
139	Add transfer from Accum. Funds	360	17 6
		500	0 0
	Minor Expeditions Fund	30	0 0
30	Add transfer from Accum. Funds	120	0 0
869		150	0 0
	Accumulated Funds		
4409	Balance 1/4/65	4499	14 7
253	Bequest	-	- -
-	Transfer from Christmas Card Fund	250	0 0
-	Excess of Income over Expenditure	37	9 9
4662		4787	4 4
	Transfer to Special Publications Fund	360	17 6
-	Transfer to Minor Exd. Funds	120	0 0
		480	17 6
4662		4306	6 10
162	Less Excess of Expenditure over Income	-	- -
4500		4306	6 10
5767		£5947	7 5

March 1965		December 1965	
		£	s. d.
	Current Assets		
956	Bank of New Zealand	167	3 11
59	Sundry Debtors	59	13 6
1015		266	17 5
	Stocks on Hand		
300	Copies "Notornis," etc.	300	0 0
720	Loan to Kermadecs Fund	720	0 0
	Investments		
700	Auckland Electric Power Board	700	0 0
1000	Dunedin City Council Debentures	1000	0 0
1532	Shares in Public Companies	2500	10 0
3232		4200	10 0
	Library		
500	At Valuation	500	0 0
5767		£5947	7 5

Income and Expenditure Account for Nine Months Ended 31st December, 1965

March 1965		December 1965		March 1965		December 1965	
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
846	Printing & Distributing "Notornis"	675	12 5	817	Subscriptions, including Life	805	2 6
85	Less Sales "Notornis," etc.	65	11 6	26	Donations	16	0 5
761		610	0 11	138	Interest Received	90	7 9
49	Postages	22	8 6	4	Dividends Received	45	1 6
--	Field Study Courses, loss	16	4 3	12	Field Courses, Surplus	--	--
96	Printing & Stationery	61	3 7	163	Excess of Expenditure over Income	--	--
153	General Expenses	94	6 2				
23	Income Tax	34	16 9				
78	Contribution to Banding Scheme	80	2 3				
--	Excess of Income over Expenditure	37	9 9				
1160		£956	12 2	1160		£956	12 2

Auditors' Report

We report to the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.) that we have examined the books, accounts and vouchers for the Society and also those of the Card Committee for the nine months ended 31st December, 1965. We certify that, in our opinion, the income and expenditure accounts for the Society and the Card Committee are properly drawn up to show the true position at that date. We also certify that the Balance Sheets for the Society and the Card Committee are properly drawn up and show the true financial position of the Society as at 31st December, 1965, but advise that whilst we have satisfied ourselves that the sub-committee administering the Kermadec Expedition Fund have funds in their bank account in excess of the advance made from the Society's main account, no permanent records are available for audit, nor has a statement of receipts and payments, nor income and expenditure account, nor balance sheet been prepared to December 31, 1965, so that we have been unable to examine these records and report thereon.

17th May, 1966

CHAMBERS, WORTH & CHAMBERS, Auditors

LIBRARY REPORT

May, 1965, to December 31st, 1965

The interest in the Library, though not excessive, is quite pleasing and worthwhile. Most of the borrowings are postal. Since the publishing of the "Catalogue of Library of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Inc., Sept. 1965" there have been thirty-three copies despatched and considerable use has been made of them. The circuits which were abolished have been replaced by individual borrowings and this has proved satisfactory and is building up. Books and periodicals borrowed over this period number sixteen.

A typewriter has been purchased and some binding which was authorised is still to be achieved.

The provision of a room in the Auckland War Memorial Museum is a wonderful facility for the Society. Warmest thanks are accorded the Museum Librarian, Miss Enid Evans, and her staff for ready guidance and advice. Thanks, too, are proffered to O.S.N.Z. members who have assisted.

— HETTY MCKENZIE, Hon. Librarian



CARD COMMITTEE

This is my final report as convenor of this sub-committee during 1965. When we look back over the last years and realize that this committee has raised nearly £1,500 in addition to accumulating some valuable printing blocks, I think you will agree that the committee has achieved that which it set out to do.

