

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand was held in Christchurch on Friday, May 16, 1952. The president, Mr. E. G. Turbott, presided over an attendance of about 30. Several apologies for absence were read.

The Christchurch Regional Organiser, Mr. E. W. Dawson, gave details of arrangements for the field trip for the following day.

Mr. Turbott spoke to the meeting of the essentially co-operative nature of the society, pointing out that another of the main objects had been achieved. This was the providing of ready means for the recording of ornithological information on a national scale. In this respect the ringing scheme, nest records cards and beach patrol cards were especially mentioned. The "special inquiries" perhaps needed more regular advertising to members, but provided a further means for co-operative work. Mr. Turbott said that in retiring from the position of president, he wished to refer specially to the work of the hon. secretary, Mr. J. M. Cunningham, over the past few years. Mr. Cunningham had given freely of both his time and his outstanding organising ability, and the successful establishment of the ringing scheme and the other permanent schemes for recording members' observations, were his work. The happy spirit of co-operation which existed between all aspects of interest in ornithology was stressed by Mr. Turbott.

The twelfth annual report, for the year ended March 31, 1952, presented by the hon. secretary, Mr. J. M. Cunningham, stated:—A glance at "Notornis" will show that progress has continued. The year has seen the completion of volume 4 and the issue of a special number devoted to the takahe, for sale to the public. As will be shown in separate reports, the library is growing beyond all recognition, and is being increasingly used by members; the ringing scheme is prospering and the future pattern of research becoming plainer; the checklist, which will be the most important project the society has yet sponsored, is nearly complete; proposals for incorporation have been formulated and will be presented shortly. A pamphlet showing the aims of the society and how members can help was distributed to all members and should be carefully studied. It contains much information in condensed form which is of value to those new and present members wishing to know more of present activities, prices of back numbers, etc.

A new permanent investigation, the beach patrol, was commenced, and its success will be dependent on the number of cards filled in by members. It is surprising how much can be learned from a list of localities and dates on which specimens were washed ashore if sufficient numbers of members co-operate. Provision is made for measurements of the corpses, but though desirable, this is not in any way necessary for the success of the scheme. It is anticipated that with the ringing scheme, the nest records will prove one of the most valuable lines of research followed by the society. Statistical analyses can produce much information from cards incompletely filled in. Mr. J. King reports, however, that although many cards have been issued, members are disappointingly slow in sending in their completed cards, only Dunedin members, Miss N. Macdonald and Mr. J. M. Cunningham having forwarded any quantity of cards. In England, The British Trust for Ornithology makes the greatest use of similar cards, and it is of interest to note that in 1950 about 5000 cards were sent in by over 100 members. It is stated: "Since the value of the scheme largely depends on the collection of an unbiased sample of nest records, it is quite essential that contributors should not select for record only those nests which may seem of greatest interest. For every nest with eggs or young should be recorded, even if it is visited only once or totally destroyed the very next day." The same applies in New Zealand.

The finances of the society have been buoyant, and the number of members and current income, are a record. A new low record is also apparent in the subscription arrears. There are a total of 660 members (an increase on last year of 107), consisting of 475 ordinary, 145 endow-

ment, 39 life and one hon. life, members. One hundred and forty have paid their subscriptions in advance and there are 26 still in arrears. Due to increase in printing costs and bigger issues of Notornis, the cost per member of Notornis has risen to 8s. 10d., and it is evident that the continued support of members by increasing their subscriptions to endowment rates and making donations, is a big factor in the financial success of the society during the past year.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the Year ended 31/3/52.

	£	s.	d.
Subs., 1951, and Arrears	200	10	0
Donations, General and Illustrations Fund	10	14	3
Sales, Back Numbers	30	3	3
Sales, Takehe	72	9	0
Interest, P.O.S.B.	9	3	0
Typing Expenses drawn from Checklist Reserve	2	13	3
	£325	12	9

	£	s.	d.
“Notornis,”—			
Vol. 4, Nos. 5—8	140	8	6
Illustrations	32	17	8
“The Takahe” issue	46	9	2
Envelopes	9	9	9
Stationery	16	12	2
Typing Envelopes, Etc.	11	19	0
Postages	19	15	3
Library Expenses	18	3	2
1951 Annual Meeting Exs.	2	15	4
Sundry	10	12	4
Ringing	3	14	10
Excess of Income over Ex-			
pense, transferred			
to General Reserve	12	15	7
	<u>£325</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>

LIABILITIES.

	£	s.	d.
Subs. paid in Advance ..	203	0	0
Sundry Creditors (a/cs. due but unpaid)	20	12	6
Checklist Reserve	17	6	9
General Reserve	166	13	1
	<u>£407</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>

	£	s.	d.
Subs. in arrear, estimated to realise	2	5	0
Stationery on Hand	10	14	6
Cash	13	10	0
P.O. Savings Bank	363	15	5
Bank of New Zealand . . .	17	7	5
	<u>£407</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>

birds, and 539 recoveries. Colour ringing is playing its part, and already a number of birds have been seen with colour rings, and their movements thus traced. It is emphasised that under no circumstances should members use colour rings of other than the allotted colours, and then only when they carry the list of combinations with them when ringing. A single lapse of memory may result in the wrong combination being used, and this would invalidate all colour ringing done with the correct combinations of colours. Some operators are developing the technique of feeding ringed gulls and reading the ring numbers through field glasses, and this will become an increasingly valuable way of getting recoveries. Further rings were supplied during the year for use on Heard and Macquarie Islands, and two more recoveries from the former are reported. Rings were also supplied to the C.S.I.R.O. for the ringing of gannets in Australia, and this operation will be complementary to gannet ringing in New Zealand. These rings are being replaced by the Australian Government. The system of keeping the records has proved satisfactory over two seasons, and rings and records will now be taken over by the Dominion Museum. In view of the increasing number of applications from members to ring, the whole question of issue of rings will have to be considered by this committee during the coming year.

