

## ANNUAL MEETING

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The Annual General Meeting was held in the lecture theatre of the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, on the evening of May 15th. In the absence of the President, who was a sudden victim of influenza, the chair was taken by Dr. R. A. Falla. About fifty members were present, including representatives from as far afield as Northland, Auckland, Westland, Otago and Southland.

A full programme of business, which reflected the healthy state of the society's various activities, occupied the early part of the evening. After an interval for supper, members were shown the Edgar Stead Hall of Birds under the proud and expert guidance of Mr. E. G. Turbott.

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## NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1958 - 59

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### OFFICE-BEARERS FOR THE YEAR

*President:* Mr. P. C. BULL

*N.I.V.P.:* Dr. R. A. FALLA

*S.I.V.P.:* Mrs. L. E. WALKER

*Secretary:* Mr. G. R. WILLIAMS

*Treasurer:* Mr. H. R. MCKENZIE

*Editor:* Mr. R. B. SIBSON

*Assistant Editor:* Mr. A. BLACKBURN

*Members of Council:* Mrs. O. SANSOM, Mr. E. G. TURBOTT  
Mr. J. C. DAVENPORT

After the last Annual General Meeting the office of North Island Vice-President was left unfilled. Therefore Council (as empowered by the Constitution) appointed Dr. R. A. Falla to this office and filled the place his elevation left among Council members by Mrs. O. Sansom. An Assistant to the Editor was decided on by Council and Mr. A. Blackburn was appointed. This was very convenient, because he lives in Gisborne, where *NOTORNIS* is at present being printed. We are grateful to Mr. Blackburn for accepting this post (which, by the way, does not include membership of Council).

As demanded by the Constitution, three members of Council retire at this Annual General Meeting. These are Mrs. O. Sansom, Mrs. L. E. Walker and Mr. J. C. Davenport. Nominations were called for to fill these vacancies and the following were received: Mrs. L. E. Walker, Mr. J. C. Davenport and Mr. A. Blackburn. No ballot was therefore needed and I have much pleasure in declaring these three elected. The Society is much indebted to Mrs. O. Sansom, who retires from Council this year and who did not seek re-nomination. She has given long and valuable service to the Society as well as to Council, and I should like to thank her wholeheartedly on behalf of us all.

Council and Society business was carried on by six Council Circulars during the year. Among the matters dealt with were: Appointment of Regional Organisers, Printing of *NOTORNIS*, preliminary plans for the publishing of a Society's Field Guide to the Birds of New

Zealand, and arrangements for holding this Annual General Meeting (for the facilities for which we are very much indebted to Dr. R. S. Duff, the Director of the Canterbury Museum, Mr. E. G. Turbott, the Assistant-Director, and Mr. J. R. Jackson, the Regional Organiser for Christchurch). Other matters dealt with by your Council were making of preliminary plans for the 1959 Study Week-end, the Society library and, as always, finances. This list by no means exhausts the topics. You will hear the outcome of much of the Council's work as this meeting proceeds.

There has been an increase in membership this year and it is interesting to see what has happened to our membership over the last ten years. It has increased by exactly 300 but the rate has not been even. In the first five-year period the rate of increase averaged 55 a year. But over the last five years the rate has dropped to such an extent that the gain of new members over deaths and resignations has averaged only six per year. A large drop in membership between 1954-55 and 1955-56 is mainly responsible for this poor average.

Over the ten-year period ending 1957-58, Ordinary Members have increased at the rate of 17 per annum, Endowment Members at 7 per annum and Life Members at 4 per annum. The discrepancy some of you may notice between this total of 28 and the total yearly average of about 30 is accounted for by the small number of Junior Members.

This financial year, thanks to the Presidential Appeal, and as you will hear in some detail from the Treasurer, there has been a remarkable increase in Endowment Members who now, for the first time since the Endowment Membership scheme was introduced ten years ago, almost equal the number of Ordinary Members.

The Society enters its new financial year in good heart. We are sure all Members will make a special point of fostering membership of this Society, so increasing the standard, scope and intensity of the study of ornithology in New Zealand.

The Society is grateful to Mr. B. D. Bell, Mr. P. C. McNab and other Blenheim members for making our first Study Week-end a success. This has encouraged us to plan for another this year.

G. R. WILLIAMS, Hon. Secretary



## TREASURER'S REPORT, 1958 - 59

The membership of the Society has increased to 784, being Hon. Life 1, Life 70, Endowment 330, Ordinary 354 and Junior 29. Of these, 33 are in arrears and 15 are resigning as at 31/3/59. 50 new members joined during the year.

