



OSNZ news

No. 17 December, 1980

NOTE: Deadline for the March issue will be 9th February.

Sir Robert Falla Memorial Appeal

The OSNZ Council resolved at its meeting on 8 November to launch an appeal to establish an annual award for New Zealand ornithology in memory of Sir Robert Falla who died in February 1979 after more than sixty years close association with the development of the study of birds in New Zealand and the southern oceans.

The Council is confident that this appeal will be generously supported. Please send donations marked 'Falla Memorial Appeal' to:— Hon. Treasurer, OSNZ, P.O. Box 3011, Dunedin.

R. B. SIBSON, *President*

Fantails and Welcome Swallows

There have been suggestion (e.g. *Tara* June 1980) that Welcome Swallows and Fantails compete with each other for flying insects and that swallows may be ousting Fantails in some areas. I have seen a brief encounter between a Fantail and two swallows, which occurred at the Plant Physiology Complex, DSIR, Palmerston North. The buildings here include both glasshouses and office blocks. There is a large river about 1 km away and there are small patches of native bush in the vicinity. Swallows often can be seen throughout the year wheeling around in the open space above the glasshouses (possibly chasing insects attracted to the warm air vented from the glasshouses). Fantails are present on a more seasonal basis, being most obvious during the months April-August, when they can be seen in the late afternoon searching for insects under the eaves of office blocks and around shrubs beside the buildings. As Fantails and swallows are seen in different aerial habitats around the buildings it is possible that they are feeding on different

types of insects and may not be competing for the same insect food.

Occasionally swallows are seen perching on a power wire running between an office building and a glasshouse. One afternoon in June 1979 my attention was drawn to the loud and persistent twittering of a Fantail on this wire. The bird appeared agitated and was rapidly changing its orientation on the wire by twisting around 180° every few seconds while holding its tail fanned very wide. The reason for the Fantail's agitation appeared to be the presence of two swallows flying overhead. Suddenly the swallows swooped down and passed a metre above the wire, whereupon the

Fantail flew off after them, showing a surprising turn of speed. I had only a fleeting glimpse of the chase as the swallows with the Fantail very close behind disappeared over the roof of a nearby glasshouse. It seems unlikely that the Fantail would have been able to fly fast enough to keep up with the swallows for very long. Presumably the Fantail was trying to either drive the swallows away or join them in their activities. I have not seen another encounter even though I have seen both species about the buildings daily this winter.

LINDSAY DAVIES

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the following four Council members retire in May 1981 and nominations are hereby called for, to fill the vacancies created:

Mr B. D. Heather (Editor)
Mr H. W. M. Hogg (Treasurer)
Mr R. S. Slack (Secretary)
Mr R. R. Sutton

Nominations close with the Secretary on 28 February 1981, and must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person nominated, who must also be a financial member of the Society. Please also submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee. Retiring officers are eligible for re-election.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1981 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before 28 February 1981, in writing and signed by the mover and seconder.

The 1981 Annual General Meeting will be held in Auckland on Saturday, 23 May.

R. S. SLACK,
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

31 Wyndham Road,
Pinehaven,
Silverstream, Hutt Valley

Black Petrel off course

In the heart of the Waikato a healthy Black Petrel was rescued unharmed from a cat on 19/6/80. The bird was found at dusk on a still, cloudless evening, on a river terrace of the Lochiel Golf Course, just below the dazzling lights of Hamilton airport.

This handsome bird was almost 43 cm long with uniformly blackish brown plumage, brown iris and black feet. It had a strongly hooked bill of bluish-horn coloured plates, black on the ridge in front of the nostrils and black at the tip. The time of its appearance suggested that it was a newly fledged bird, making its first flight from the Hauraki Gulf (Little Barrier or Great Barrier Islands) and had apparently gone in the opposite direction from the usual route.

After being kept overnight the bird was released next morning from a windy cliff top on the west coast.

JOHN and BETTY SEDDON

Once Bittern

On 19 July we were watching three Cirl Buntings flying in and out of tamarisk trees growing alongside a stopbank near the Ashley estuary when a Bittern flew over us. The bird landed among reeds quite close to us and we were able to keep it under observation as it fed. We were able to photograph the bird until it became aware of our presence and suddenly rose into the air and flew off towards a distant corner of the paddock. We were interested in the reaction of three magpies which came hurtling out of a tree as soon as the Bittern became airborne, intercepting it in the same way that they would a Harrier. Two magpies stopped their attack, while the third made a feint, then broke off, presumably realising the Bittern posed no threat.

PHIL HOWELL and
KATHLEEN HARRISON

Fire-eating Cattle Egrets

The latest issue of *Le Gerfaut* from Belgium has a paper on the birds of Liberia, which includes mention of how Cattle Egrets every year appear as if from nowhere as soon as the coastal savannas are set alight. For days on end they follow the flames, usually from the non-burning side, avoiding incineration only at the last moment. Sometimes they even go right into the flames.