Members were interested in a ring taken from a giant petrel near Valparaiso and which had been placed on the bird at Heard Island.

Report of Constitution and Incorporation Sub-Committee, presented by Mr. E. G. Turbott, chairman.—One lengthy meeting of the committee has been held and considerable interchange of views and opinions carried out by correspondence. However, there has been some difficulty in arranging for the full committee to meet and this has delayed the work to some extent. On behalf of the committee I have to report that the proposals for the new constitution are not yet ready for presentation to members. The committee is anxious to carry out the fullest possible discussion before submitting its proposals, but it is hoped that the draft will be completed early in the present year, and copies of the proposed constitution will then be printed and sent to all members. A special general meeting will probably be called later in the year to discuss and vote upon the new constitution.

The report of the Hon. Librarian (Mr. E. G. Turbott) stated:—The formation of a Library Committee which will negotiate exchanges, purchase books and periodicals, and arrange for reviews has been finalised. Members of the committee are: Messrs. E. G. Turbott (chairman), R. H. D. Stidolph, R. B. Sibson and Professor B. J. Marples. The year's total borrowings from the Library have been 63. Books and pamphlets, apart from periodicals, added during the year number 14. Preliminary arrangements for the circulation of current issues of periodicals to members in Wellington and Dunedin have been made, and this system will be initiated during the coming year. Periodicals taken currently remain at ten, of which eight are received by exchange: these include "Bird-Banding," arrangements for which had not been completed in time for inclusion in the list of the library published last year. It should be noted that four additional periodicals (only issues of ornithological interest) are received on exchange, a total of five being mentioned in error in last year's report. In addition to periodicals, the society acquires on its exchange basis publications of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, Oxford, and of the British Museum (Natural History), in the latter case issues of ornithological interest only being received. A number of requests for further exchanges have been received and will be considered by the Library Committee. Finally, the society is again grateful to Miss Enid Evans, librarian of the Auckland Institute and Museum, for her continued interest and assistance. During Miss Evans's absence from the Museum, the assistant librarian, Mr. M. Hitchings, has kindly undertaken the work of cataloguing and despatch of books to members.

It was resolved "that the incoming committee consider raising the subscription to 10s. for ordinary members and £1 for endowment members, suitable provision being made for junior members if practicable."

A Checklist Publication Committee consisting of Messrs. C. A. Fleming, J. M. Cunningham, R. H. D. Stidolph and R. B. Sibson was set up to investigate methods of publication, and the general committee was authorised to publish the Checklist.

The Constitution Committee consisting of Messrs. E. G. Turbott, J. M. Cunningham, C. A. Fleming and Dr. W. M. Hamilton, was re-appointed.

There was some discussion on the advisability of reprinting the early issues of the society's publications which were cyclostyled, and the meeting, Mr. Cunningham only dissenting on the ground of possible financial loss, endorsed the retiring committee's decision to reprint them, at a cost not to exceed £150.

Thanks were expressed to Mr. Dawson for arranging the meeting and to the Canterbury University College authorities for making a room available. Dr. R. A. Falla gave a commentary on his fine colour films of sub-Antarctic bird life. These were greatly appreciated and admired by those present, and the evening concluded with supper.

The field trip was held the day after the annual meeting. A busload of happy ornithologists left Victoria Square for, appropriately enough, Birdling's Flat. From here the party moved to Lake Forsyth, where an amazing congregation of waterfowl was observed. Though the early part of the day was fine but cold, a drizzle, which commenced while the party was in a patch of bush having tea, developed into heavy rain during the journey home. Members visiting Christchurch made further excursions to various estuaries the following day.

Editorial Consultative Committee.—The committee has appointed a committee of six as an Editorial Consultative Committee. It will act only as an advisory body on such matters as acceptance for publication of records which are in any way doubtful.

INVESTIGATIONS OF PREDATORY BIRDS.—Harrier hawks have been ringed by research workers, and members are asked to co-operate in the investigations now taking place. An official statement reads: The Animal Ecology Section of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, in conjunction with the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, is carrying out an investigation of the harrier by marking the birds with metal bands on their legs. The bird is of considerable interest as a predator of both game birds and rabbits, yet very little is known about its behaviour and habits. Marking these birds should provide much information not only about their movements but also give some indication of how effective is the bounty system that is worked in some districts to control their numbers. Already some results have been achieved from this study, and a hawk which was marked in Hawkes Bay in April, 1952, was found near Lake Waitaki, North Otago, over 500 miles away, a month later. Anyone finding a marked bird is asked to send the ring to the Dominion Museum.

UNUSUAL PLUMAGED OYSTERCATCHER.—On April 14, 1952, on the tidal flats at Aramoana, near the entrance to Otago Harbour, were several flocks of South Island Pied Oystercatchers (*Haematopus finschi*). On the edge of the incoming tide, in close association with two pied oystercatchers and two stilts, was another oystercatcher with the head, nape, and throat a light fawn. Except for a few streaks of the same colour on its back, the rest of its plumage was white. The legs and bill were orange-red, but the colour of the eye was not seen. An incoming wave put to flight a flock of over 20 pied oystercatchers in the vicinity, and, as they flew past the bird we were observing it joined the flock where it looked very conspicuous in the centre of it. Present with I.T. and L.E.W. were two members of the Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club, Mrs. M. E. Hickman and Mr. J. G. Walker, who also observed the strange-looking oystercatcher.—I. Tily and L. E. Walker.