

(Except for correction of page numbers, this is an unrevised reprint;  
issued July, 1948.)

# N.Z. BIRD NOTES

## Bulletin of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Edited by Dr. R. A. FALLA and Professor B. J. MARPLES.

Address communications to Professor Marples, The Museum, Dunedin.

Annual subscription, 5/-. Price to non-members, 2/- per number.

---

Vol. 1.—No. 2.

Issued April, 1943

---

### CONTENTS.

Introduction.

Reviews.

The Magpie Investigation.

One Year of Bird Observations at Waikanae River Estuary, by A. A.  
Kirk and K. A. Wodzicki.

---

### 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.

Their appearance agreed generally with the mounted specimen in the Canterbury Museum."

18. January 22.—One seen at Ferguson's, South Westland.
19. February 24.—Mr. W. Knight saw a flock of 15 birds at Paraparaumu. Some birds were seen at intervals up to March 13. "Over the bowling green they flew with long sweeps as if searching for food. They alighted on the green, but did not appear to gather food there. On March 6, pairs were noted mating. One rested on the ground, evidently the female, the male alighting on the female and fluttering with outstretched wings much as a sparrow does. At no time did the birds make any sound."
20. February 28.—Mrs. W. J. Rutherford, Stanmore Bay, Whangaparoa Peninsula, Auckland, saw two birds flying about, and later watched them closely as they fed on insects and spiders on a window.
21. No date.—Mr. C. M. Comber saw two birds just west of Mt. Egmont, on the ranges.

No doubt stragglers of this species have reached New Zealand in greater numbers than the single specimen taken before 1930 would suggest, but clearly the large numbers seen in the summer of 1942-43 were exceptional. Sometimes the appearance of some unusual bird is associated with a storm, as in the case of tropical sea birds which have been carried far up the North African continent by cyclones. The Director of the Meteorological Services, Wellington, very kindly supplied a summary of the situation at the end of November over the Tasman, and states that nothing of exceptional significance occurred. Furthermore the situation over Northern Australia, Queensland and New Guinea was unaffected by even minor disturbances, so we are unable to suggest any reason for the unusual behaviour of the birds. It has been suggested that perhaps the birds were diverted from their course while passing through the Pacific war zone, but this seems unlikely, as according to most accounts, birds are very little affected by gunfire.

To summarise the above reports very briefly. The swifts appeared at the end of November, 1942, in considerable numbers in Westland, and at the same time near Auckland in small numbers. They were seen during the summer in western districts from Stewart Island to North Auckland, and also extended into Canterbury. The latest records are in March, and in the North Island, suggesting the return migration, and mating was noticed on March 6.

---

#### CORRECTION.

Members are requested to make two corrections in their copy of N.Z. Bird Notes, No. 2. By an unfortunate oversight the pages were numbered 1 to 8 instead of 9 to 16. It is intended to number the pages consecutively throughout the whole volume, and if possible to issue an index at the end. In the table of contents, "Winter Feeding of Birds," by E. W. Hursthouse appears, but owing to considerations of space had to be withdrawn. It appears in the present number.