During 1965, no cards were produced though we had intimated that this was our intention. The problems of arranging a suitable artist were difficult because of the artist being unable to meet the deadline. Each year there were rising production costs and increasing postage rates and although our price did not alter during the period, sales were slowly falling because of competition from similar organisations. The committee, therefore, decided not to produce an inferior card by rushing the production and instead they met orders from limited amounts of stock held over from the previous year. Proceeds from such sales have been included with donations in the accounts.

On behalf of my outgoing committee I thank those Auckland members who helped with the packing and checking over the years. I thank you members for your generous support which, through profits, amply rewarded the committee's efforts.

— B. S. CHAMBERS

CARD COMMITTEE ACCOUNTS

REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR NINE MONTHS ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1965

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Income: Donations	22	4	6			
Interest	28	7	0			
				50	11	6
Postages and Bank Fees				7	6	
Net Revenue to Accumulated Funds				50	4	0

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1965

	£	s.	d.
Accumulated funds at 31/3/65	1117	2	4
Add Current Surplus	50	4	0
	1167	6	4
Less Transfer to General Account	250	0	0
Balance remaining	£917	6	4
This is invested as follows:—			
Bank	865	6	4
Printing Blocks	40	0	0
Accrued Interest	12	0	0
	£917	6	4

THE NEST RECORD SCHEME: 1965 - 1966

During the year ended May 23rd, 1966, 781 nest record cards were received, almost as many as the total of 801 for the year 1964-65. This number includes over a hundred cards for the years 1963 and 1964 that were not forwarded in time to be included in last year's total.

Cards were received from 41 contributors, whereas last year's contributors numbered 54. It seems, therefore, that while some members have increased their contributions, there is still a need for wider interest and participation in the scheme. There were no cards at all this year from the Wellington region. It was disappointing to find the names of some former contributors missing from this year's list. However, it is a pleasure to welcome new contributors and to see the enthusiastic response from some of the junior members. In regions where there is an especially active local branch, the work of junior members is most promising.

Records for Brown Quail and North Island Fernbird have been received for the first time. This year the Fantail records have been separated into North Island Pied and South Island Pied. There is still no intake for the Black Fantail. A number of species represented in last year's records are missing from this year's list. The large increase in the intake for Blackbird, Song Thrush and House Sparrow is due in large measure to the efforts of Dr. J. E. C. Flux of the Animal Ecology Division of the D.S.I.R. and of J. F. Hilton, Peter Jackson and D. G. Dawson of the Christchurch Branch of O.S.N.Z.

During the period under review, Dr. Flux has prepared a paper now in the hands of the publishers, on his observations on nesting success particularly of Song Thrushes. J. E. Hilton is working on an analysis of the Blackbird cards. In addition, the cards for Skylark and Pipit, House Sparrow and Red-billed Gull are being consulted by G. Tunnicliffe, D. G. Dawson and J. Mills respectively, all of whom are preparing material for a thesis.

Increase or decrease in the intake for individual species appears to bear no relation to numbers or distribution of species, but rather to reflect the efforts and interests of individual contributors. A glance at the species list shows that the coverage for many of our native and introduced species is still far from complete, and that a study of nesting success for many of our birds is still a wide open field.

— MARGARET M. NEILL



LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions of 20 or more cards are shown in brackets.

J. H. Allan, A. F. Barwell, John F. Bell (79), A. Blackburn (43), Mrs. B. Brown, R. Bushell, D. E. & T. R. Calvert, P. Child (20), J. C. R. Claridge, Robert Cowan (59), J. A. Cowie, D. G. Dawson (in conjunction with J. E. Hilton and P. Crosier — 28), A. T. Edgar, J. V. Elliott, Dr. J. E. C. Flux, assisted by Mr. Porter and Mr. Taylor (104), Robin Gallienne, G. Harrow, J. E. Hilton (150), J. R. Jackson (36), Peter Jackson (61), Peter Jackson and David Burt (24), R. T. Lawrence, N. J. Ledgard, G. D. Leitch, David J. Lewis, Mark G. McNeillage, D. V. Merton (22), G. H. Moon, Kenneth P. Pomeroy, M. Raskin, P. J. Reese, Gillian Reeve, M. F. Soper (24), Richard M. Wallace, Christchurch Branch O.S.N.Z., Gillian Poulton.

