

N.Z. BIRD NOTES

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INTRODUCTION.

The great amount of space taken up by the short notes prevented the inclusion of any other items in the last number. The Society gratefully acknowledges the following donations:—Messrs. K. H. Hindwood and B. Sladden, £1; Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Fleming, Mr. E. W. Hursthouse and "Bird Lover," 10s; Dr. K. A. Wodzicki, 5s; Mr. J. R. Eyles, 2s 6d; "Tui," 1s 6d. Please remember that subscriptions are due in July, a considerable number for this year have not yet been received, and please contribute to the publication fund if possible. The Society would be grateful also for any books, notes, photographs, etc., dealing with ornithology. A number of members are already availing themselves of the opportunity of borrowing the various publications in the possession of the Society, and we should like to extend the scope of this.

The numbers of members is now about 160, and it is hoped that all will endeavour to enlist additional ones at every opportunity. We regret very much to record the deaths of two members—Mr. W. J. Ferguson, of Invercargill, and Mr. C. V. Thomson, of Stewart Island.

We are indebted to the South Australian Ornithological Association, who have agreed to exchange publications with us, and we now possess "The South Australian Ornithologist," Vol. XVI, Parts 1-8. We are also indebted to Messrs. P. C. Bull and C. A. Fleming for donating separates of their recent papers, and it is very much to be hoped that all who publish, or have published, papers on New Zealand birds, will present copies to the Society, so that we may have as complete a series as possible for reference. Four papers have also been very kindly donated by the British Trust for Ornithology.

Attention is again directed to the Special Investigations, and especially at this season to that of clutch sizes. Please make a special

effort to find out the number and fate of as many eggs as possible belonging to *any* species.

Will all who have any notes on the White Eye, and especially those who have been ringing any of this species, please communicate with Professor Marples, as it is hoped to bring out shortly a report on this bird.

REVIEWS.

The Emu. Vol. XVII, Part IV. This contains a valuable paper by C. A. Fleming on the White-eye, but this will be reviewed in a later number.

The Emu. Vol. XVIII, Part I. There are three N.Z. papers: "The Kuaka or Diving Petrel, *Pelecanoides urinatrix*," by L. E. Richdale, pp. 24-48. This is a very close and detailed study of the life history of the bird, carried out during an aggregate of 21 weeks of observations spread over several years. Extensive use was made of ringing, weighing and measuring, and it is very gratifying to see measurements, weights, etc., based upon large numbers of observations. Far too much of our information is based upon small numbers. It is impossible to summarise the paper in this space but an important feature is a table of data for estimating the ages of chicks, which should be in the notebook of all who visit small islands. In future, observers who encounter chicks of this species will be able to make reasonably close estimates of their ages instead of making such vague and almost useless records as the only too common "recently hatched" or "well grown chick." In this way relative times of hatching may be arrived at, and on the present data there seems to be a considerable discrepancy between the various breeding grounds. The paper is illustrated with photographs of chicks at different ages.

"Observations on the Distribution of the Wrybill in the North Island, N.Z.," by R. B. Sibson, pp. 49-62. This is an important paper on the winter distribution and behaviour of one of our most interesting species. It breeds on the river beds of Canterbury and winters in the Firth of Thames, North Auckland region. Graphs are given of the numbers observed at different times, and the paper is an excellent example of what can be accomplished by the systematic observation of bird flocks. Behaviour, plumage, and call notes are also dealt with. It is to be hoped that someone will follow with an account of the bird in the South Island, and that members will be encouraged to make systematic studies themselves.

"A Mechanism for Recording Automatically the Nesting Habits of Birds," by B. J. Marples and L. Gurr, pp. 67-71. This paper describes a simple home-made device which recorded on a smoked drum every time a bird entered or left its nest. The records of laying, incubating and feeding obtained for the blackbird, thrush and sparrow are discussed, also the change in weight of blackbird's eggs and young during the period in the nest. Such automatic recording methods could be usefully adapted for many ornithological purposes.