Our financial position is now good and we have been able to increase the size of our journal "*Notornis*." The change to Te Rau Press Ltd. at Gisborne has been most satisfactory in regard to the printing price. The Ringing Report for last year was so large that to print all of it was felt to be beyond our resources. However, we were most fortunate in receiving a £40 grant from the Dominion Museum

enabling us to print in full. We are very grateful for this fine gesture. Another great help to us, for which we tender sincere thanks, was the taking over of the purchase of all metal rings used in our ringing scheme by the Wildlife Branch of the Internal Affairs Department. The rapid growth of the ringing scheme could hardly have been maintained on our own resources.

The sale of back numbers of "*Notornis*" and of other publications is being vigorously pursued by Mr. J. C. Davenport and has added £40/19/9 to the profit this year.

The Christmas Card Scheme has again been successful and will be reported on by Mr. B. S. Chambers.

The Presidential Appeal for 1958-59 has succeeded in its object of getting us out of our immediate financial difficulties. The figures shown do not quite agree with the accounts for 1958-59 as some members anticipated the Appeal and made payments towards it in the 1957-58 year. Life subscriptions and endowments from the Appeal, plus £13/1/- from Appeal donations, made up £200 which was invested at 5 per cent. The members who increased their subscriptions from 10/- to £1 and 5/- to 10/- have made up an extra £69, practically accounting for the profit shown for the year. Donations from all sources were £144/15/5. £13/1/- was transferred for investment, leaving £131/14/5. This has been kept apart for the time being to meet extra expenses, and, if necessary, to meet general costs until the subscription is raised. It is felt that the Appeal, in postponing an increase in the subscription, has enabled members of modest means to continue in the Society. Many thanks are due to all who have helped, particularly to those who gave large amounts.

Our thanks are due again to Messrs. Chambers, Worth and Chambers for auditing the books free of charge.

H. R. McKENZIE, Hon. Treasurer



## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LIBRARY, 1958-59

During the year, 73 separates have been added to the library, and periodicals received on exchange have continued to come regularly.

Twenty-seven items were borrowed during the year by members.

Circulation of journals has continued, and there are four circuits now operating.

I wish to express my deep appreciation of the work that Miss M. McIntyre has done during the past few months. She has devoted a considerable amount of time to the library and much work has been done that would otherwise have been impossible.

Perhaps it would be an appropriate time to mention some of the library's needs. We shall soon need another bookcase. Mr. Sibson made two, which we thought would be ample for a considerable time, but with so many journals coming in regularly, the space soon gets eaten up. It is not a matter of immediate urgency, but it would be desirable to have another case within the next year. Also, the catalogue

cards are housed in shoe boxes. These are quite satisfactory from a functional point of view, but not from an aesthetic one. I'm sure the Society's library committee would consider shoe boxes hardly worthy of its library, so if at any time the Society (or some generous member of it) feels it could run to steel drawers (cost £3/17/6) it would be very nice.

ENID A. EVANS, Hon. Librarian



## NEST RECORDS SCHEME

### Annual Report for Year Ending 31st March, 1959

Accessions this year compared favourably with 1958. As will be seen, there are now nearly 1,700 records and several new species have been added to the list. Dr. M. F. Soper and Mr. D. Merton deserve special mention for each supplying more than 100 cards. Mr. E. W. Crack supplied more than 50 records from 3 acres in Ashburton County. Contributors for the year and present accessions respectively follow as under:—

Miss M. R. Trower, Miss P. M. Lewis, Mesdames L. E. Walker, A. Secker, Messrs. H. R. McKenzie, F. W. Behrent, Dr. M. F. Soper, D. J. Lewis, E. W. Crack, H. L. Secker, B. D. Bell, B. Swale, P. Morrison, D. Arthur, N. Ewing, D. Merton, I. Hogarth, R. St. Paul, W. R. Silcock, W. T. Parham, J. R. Jackson, P. D. G. Skegg, N. B. MacKenzie.