SPECIES LIST OF NEST RECORD CARDS

SPECIES	Previous Total	1965-66	Total	SPECIES	Previous Total	1965-66	Total
North Island Kiwi	1	-	1	Wrybill	8	1	9
Stewart Island Kiwi	1	-	1	Pied Stilt	167	9	176
Great Spotted Kiwi	1	-	1	Black Stilt	2	4	6
Yellow-Eyed Penguin	10	-	10	Southern Skua	1	-	1
Little Blue Penguin	57	-	57	Black-backed Gull	199	8	207
White-Flipped Penguin	11	1	12	Red-billed Gull	35	1	36
N.Z. Crested Penguin	2	-	2	Black-billed Gull	89	11	100
Southern Crested Grebe	2	-	2	Black-fronted Tern	170	5	175
N.Z. Dabchick	1	-	1	Caspian Tern	19	-	19
Wandering Albatross	11	-	11	Antarctic Tern	3	-	3
Light-Mantled Sooty Albatross	4	-	4	Fairy Tern	7	1	8
Fairy Prion	16	-	16	White-fronted Tern	15	1	16
Flesh-Footed Shearwater	3	1	4	Grey Ternlet	5	-	5
Sooty Shearwater	7	-	7	N.Z. Pigeon	15	8	23
Fluttering Shearwater	3	-	3	Rock Pigeon	57	2	59
Allied Shearwater	1	-	1	Kaka	4	4	8
Black Petrel	13	-	13	Kea	45	6	51
Grey-Faced Petrel	1	-	1	N.Z. Parakeet	3	1	4
Kermadec Petrel	1	2	3	Yellow-crowned Parakeet	3	1	4
Pycroft's Petrel	5	-	5	Shining Cuckoo	3	-	3
White-faced Storm Petrel	51	-	51	Morepork	4	3	7
Diving Petrel	4	-	4	Little Owl	13	-	13
Gannet	45	1	46	Kingfisher	35	7	42
Black Shag	18	-	18	South Island Rifleman	40	4	44
Pied Shag	1	-	1	Rock Wren	7	4	11
Little Black Shag	11	-	11	Skylark	82	-	82
White-throated Shag	18	-	18	Welcome Swallow	59	16	75
King Shag	5	-	5	Fantail	78	-	78
Spotted Shag	21	3	24	N.I. Pied Fantail	18	18	36
Blue Heron	8	2	10	S.I. Pied Fantail	3	3	6
White-faced Heron	2	-	2	Pied Tit	12	-	12
Bittern	20	1	21	(White-breasted Tomtit)	17	4	21
Canada Goose	9	-	9	Yellow Breasted Tomtit	7	-	7
Mute Swan	37	1	38	North Island Robin	14	1	15
Black Swan	6	-	6	South Island Robin	-	2	2
Paradise Duck	9	-	9	North Island Fernbird	7	2	9
Grey Teal	2	-	2	South Island Fernbird	2	-	2
Brown Teal	53	12	65	Brown Creeper	6	-	6
Grey Duck	33	2	35	Whitehead	11	2	13
Mallard	11	-	11	Yellowhead	52	6	58
Shoveller	6	-	6	Grey Warbler	586	220	806
Black Teal	48	-	48	Song Thrush	517	198	715
Harrier	4	1	5	Blackbird	90	8	98
N.Z. Falcon	8	3	11	Hedge Sparrow	22	6	28
Pheasant	-	1	1	N.Z. Plover	12	4	16
Brown Quail	13	1	14	Bellbird	8	13	21
Californian Quail	1	-	1	Tui	77	5	82
Chukor	2	-	2	White-Eye	59	8	67
Banded Rail	4	-	4	Greenfinch	205	11	216
North Island Weka	2	3	5	Goldfinch	38	4	42
South Island Weka	69	8	77	Lesser Redpoll	76	19	95
Pukeko	4	-	4	Chaffinch	23	1	24
Australian Coot	94	1	95	Yellow Hammer	245	53	298
South Island	17	2	19	House Sparrow	126	32	158
Pied Oystercatcher	28	-	28	Starling	12	1	13
Northern Oystercatcher	26	-	26	Myna	10	2	12
Black Oystercatcher	140	3	143	White-backed Magpie	6	6	12
Spur-winged Plover	41	1	42	Magpie (Species not indicated)	3	4	7
Banded Dotterel				North Island Saddleback			
N.Z. Dotterel							
	4427	781	5208				