Perhaps our secret N.Z. colony is on White Island?

BARRIE HEATHER

Miranda Banders

Wader banding in the Auckland region is now an operative project of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust. The main aims of the work are to band Bar-tailed Godwits, Knots and Turnstones in order to learn more about all aspects of their life histories. The intention is to work mainly on the Firth of Thames because high numbers of these species occur there and more observers visit the area. You will see from the results listed below that we are having difficulties avoiding the Wrybill flocks.

Cannon-netting results to 17/8/80: 2/3/80 Kaipara Harbour; 453 Knots, 6 Turnstones. 22/3/80 Kaipara Harbour; 25 Banded Dotterel, 3 Wrybills, 9 N.Z. Dotterels. 7/6/80 Firth of Thames; 1 Knot, 354 Wrybills. 8/6/80 Firth of Thames; 206 Knots, 52 Bar-tailed Godwits, 1 Turnstone, 404 Wrybills, 2 SIPO, 1 N.Z. Dotterel. 17/8/80 Firth of Thames; 242 Knots, 1078 Wrybills.

Among the first Knots captured was a bird that had been banded near Melbourne the previous year.

In late August I attended a meeting in Melbourne to discuss the co-ordination of wader censuses and banding. The Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union organised the meeting, which was attended by representatives from each of the Australian states, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. Travel to this meeting was sponsored by B.P. (\$2000) and I.C.I. (\$1000). We were billeted with local ornithologists.

There is some wader banding being done in most Australian states. Curlew Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint are their most abundant species which means that there is no great problem about duplicating effort in New Zealand and Australia. However, small numbers of all species are being banded in Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The final outcome of the meeting was a recommendation that a person be employed full time to organise and co-ordinate wader studies in Australasia. The RAOU will underwrite this employment to \$10,000 until June 1981.

C. R. VEITCH

Band and Tag

Since the last Newsletter Roderick Cossee has been completing the first stage of the computer update. Now we have to wait while the cards are punched before the next stage of adding the data to the files is commenced early in 1981.

There was a disappointing result to

our questions in the last newsletter. No suggestions, no questions for answering and no answers to the two questions we posed were forwarded. One member of the society even asked the other day when this column was going to commence! Anyway the answers to our two questions last time: 1. Royal Albatross, still alive on 13/11/80 after being banded as a breeding adult on 13/11/37 by Dr L. E. Richdale. The actual age of the bird is at least nine years older, making it the oldest banded bird in the world. 2. The Black Robin has the total known population banded (except for young chicks) and to date 30 individuals have been banded.

New banding permits issued recently: Greg Sherley of Canterbury University for Rifleman and Fantail at Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura; Graeme Elliot of Victoria University for rails in Nelson and Marlborough; Mike Tarburton of Longburn College for Silvereyes and introduced passerines in Manawatu; Miranda Naturalists' Trust for waders at Auckland localities. TV coverage of a firing of their net and some banding was seen on 10 November. Judging by the returns seen so far Richard Veitch has a deadly finger on the firing button. However, after three visits to Auckland to see them in action and learn how it is done, Roderick Cossee has some rude things to say about Auckland weather and the resultant lack of banding activity. John Fennell of Darfield, Canterbury, is to band waders in the Christchurch district. Again this is a group project which will increase the probability of recapturing birds moving within N.Z. We hope that the South Island can generate the same sort of enthusiasm that is evident in Auckland.

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NZ Dotterel sightings

Reg Cotter and Bill Cash report seeing a NZ Dotterel near the Wairau Rivermouth on 17/10/80.

Both Peter McKenzie and Alan Gollop reported a NZ Dotterel at the Waikanae Estuary and this bird had already been in residence for at least two weeks when Reg Cotter and Max Falconer saw it on 26/10/80. Reg and Max followed this with yet another sighting at Waikawa, north of the Waikanae Estuary on the Wellington west coast. They have not been able to establish whether the Waikanae bird was still present on this day. It would be nice to think that this was another bird. However, Peter McKenzie reports that the Waikanae bird did 'come and go' a bit.

During Easter, OSNZ members from Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury and Marlborough gathered in Blenheim to survey the Wairau Lagoons. They were joined by English ornithologist David Todd, a recent Oxford graduate who has been studying a megapode species in Tonga. David showed members some slides of various birds during the weekend and his company and information were enjoyed by all. He has returned to England via Tonga before taking up a research position in the Seychelles.

PAULINE JENKINS

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New Banding Permits

Early in 1981 all banding permits will be cancelled. All current operators will need to reapply within the *proposed* three categories of permit:

A. General permit for a qualified bander.

Permit specifies species and locations for banding.