Stewart Island Kiwi (1) Great Spotted Kiwi (1) Yellow-eyed Penguin (4) Little Blue Penguin (12) White-flipped Penguin (7) Fiordland Crested Penguin (1) Little Grebe (1) Fairy Prion (4) Fluttering Shearwater (5) Fleshy-footed Shearwater (1) Grey-faced Petrel (4) Diving Petrel (3) Gannet (3) Black Shag (11) Pied Shag (4) Little Black Shag (1) Little Pied Shag (1) King Shag (5) Spotted Shag (1) Reef Heron (7) White-faced Heron (4) Bittern (2) Mute Swan (2) Black Swan (11) Paradise Duck (3) Grey Teal (9) Brown Duck (2) Grey Duck (9) Mallard (7) Shoveler (3) Black Teal (3) Harrier (34) Bush Hawk (2) Pheasant (4) Californian Quail (5) North Island Weka (3) Pukeko (15) Black Oyster-catcher (10) Variable Oyster-catcher (5) Pied Oyster-catcher (15) Spur-winged Plover (2) Banded Dotterel (43) N.Z. Dotterel (17) Pied Stilt (48) Black-backed Gull (39) Red-billed Gull (11) Black-billed Gull (14) Black-fronted Tern (8) Caspian Tern (3) Fairy Tern (2) White-fronted Tern (30) Bush Pigeon (3) Rock Dove (43) Kaka (1) Red-fronted Parakeet (2) Shining Cuckoo (2) Morepork (1) Kingfisher (11) Rifleman (2) Skylark (27) Fantail (34) Pied Tit (8) Yellow-breasted Tit (2) Northern Robin (10) Southern Robin (1) Brown Creeper (1) Whitehead (4) Grey Warbler (23) Songthrush (313) Blackbird (267) Hedgesparrow (52) Pipit (13) Bellbird (7) Tui (5) White-eye (39) Greenfinch (36) Goldfinch (137) Lesser Redpoll (20) Chaffinch (42) Yellow hammer (15) House-sparrow (51) Starling (56) Mynah (5) White-backed Magpie (7).

H. L. SECKER, Organiser

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH, 1959

LIABILITIES				ASSETS			
Sundry Creditors	.. ..	110 18 0		Cash Bank of New Zealand	.. ..	6 0 2	
Subscriptions in advance	.. ..	43 0 0		Cash Post Office Savings Bank	400 0 0		
Provision for Index for Vol. 8		12 0 0		Sundry Debtors	.. ..	29 19 0	
			165 18 0	Subscriptions in arrears, estimated to produce	.. ..	9 0 0	
Life Subscriptions and Endow- ments Reserve Account—							444 19 2
Balance 1/4/58	.. ..	240 5 0		Stocks on hand:			
Add paid 1958-59 (Appeal)	146 14 0			Printing and stationery	.. ..	28 5 0	
From Donations	.. ..	13 1 0		"Notornis" back numbers, Re- ports & Bulletins, Sundry publications	.. ..	450 19 6	
			400 0 0				479 4 6
General Reserve:				Plant at cost less Depreciation			
Balance 1/4/58	.. ..	589 8 6		Addressograph & Accessories			17 4 10
Add further stock brought in	4 17 0			Library, Purchases to date	.. ..		27 17 8
Add Presidential Appeal Fund Donations	.. ..	130 12 8		Investments (Life Subs. & Endowments):			
Add excess of income over expenditure	.. ..	78 10 0		Auck. El. Pwr. Brd., Stock,			
			803 8 2	1969 at cost	.. ..	200 0 0	
				Auck. El. Pwr. Brd., Stock,			
				1970 at cost	.. ..	200 0 0	
							400 0 0
							1369 6 2
			£1369 6 2				

# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31/3/59

EXPENDITURE			INCOME		
Printing "Notornis" .. ..	389	17 7	Subscriptions for year ..	500	4 4
Less Grant Dominion Museum	40	0 0	Add arrears estimated to produce .. ..	9	0 0
		<u>349 17 7</u>			<u>509 4 4</u>
Postages .. ..	59	0 11	Blenheim Field Week-end, Surplus		23 18 2
Printing and Stationery ..	35	11 7	Profit on sale of back numbers of "Notornis," etc. .. ..		40 19 9
General Expenses .. ..	30	2 5	Interest .. ..		22 9 9
Cost of Ringing Scheme less donations, £4 .. ..	37	12 9			
Depreciation .. ..	5	16 9			
Excess of income over expenditure	78	10 0			
		<u>596 12 0</u>			<u>596 12 0</u>

I report to the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Inc., that I have examined the books, accounts and vouchers of the Society for the year ended 31st March, 1959, and certify the above balance sheet is properly drawn up to show the true financial position of the Society at the date. I have accepted the values placed by your Treasurer on "Stocks on Hand."

D. N. CHAMBERS, Auditor.

## EXCURSIONS

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The pleasant custom now seems to be firmly established that the members of the host city arrange local excursions on the two days which follow the annual general meeting. This year the thanks of the visitors go to Graham Turbott and Dick Jackson, whose careful planning enabled them to see something of the great numbers of shore-birds and wildfowl which in winter haunt the Canterbury lagoons and estuaries.