RECORDING SCHEME

Report for 1965/66

Outstanding contributions were received from Southland and Otago, and much useful information came in from many other Regions, but very little from Auckland or Wellington and none at all from Marlborough, Nelson and Wairarapa. I am grateful to those who have supported the scheme and hope that in 1966/67 many who have not yet done so but who have information to offer, will send their notes for incorporation in the species files. Many members have a store of valuable material in their notebooks, and it is important that as much as possible of this should be recorded before it is forgotten or lost.

Good use has been made of the scheme during the year. The files for N.Z. Thrush, Spur-wing Plover, Blue Duck and North Island Kokako have been sent out to members who are working on those species. A summary of information on N.I. Kokako will shortly appear in *Notornis*, and a recent paper on Welcome Swallows owed much of its distributional data to the Recording Scheme.

Useful locality lists have been received for Waikaremoana and Eastern Taranaki.

A summary of important unpublished records is being prepared and will be sent to the Editor when ready.

The following is a list of contributors:—

Southland: Mrs. Barlow, T. Smith, R. R. Sutton.

Otago: J. H. Allan, Mrs. Buchanan, G. Chance, P. Child, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Hamel, A. Harris, H. W. M. Hogg, Mrs. B. Kelly, D. Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. McKellar, I. G. McLaren, I. L. McVinnie, J. Middleditch, A. Nuttal, W. T. Popplewell, E. Sheat, Dr. Soper, Mrs. L. E. Walker, Dr. K. Westerskov.

Canterbury: P. Crosier, Miss Davis, B. Detlaff, J. Hilton, J. R. Jackson, D. McMillan, G. Tunncliffe.

West Coast: P. Grant, T. Hartley-Smith, A. Wright.

Wellington: B. D. Bell, Dr. Falla, F. C. Kinsky, H. L. Secker, Miss M. Walton.

Wanganui: R. W. Macdonald.

Manawatu: E. Dear, E. B. Jones.

Taranaki: R. Allan, W. Bysouth, F. J. Finer, M. G. Macdonald, W. R. Marsden, D. G. Medway.

Hawke's Bay: Mrs. Drake, B. D. Hankins, N. B. Mackenzie, Mrs. Waters.

Gisborne: A. Blackburn.

Bay of Plenty: V. Davis, M. E. Fitzgerald, Mrs. McLintock, R. St. Paul,

R. M. Weston.

Volcanic Plateau: A. Cragg, R. W. Jackson, H. Lyall.

Waikato: C. R. Buckeridge, M. P. Daniel, P. J. Howard.

South Auckland: Miss S. Douglas, Miss A. Goodwin, D. A. Lawrie, J. Lownsborough, H. R. McKenzie, W. Moisley, Mrs. Urquhart, D. Walter.

Auckland: Miss L. J. Bishop, R. H. Blanshard, D. V. Merton, R. B. Sibson, E. G. Turbott.

Kaipara: Mrs. M. J. Barron, F. P. Hudson.

Northland: S. Barrett, T. R. and D. E. Calvert, R. Cowan, C. W. Devonshire, H. A. Findlay, Miss G. Poulton, Miss R. Reeve, Mrs. K. Reynolds, M. Ross.

SUMMARIES

(1) SPUR-WINGED PLOVER STUDY

By MAIDA L. BARLOW

Southland O.S.N.Z. membership is small and scattered. Those who do active field work thought that they would accomplish something of more scientific value by concentrating on one species and studying it thoroughly, rather than taking individual bites at the large "cherry" of varied bird life in the Southland area.

The Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novaehollandiae*) was chosen for the following reasons:

1. Its successful establishment in the south, and its continuing spread, posed challenging questions.
2. Some aspects of behaviour appeared to be changing, particularly in the matter of aggression.
3. The original breeding area in this country, and possibly the area most closely populated by the species in New Zealand, was close at hand.

Early in 1965 a study plan was made, bearing in mind that the plan, in a raw study such as this, is a tool, not an objective. The topic was looked at from three main aspects, to be studied over a period of, say, five years:

1. Population study; distribution and movement.
2. Statistics of egg fertility; clutch size; incubation dates; chick growth rates; chick mortality percentage; hatching percentage; fledging.
3. Behaviour study.

Our study is still at an early stage. My main purpose here is to make members aware of what can be done, by a small and scattered group of busy people, each contributing within his particular competence to a team effort.

Members have participated in the following ways to date:

B. D. Heather: help with planning.

S. L. Lobb: supplied materials for, and made, four drop-traps.

J. Mackintosh: adapted four pairs of pliers to fit the E-band; organised the conversion of aluminium bands to colour-bands.

R. R. Sutton: electroplating of monel bands.

B. W. Mazey: cyclostyling and distribution of questionnaire.

R. R. Sutton, P. M. Muller, R. Bond and M. L. Barlow make up the field team. Wives and husbands contribute nobly by gumboot-drying, child-minding and helping with the field work at times.

Other members record and report all sightings of the species.

A team effort such as this has advantages over the one-man study. Individually, the time we can give to the work is limited; collectively, it reaches quite impressive proportions. We share our problems, findings and field methods, and thus learn from each other. By working in such a team the individual has others, as vitally interested as himself, with whom he can discuss the fine points which continually arise in such a study. The ornithologist can pursue his enthusiasm to the point where he has no-one to discuss it with, because his own knowledge is so specialised. This may be the way to scientific advance, but it is also the road to the loneliness of the ivory tower.

Group work can achieve the scientific result. At the same time, it can increase the worker's joy in life, and save him from the psychiatrist!

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Members living or travelling in the South Island are asked to look for leg-bands on any Spur-winged Plovers they see. Recorded sightings of banded birds are vital to our knowledge of the movements of this species.

Individual colour-banding is being carried out. Each combination includes a monel band (giving aluminium colour). Some birds carry untreated monel bands, which are difficult to see. This difficulty has been overcome by electroplating the monel bands, and birds banded since October 1965 carry such bands. A few birds banded before 1965 carry a single aluminium band. Since 1965, some birds carry two bands (a colour and a monel), many have three bands, and from the end of 1966 birds will carry four bands. No bird has more than two bands on a leg. It is important to note:

(1) Whether the bands are on the bird's left or its right leg; and (2) The order of bands from above; e.g.

R/A. B. Red over (i.e. above) aluminium on the left leg; blue on the right leg.

A/O. A. Aluminium over orange on the left; aluminium on right.

— W.A. No band on left; white over aluminium on right.

Please record any such sighting accurately and immediately. *Write it down at once!* If possible, and certainly if in any doubt, ask a second person to check the combination colours and order. Report, giving also date, locality and whether bird alone or with a flock, to The Banding Officer, Dominion Museum, Wellington; or to the writer.

(Mrs.) Maida L. Barlow,
152 Lewis Street,
Invercargill.



(2) INTRODUCED BIRDS

By P. C. BULL, *Animal Ecology Division, D.S.I.R., Lower Hutt*

The success of introduced birds in living in close association with man often brings them into conflict with his interests, thus leading to economic problems and strong pressures for destruction of the offending species. On the other hand, the same birds often have important aesthetic, scientific, educational, sporting or economic values. Proposals to control birds must be examined in relation to these positive values, and adopted only if the need is real and means exist to achieve control effectively, humanely and at an acceptable cost. Since we invariably lack the information needed for such an assessment, the Animal Ecology Division of D.S.I.R. has recently established a small unit to study introduced birds in agricultural lands in Hawke's Bay. Attention is being given to methods of assessing damage to crops and ways of controlling it, but the main emphasis of the work is on long-term studies of the ecology of the main problem species (Rooks, Mynas and House-Sparrows) including such aspects as numbers, reproduction, survival, movements and food.

