

larger, with dull olive green male plumage, lacking the yellowish olive traces of the underparts, with dull violet instead of bright purple gloss on head, and white, instead of yellowish, pectoral plumes and under-tail coverts—characters readily apparent in the field and said to be “as well marked as, indeed in some respects more marked than” those of the Chatham Island bellbird. In a useful table of measurements, the North and South Island birds are not separated subspecifically, but the Auckland Island *incoronata* is given specific rank—this last surely a lapsus.

This volume is a symptom of a healthy policy of constructive conservation on the part of Auckland Museum officers, which, implemented by the action of the Department of Internal Affairs, has saved Great Island from the fate of St. Helena. The Museum hopes to record future recovery of the vegetation and fauna in future publications.—C.A.F.

Inbreeding Among Birds in the Wild State, by L. E. Rochdale, Dunedin. Emu, Vol. 48, May, 1949, p.p. 282-290; one illustration.

Further results of an intensive study of breeding yellow-eyed penguins are apparent in this article, in which the author publishes his conclusions after twelve years' of observations of this species on Otago Peninsula. Out of a total of 386 separate annual matings of banded birds, 398 fledglings entered the sea and all these birds were marked. Of the latter number, 162 were seen subsequently and from the foregoing data the author discusses the incidence of inbreeding in this species. He showed that the chances of inbreeding between parent and offspring, or between brother and sister were decidedly remote. The only case of inbreeding recorded among these penguins is between a brother and a sister. From the literature available he can find only four other instances on record of inbreeding in other species of birds in a wild state, probably due, he states, “to lack of opportunity, largely because of the poor return of young to their exact place of hatching.” If it did occur, it did not appear to be harmful.—R.H.D.S.

Notornis Rediscovered, by E. A. Falla, Dominion Museum, Wellington. Emu, Vol 48, May, 1949, pp. 316-322; five illustrations.

The story of the dramatic rediscovery of the notornis or takahe (*Notornis hochstetteri*) by Dr. G. B. Orbell, of Invercargill, and subsequent observations of the bird's habits by the author of this paper in an area west of Lake Te Anau, is placed on permanent record in this article. After a brief historical survey of the species and the events leading up to the rediscovery of the takahe on November 20, 1948, by Dr. Orbell and his party, the author gives first-hand information of the bird's habits, gained on a later visit to the area in January, 1949.

Salient points of Dr. Falla's paper are: The birds inhabit an area of about 500 acres—the basin of a valley 2,000 feet above the level of Lake Te Anau (which is 684 feet above sea level). There is little variety of food for bird life, nor is it in abundance. A takahe was seen stripping flowers and seeds of *Danthonia* (snow-grass) by running the stalks through its bill. The succulent bases of *Carex* (sedge) and the stripped fleshy stalks of *Aciphylla* (spaniard) are also eaten. The droppings of the birds are remarkable and characteristic, and provide a good clue to the presence of this species. The solid cylindrical faeces are half an inch in diameter and up to six inches and more in length. Some droppings composed of moss were found in one area. Not unlike the weka in its movements and general stance, the takahe flicks its tail at almost every step, and runs well. It has a loud call, somewhat like that of the weka “and not unlike a powerful version of the Californian quail”; when calling a chick, “cowp-cowp-cowp”; a scream when pairs are separated and an alarm note of “boomp-boomp.” The nest is built on the ground between tussocks of snow grass, being constructed of grass. An egg seen by the party was dull cream, with brown spots and faint mauve blotches and measured 73.5 x 48.3 millimetres. The chick somewhat resembles a pukeko chick. An estimated total of 100 birds in two

neighbouring valleys is suggested, though this may be on the high side. Stoats and deer are present in the area; a plan to ease predator pressure is already in operation by officers of the Internal Affairs Department.

In order to protect the colony the Government has closed an area of 435,000 acres of Fiordland National Park to entry by the public, except by special permit.

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