On the morning of May 16th, while there was a kindly break-in the prevailing gray, it was possible from the comfort of cars to watch the waders and ducks in the Heathcote-Avon estuary as a rising tide pushed them first towards the shores and then to a central sandbank. As we were driven round the estuary, the cars drew up near a long line of ducks, more than half of which were Shovelers. Next we walked out to the spit, disturbing a flock of Banded Dotterels and noting with interest a group of ten Pied Shags, visitors perhaps from Motunau. This is a species which seems to be regaining the ground lost by persecution. Unfortunately the full tide was not quite big enough to dislodge the 4000+ Pied Oystercatchers and 400+ Godwits from their central roost. To northern eyes 60+ Black-fronted Terns were especially attractive. Shags, of course, were numerous and among them one Little Pied Shag perhaps merits mention. Foreign fowl, too, were well to the fore. Many Mallard and Black Swans and a single Mute Swan were enjoying the sheltered waters of the estuary. Shag Rock was not exactly adorned by a couple of White-backed Magpies. Flocks of feral Rock Doves were passing along the cliffs of Banks Peninsula. Goldfinches and Redpolls were flitting from one bed of *salicornia* to another. As the tide fell, at least fifteen White-faced Herons flew down and stalked among the ducks and the few Pied Stilts.

At noon the sun disappeared and a freshening southerly brought a return of the raw weather. Visits to the Waimakariri at the bridge, at Brooklands and near the estuary added nothing to the morning's tally.

Though Sunday morning broke cold, wet and blustery, a gratifying muster of members reported at 9.30 a.m. for an excursion towards L. Ellesmere. Four Rooks near Halswell were greeted with cheers. It was a relief to the sentimental to know that some of the famous Canterbury colony had not succumbed to 1080.

As the shooting season was not yet finished, impressive flights of Black Swans and one skein of Canada Geese were not unexpected. Widespread floods had attracted large numbers of Black Swans and a few Paradise Ducks. Two groups of White-faced Herons about a mile apart contained 39 and 27 birds. Lunch was taken in the shelter of a surviving patch of the once rich forest of Bank's Peninsula. Bellbirds and a Black Fantail were a change from the birds of the marshes. There were many enigmas for the botanically minded.

When Birdling's Flat was reached, two Spartans were unable to resist the call of beachcombing and from a walk to the base of the cliffs, returned with the remains of a Yellow-eyed Penguin and six young Sooty Shearwaters. This season many young Muttonbirds have been driven ashore, dying of starvation as they start their northward migration.

Meanwhile the rest of the party were watching the thousands of

wildfowl which were sheltering on L. Forsythe, but the cutting wind did not help observation from a stony railway embankment. Shoveler were plentiful and a single Grey Teal showed up in flight. An early afternoon tea was taken at Hilltop, after we had passed through a wet snow storm to get there. One car-load decided to push on to Akaroa, as a result of which the organiser of ringing saw his first Brown Creeper. It was feeding in a silver birch with Silvereyes and Redpolls. On the Akaroa side of the pass a common percher on jetties and rafts was the Spotted Shag. Every inlet had its quota of White-faced Herons so that the day's tally for this progressive species was over ninety. In fact they outnumbered the Pied Stilts of which only one flock of about fifty birds was seen.

As we motored back past L. Forsythe in the gathering dusk, it was estimated that 1600 Canada Geese were now grazing over the marshy turf. It had been a rewarding week-end for those who were prepared to face sub-antarctic conditions, in search of the birds of shore, lake and estuary.

—R.B.S.

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## SHORT NOTES

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### KINGFISHERS EATING BLOWFLIES

One or two pairs of Kingfishers (*H. sanctus*) may usually be found about Ball's Clearing, Puketitiri. They have been seen eating tadpoles, worms, skinks and blowflies. On 15/6/57 one was found dead under a clothesline. The stomach contained at least seven crushed blowflies. Not long after another was found drowned in a drum of sour milk over which it had been seen regularly catching blowflies.

PAM M. LEWIS

[Oliver (1955) in a lengthy note on the varied diet of the Kingfisher in New Zealand calls the bird omnivorous, but does not mention blowflies among the prey taken. However, in his book 'Focus on N.Z. Birds', Moon has a photograph (p. 65) of a Kingfisher bringing a blowfly to the nest. Ed.]

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### EXHAUSTED NELLY FED BY HAND

On 3/12/58 a Giant Petrel (*M. giganteus*) came in on the tide at Orua Bay, South Manukau Heads. It was very weak but eagerly took some piper and sprats from fishermen who were drawing a net. After that it became very tame, so that when it was called, it came up to our bach for scraps and fish. Often it just waited around for a feed.

On December 6th it flew again for the first time, using the head-wind to take off. It did not go very far and was quickly exhausted. As it walked up the beach, it sat down for a rest every few yards. It became so tame that it would take fish from our hands and made no attempt to peck.

On December 7th it was flying about much more, but it came in for a feed of fish from the net and took all it was offered. Later some children joined the Nelly, which was just sitting, not interested.

S. C. RUTHERFURD