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N.Z. BIRD NOTES

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INTRODUCTION.

It is gratifying to record that the membership of the Society is increasing, but it is to be hoped that all members will lose no opportunity of getting still more new members, so that as soon as possible we may be able to afford to publish quarterly instead of three times a year as at present. The Society acknowledges with thanks the receipt of the following donations to the Publication Fund:—A. E. Brooks, 15/-; J. Johnson, 5/-; H. R. McKenzie, 5/-; and H. L. Seeker, 5/-.

The next number will contain the short classified notes, and it is hoped that all members will send some in, and also that they will not forget the special investigations, including the new one on the magpie. Details of this are in the present number. Most, if not all, members must have seen magpies sometime, and so can help. Don't imagine that they are so common that someone else will have sent in the notes about them; send some yourself!

Among the reviews in this issue is one of a booklet by Mr. Sander-son, which he has typed and presented to the Society. The idea may commend itself to other members, and might form a valuable link between people interested in birds. We cannot print long articles, but if members wrote accounts of their local birds or of their experiences with birds and presented a typed copy for loan to other members, a great deal of interesting information would be disseminated throughout the Society, and it would be helped to become a more live and active body. Anything which links us together and helps to promote the subject in which we are interested is worthy of consideration. The pamphlets by Mr. Richdale on the Robin and the Albatross, already reviewed in our bulletins, are somewhat similar, but differ in being printed and on sale from the author for a small sum, the proceeds being devoted to further publications.

A number of reports have come in about the Spine-tailed Swifts, whose arrival in considerable numbers was reported in the last issue. It is hoped that members who have information about them will not fail to send it in, so that as complete a report as possible may be drawn up.

REVIEWS.

"The Emu," Vol. XLII, pt. 3, Jan., 1943. This number contains one New Zealand paper, "The Occurrence of *Pterodroma leucoptera* in New Zealand," by P. C. Bull. It deals with the remains of ten specimens of the Gould Petrel found washed up on Muriwai Beach, Auckland, in April, 1942. This is the first authentic record in New Zealand. The birds are fully described and compared with specimens from Cabbage Tree Island, N.S.W., the only known nesting place. The Muriwai specimens differ from the Cabbage Tree Island ones, and appear to belong to a different sub-species from an undiscovered and perhaps more northerly colony. This paper shows the valuable contributions to the systematic and distributional sides of ornithology which may be made by the study of storm-drifted specimens from the beaches, and members are urged to keep this in mind. Another paper in The Emu which should be mentioned is "Birds of the Five Islands," by J. A. Keast, which deals with some small islands not far from Sidney, and will be of interest to members who have the opportunity to study some of our small bird-inhabited islands. The author points out the importance, when visiting a colony, of estimating the numbers of birds in it, so that in course of time information about the fluctuation in numbers from year to year may be accumulated.—B. J. M.

"Notes on Birds near Whangarei," by Wesley Sanderson. This is a typewritten booklet of 38 pages, containing several articles on different subjects. Some deal with particular species, such as the Rails or the Brown Duck, while others contain notes on nests, on protective colouration or on the enemies of birds. Not intended to be exhaustive scientific treatises, the articles are pleasantly written accounts of the experiences of a bird lover throughout the year.—B. J. M.

"A Study of the Little Owl, *Athene noctua*, in New Zealand," by B. J. Marples. Trans. Roy. Soc. N.Z., vol. 72, Part 3, pp. 237-252, 1942. This is a most welcome initial study of its kind based on exhaustive material of 242 birds; it deals with a most thorough analysis of the food of this bird in New Zealand which, for the greater part, comprises caterpillars and beetles; very few remains of birds were found, none belonging to native species. Interesting chapters are devoted to seasonal variations, the sex ratio, and to the distribution and nesting.

K.A.W.

Any of the above may be borrowed on application to the Hon. Secretary, together with postage.