

PROTECTION OF NOTORNIS.

The following communication, dated April 23, 1951, addressed to the secretary of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand from the Secretary for Internal Affairs, Mr. A. G. Harper, sets out the position regarding the protection of the *Notornis*:—

“As you are aware, a large area of the Fiordland National Park was given special protection after the rediscovery of the takahe in 1948. Before entry into this area can be effected a permit is required from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Invercargill.

“Within this area is the known breeding ground of the takahe. At a recent meeting of a committee advisory to this Department on rare birds the absolute necessity for unauthorized persons to keep out of the valleys in question was emphasized. This prohibition is an essential part of the work being carried out in an endeavour to preserve the birds. It would be greatly appreciated if your organisation could give all possible backing to the restrictions in force by using its influence in the bringing of this necessity for co-operation with the authorities to the notice of members.

“It may be of interest to your Society to be informed briefly on the protective measures which have been taken. First of all there was the setting aside of the large area of Fiordland National Park as a special reserve for the birds, pending the fixing of their range.

“Secondly, under the legislation setting aside the area there was the restriction on entry, unless authority was obtained from the appropriate person to whom the powers of the Minister of Lands were delegated. This Department's Ranger at Te Anau is in the position to keep a check on persons going across the lake, either privately or as tourists on the tourist launch which takes visitors to the Glow Worm Cave situated in the prohibited area. The Ranger also supervises the running of tourists to the cave to see that advantage is not thereby taken by persons to proceed further afield than the caves or to stay longer within the time allowed for this.

“Thirdly, a Field Officer of the Wildlife Branch has been carrying out guard duties in the takahe country for a good proportion of the year to see that there is no interference with the birds through unauthorized entrance. Fourthly, this Field Officer, Mr. Woodrow, has carried out control work with respect to the introduced animals found in the area. This has involved the destruction of stoats by trapping in such a manner that there is no likelihood of the *Notornis* or other ground birds being caught; the snaring of deer so that there is no possibility of the birds being disturbed by shooting and finally the trapping of opossums in the restricted areas where they occur. Fortunately there is no evidence that either rats or cats exist in the known *Notornis* range.

“Fifthly, officers of the Wildlife Branch have been active in reconnaissance work in an endeavour to fix limits to the habitat of the birds. This has involved numerous expeditions into valleys along the whole western side of Lake Te Anau for which suggestions have emanated that the birds might be present. During last spring and summer Mr. Woodrow continued with this reconnaissance as he was able to fit it in with his guard duties. With work previously done by other officers, the birds are now known to occur in seven valleys, while there is an area of country lying between these valleys which has still to be covered. The known number of birds has also been greatly increased to somewhere between thirty and forty and the valleys in which the birds are known to breed are now known to be four, instead of one, with a possible further valley.

“Further work will be planned after the next meeting of the Rare Birds Advisory Committee.”