

N.Z. BIRD NOTES

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CONTENTS.

Reviews.

"Some Observations on the South Island Pied Oyster-catcher in Auckland."

By R. B. Sibson.

"The White-faced Heron." By B. A. Ellis.

"A Blackbird Nesting Story." By H. R. McKenzie.

REVIEWS.

"*EMU*," Vol. XLIV, part 4, April, 1945.

The last quarterly number is again deserving of notice for a number of articles of particular interest to New Zealand students.

K. A. Hindwood, in "The Fleshy-footed Shearwater (*Puffinus carneipes*)," describes late summer observation of small flocks off the coast of New South Wales and discusses the possibility that the birds may belong to the nearest breeding population at Lord Howe Island, 450 miles distant, the alternative being that they are non-breeders.

B. J. Marples, in "*Zosterops lateralis* at Dunedin, New Zealand," deals with the weight, size, colour, etc., of white-eyes trapped and ringed since 1938, a total of 1407 birds. This paper is not only model of method in examining trapped birds and in recording results, but extends our knowledge of the species in several directions that have not already been covered by Fleming's ("Emu," 1943) life history study and the movement and migration records made by members of this Society (1944), which were also based on trapping methods.

Results of weight studies are presented in tables and by graphs, and comparison made with the wider works of Baldwin and Kendeigh (1938) on North American Birds show close similarity in that maximum mean weight is reached in mid-winter, there is regular diurnal fluctuation and some indication of inverse correlation with the mean daily temperature. It is shown that white-eyes moult twice a year, that males appear on the average to be slightly larger than females, but that there is no sexual variation in winter plumage. A very interesting section deals with the colour variation in plumages, and three variants are distinguished. This gives a useful basis for future work, and when an equivalent study of the summer plumages of the white-eye can be undertaken the species will have been the most completely studied of New Zealand land-birds.

R. H. D. Stidolph, in "Breeding of Grey Teal in New Zealand," fills an erstwhile regrettable, almost disgraceful, gap in our knowledge of the elementary life histories of New Zealand ducks. The paper

gives a good description of nest, eggs and some of the habits of the Grey Teal in the Wairarapa district.

L. E. Richdale contributes "Courtship and Allied Behaviour in Penguins," a study in which he departs from the presentation of life history data to give an analysis of behaviour, based mainly on his valuable and intensive study over eight seasons of the Yellow-eyed Penguin, although other species are also discussed. There is a useful preliminary definition of terms which should do much to correct the loose usage so often employed in discussions on behaviour. Another welcome feature is a classification of all the fixed trains of action which the author has observed, illustrated in each case with his excellent photographs.

Mr Richdale finds comparison with the work of others who have ventured to write of penguin behaviour to be "difficult" for reasons which he gives. The inference is gratuitous: his own good work can very well be left to speak for itself.

J. A. Tubb's "Field Notes on Some New Guinea Birds" and G. R. Gannon's "Nesting Activities of the Grey Thrush" are papers of general interest, and there are also "The Grey Plover," by A. R. McGill; "The Eyrean Grass-Wren," by K. A. Hindwood; "The Genus *Phoebetria* in Australian Seas," by D. L. Serventy, and several other short papers.

R. A. F.

"CAMERA STUDIES OF NEW ZEALAND BIRDS, SERIES A."

By L. E. Richdale, Dunedin, 1944.

In No. 4 of the series, "Wild Life in New Zealand," Mr Richdale presents camera studies of seven species of penguin and eight petrels from the Otago-Stewart Island area. The high standard of photographic achievement we have learned to expect from this painstaking investigator is fully maintained, and the portraits of adults and young and moulting birds should prove of practical value as aids to identification in these "difficult" groups. Also, visitors to island colonies will find the illustrations of downy petrel chicks of known age a great help in assessing the age in days of young birds they encounter. There are 21 photographs of 15 species: The Erect-crested, Rock-hopper, Royal, White-flipped, Little Blue Penguins, and of *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* (for which no suitable common name is available), and, in addition, of the Royal Albatross, Whitefaced Storm Petrel, two Prions, Diving Petrel, Cape Pigeon, Nelly and Mutton-bird. Informative sub-titles and an author's preface accompany the plates.

Vernacular names for our lesser known seabirds remain a problem and call for standardisation. It may be doubted whether "Erect crested Penguin" will ever gain the currency of such a rival term as "Schlatter's Penguin," and the use of "Fairy Prion" for *Pachyptila turtur* is preferable to "Narrow-billed Prion," a name suitably applied to *P. belcheri*.

Mr Richdale promises a full account of the life history of the Muttonbird as the next number in the series.

The booklet is obtainable from the author, 23 Skibo Street, Dunedin. Price, 3s 6d.

C. A. F.