B. Apprentice permit for a new bander. Progression to A permit will depend on experience and numbers of birds banded.

C. Institution or Group permit. For cooperative projects, universities, etc. These permits will have specific conditions as to who may band, supervision and species and locations for banding.

All permits will allow banding using metal bands as of right. However, special markers, colour bands, engraved colour bands etc. will require specific approval and endorsement on the permit. The use of mist nets will also require specific approval.

We would be interested to have suggestions and comments about the issue of new banding permits no later than mid-January 1981.

On a lighter note the following is paraphrased from the Southland Times of 3/7/80.

'Wildlife scientist surprised in Murchison Mountains. Energetic Keas had entered a hut and carried four mattresses off the bunks, and peeled fly screens off the windows. Added to the pile were any available tins, opened bags of sugar and flour topped off with weetbix and rice. The whole lot was well seasoned with droppings. He had no idea how many Keas had been invited to the party. The Wildlife Service had banded a family of 12 in the area, but there was no way of knowing how many had been involved in the redecoration problem.'

Perhaps there is a moral here? We

wonder what it would be like to get spiked by a godwit or skewered by a Wrybill?

Banding Mail Bag

R-19875 Northern Royal Albatross. Banded as a chick hatched at Tairoa Head on 2/2/76. The parents were R-15336, a chick of Taiaroa Head, and R-19815 an immigrant from the Chatham Islands which disappeared for the season in May 1976. The chick, reared by R-15336 with assistance from Mr and Mrs Albatross Wright, flew on 2/10/76.

This chick was one of three hand-reared chicks that year and one of a total of seven partly or totally hand-reared birds at Taiaroa Hed between 1970 and 1977 and is the first to return. S-56167 New Zealand Shoveler. Banded as an adult male at Waituna Swamp, Southland on 7/2/72. Recovered shot at Patutahi, Gisborne on 11/5/80 as the oldest Shoveler recovered to date.

D-51438 New Zealand Dotterel. Banded as a pullus at Clevedon on 26/12/50. Sight recovered as an adult male alive at Seagrove on 15/7/79 and 12/9/79. D-40189 Pycroft's Petrel. Banded as an adult at Aorangi, Poor Knights Islands on 11/12/64. Recovered alive and healthy at Aorangi on 20/2/80.

P-7110 White-flipped Penguin. Banded as a pullus at Motunau Island on 5/12/62. Recovered alive where banded on 17/12/79.

E-71931 Red-billed Gull. Banded as a pullus at Kaikoura on 5/12/59. Sighted by colour bands near the Petone Wharf, Wellington on 14/2/80.

2033 Black Swan. Banded as a juvenile male at Lake Ellesmere on 27/11/57. Found dead at Kaituna near Lake Ellesmere on 21/12/79 after a severe south-westerly storm.

C. J. R. ROBERTSON and R. COSSEE

Bird Recording in National Parks and Reserves

Following on from the Society's Bird Distribution Mapping Scheme, another scheme has been launched by the Department of Lands and Survey to record the distribution of birds in national parks and reserves. It is hoped that the information collected will increase our knowledge of the biological wealth of these reserves and assist in the preparation of displays, leaflets and other educational material. There are two major differences between the schemes:

1. For all parks except Fiordland, the birds will be mapped on a square grid of 2000 yard sides. These squares are bounded by even numbered lines of

NZMS 1 maps. The recording card allows the observer to mark that portion of the square searched. Use of these smaller squares will complement the Society's scheme and provide more locality details that are necessary for interpretation within the parks. Fiordland National Park will continue to use the 10,000 yard square.

2. A species checklist is provided on the card.

Supplies of these cards and instruction sheets are available at ranger stations within national parks and reserves or from offices of the Department of Lands and Survey. Society members are encouraged to use their expertise in assisting with this scheme.

P. D. GAZE

International Ornithological Congress

The XVIIIth International Ornithological Congress will be held in Moscow, 16-25 August 1982.

There will be six working days and one day reserved for free discussion and excursions. Each working day will be scheduled as follows: Morning: One plenary lecture, followed by three parallel symposia. Simultaneous translation will be provided from Russian into English and vice versa. Afternoon: Poster session, followed by four or five parallel smaller symposia. There will be no simultaneous translation at these sessions and symposia. Late afternoon and evening: Films. In addition round-table discussions can take place throughout the afternoon and evening of each working day.

Prof. V. Ilyichev (Secretary-General, Ringing Centre, Fersman Street 13, 117312 Moscow V-312, USSR), should be contacted for further details.

An interesting trio

On the mudflats of Kawhia Harbour on 7/9/80 a Cattle Egret was seen associating with a White-faced Heron and a Reef Heron.

The Cattle Egret appeared to be following the White-faced Heron and watching it closely as it fed along the receding tide line. After some time the Cattle Egret took some tentative and inexpert stabs at a crab before finally catching and swallowing it.