Rooks were found to feed largely on earthworms and insects, especially beetles, fly larvae and caterpillars. They also caused considerable damage to newly sown crops of peas, pumpkins and cereals; maize crops sometimes had to be resown. A survey last year showed that 69 breeding rookeries were distributed over some 1150 square miles and contained at least 3557 nests. Further, there is good evidence of a recent increase in both the breeding and feeding ranges of Rooks in Hawke's Bay. These findings raise three important problems: was the spread accelerated by recent attempts to control the birds at established rookeries?; will the birds continue spreading and perhaps reach the vulnerable maize-growing areas near Gisborne; and should an attempt be made to prevent this by a control programme based on new poisons and immobilizing drugs? These questions cannot be answered till more is known of the birds' ecology and the effectiveness of the drugs.

Decisions on the need for bird control and the widespread concern at the possible effects of toxic chemicals both demand more reliable information on changes in the numbers of our common birds. In Britain very useful information of this kind is being obtained by the British Trust for Ornithology through its "Common birds' census." Our Society needs urgently to increase its numbers of competent ornithologists interested in common birds so that it can mount a similar scheme.



(3) RECORDING ABUNDANCE OF FOREST BIRDS

By J. A. GIBB, Animal Ecology Division, D.S.I.R.

In perusing the writings of our early ornithologists we are sometimes frustrated at being unable to interpret their observations on the abundance of our forest birds. How will ornithologists 50-100 years hence regard our observations now?

In parts of the world with a rich avifauna, each species occupies a relatively narrow ecological niche in the community. Consequently the compilation of a species list is more revealing with a rich avifauna than with a sparse avifauna in which each species occupies a broad spectrum of environments. Nonetheless a systematic collection of species lists for N.Z. forests is urgently needed, and could be organised by this society. But species lists need supplementing with some indication of abundance.

Terms such as 'common,' 'few,' 'scarce' and 'rare' are better than nothing, but only just. Ideally we need many more complete censuses of specific areas, such as those undertaken by Kikkawa; but a census is often impracticable, and there are ways of bridging this gap between the unadorned species list and the complete census, without recourse to using vague adjectives.

Perhaps the simplest and most informative method is to record the species contacted in a given period of time, either as spot checks along predetermined routes or continuously on slow walks. The time periods or intervals must be standardised; on walks, a 15-minute time interval is convenient. This method of recording species, not numbers, contacted tends to under-emphasise common species, and to over-emphasise less common species, but as the information is quantitative it is possible to compare densities from place to place, or time to time.

As the frequencies with which different species are contacted depend partly on their conspicuousness, I also record for each bird contacted, (a) whether it was first seen or first heard, and (b) the minimum distance at which it was contacted.

In the Urewera National Park around L. Waikaremoana in January 1966 the following species of birds were recorded, given here in declining order of frequency based on 86 15-minute periods: Grey Warbler, Rifleman, Pied Tit, Bellbird, Tui, Whitehead, Chaffinch, White-eye, Blackbird, Parakeet, Kaka, Fantail, Long-tailed Cuckoo, Shining Cuckoo, N.Z. Pigeon, Song Thrush, Harrier. The order of abundance was virtually the same when based on the numbers of birds contacted; but how does this recorded order of abundance compare with actual abundance? The difference is largely a function of the distances at which the members of each species were contacted, and of their conspicuousness.

Only about 13% of all the birds contacted were first detected by sight, and the rest by sound; and this observer seldom contacted birds by sight at distances greater than 20 yards. Moreover, 99% of the Rifleman, to take an extreme example, were contacted within about 20 yards of the track; whereas Grey Warblers for instance were contacted in fair numbers, mostly by sound, out to distances of 80 yards. Whilst it appears that Rifleman are not repelled by the observer, other species such as Bellbirds and Chaffinches probably are; and one knows from experience that yet other species (Fantails, Robins, Whiteheads) are sometimes attracted to the observer.

Thus characteristics of the birds themselves and of the observer complicate interpretation of measures of abundance made from field counts; but as detailed censuses of small areas are so time-consuming, we must face up to the problems if ever we are to obtain satisfactory measurements of the abundance of forest birds.

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