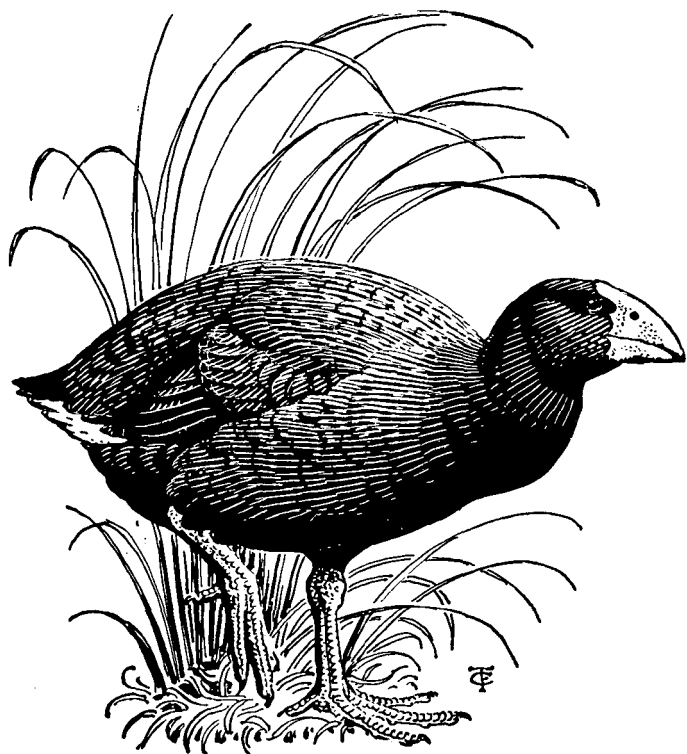


*Vol. 5. No. 4.*

*April, 1953*

# NOTORNIS



*Bulletin of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.  
Published Quarterly.*

# NOTORNIS

In continuation of New Zealand Bird Notes.

## Bulletin of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Registered with the G.P.O., Wellington, as a Magazine.

Edited by R. H. D. STIDOLPH, 114 Cole Street, Masterton.

Annual Subscription, 7/6 (Juniors, 5/-); Endowment Membership, 10/-;  
Life Membership, £6/6/-.

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**WHITE HERON INQUIRY.**—For many years, the rarity of white herons has caught people's imagination and become legendary. The post-nuptial dispersal throughout New Zealand has been the cause of widespread newspaper reports of birds seen, and where there used to be one or two reported, now there are frequently 4 or 5, and there seem to be more reports. This may be due to: (a) white heron "spotting" becoming more popular; (b) increased breeding success at Okarito; (c) an influx of Australian birds. There is some evidence in favour of all of these. In the latter case, Australian birds would not necessarily breed at Okarito, and the possibility of new colonies being established should be borne in mind. In view of this, the society has decided to conduct an inquiry into the numbers and distribution of this species, to be organised by Mr. D. H. Brathwaite, Box 360, Napier. Members are urged to make an effort to obtain as many records as they can, and investigate newspaper reports in their districts. Because of the possible occurrence of closely related Australian species (and also the royal spoonbill, which feeds in shallow water with a scythe-like motion of the bill), each bird seen should be closely examined and the colour of the bill, bare skin on the face, upper and lower legs and feet noted. The habitat, e.g., lake shore, tidal flat, swamp, the depth of the water they are feeding in, and any other birds seen in company with the herons (particularly white-faced herons), are all of particular value.