Perhaps this egret was experimenting with the food of a strange new environment?

BETTY SEDDON

Scientific Studies in National Parks

Each year a report is presented to the National Parks Authority outlining details of scientific work which has been carried out in national parks by outside organisations, universities and Government Departments during the preceding 12 months. Copies of this report are made available to the Park Boards and interested organisations for general information. Some difficulty has been encountered in preparing this report for the Authority. It is compiled from information submitted by each Park Board and in the past Boards have had considerable difficulty in finding out just what work is being done. There have also been instances where investigations have been undertaken without the knowledge of the Park Boards concerned.

The Authority feels that scientific studies are of vital importance in the planning and management of national parks. One of the prime functions of park boards is to design and implement programmes for preserving park environments in perpetuity and interpreting park resources for the benefit of visitors. Without full understanding of park resources, which only comes from scientific research, these tasks are impossible. In view of the importance of scientific research in national parks the Authority has set up a scientific committee which has general oversight of this work. Individual park boards have also established their own scientific committees for local scientific programmes.

In order that park scientific records are complete it is essential that all organisations and departments, together with individual students, scientists and amateur ornithologists advise either the Board Chairman or Chief Ranger of the park concerned of any scientific work to be undertaken on the park and provide a summary of findings or a copy of any subsequent publications. The Authority will, of course, respect the instructions of authors regarding distribution and copyright of material provided.

N. S. COAD

Summer School — Ward, 1980

Organised by Brian Bell, and generously helped by Mr T. J. Taylor (Jack), a Summer School was held near Ward, Marlborough, from 14 to 20 January 1980. The venue was Jack Taylor's farm, notable country for Corriedales. Accommodation was provided in an unused cottage and a large woolshed. In that summer of mixed weather, some alterations to the planned programme of lectures had to be made, so that oppor-

tunities for field work would not be lost.

The participants were: Dr Mercia Barnes, Beth Brown, D. Bate, B. D. Bell, K. Bond, W. Cash, R. Colturn, Bob & Sybil Creswell, Dr L. J. Davies, Beverley Elliot, Jenny Hawkins, G. Hunt, Glenice Martin, R. Mayhill, P. McKenzie, C. Miskelly, Sue Orchard, Sara Pitt, Pleasance Purser, Linley Robertson, Sylvia Reed, Shander, R. B. Sibson, I. Southey, N. Ward and E. Williams.

Lectures, with special emphasis on field work, were given by J. A. Bartle, Dr P. C. Bull, P. D. Gaze, L. Gurr, C. J. R. Robertson, P. M. Sagar and R. B. Sibson.

For visitors from the North Island two introduced species were of unusual interest. Little Owls called on calm evenings and when the blustery winds abated, the rattle of cock Cirl Buntings was audible from several conspicuous singing posts. Cirl Buntings are not among the most gifted of Nature's musicians but their even unhurried trill excites the ear of the well-schooled naturalist. To judge by the volume of song poured out between 5.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. — for both species have long singing days in summer — there must be myriads of Goldfinches and Greenfinches in Marlborough. By contrast our small indigenous Grey Warbler and Fantail were less easily traced. A hectare of peas, which Jack had planted with some ulterior motive, was now sprouting a fine crop of fathen and other weeds, a veritable feast for sparrows and finches. The presence of several cock Chaffinches indicated the cessation of song and the start of autumn flocking. Apparently disdaining such easy prey, a Falcon down from higher country, paused to reconnoitre and then flew swiftly on. Down in the green valleys of the Flaxbourne Rivers, a few zealots, who were privileged and patient, had fleeting glimpses of those very artful dodgers, the small rails.

Jack's farm is handy to an exciting variety of coastal habitats; so that for the conscientious watcher it is possible to log more than 70 species. For all of us there were moments of joyful surprise. Here are some of them. (a) In the Little Camargue of the Wairau-Opawa Estuary Richard Holdaway took us by the hand; and lo! three pairs of Royal Spoonbills at their nests on the remnants of a stranded tree, their long crests tossing jauntily in the light breeze. So close were we able to approach without fear of disturbance, that some observers detected even yellow eye-lids! (b) On a drying out pan at Grassmere, 7 Wrybills and 19 Stints, which some

observers thought rather heavily marked on the lower neck for the time of year. Adults already starting to don nuptial dress? (c) Flying with a coasting flock of Pied Oystercatchers, an apparent shag which on closer examination by Sylvia Reed had a long decurved bill and was indeed a Glossy Ibis. (d) Up the coast from the Waima (Ure) towards the Needles, a Tattler which from its sustained trills was diagnosed as a real Wanderer.

The varied company, young and not-so-young, who assembled at Doghill to learn something of the many aspects of studying birds in New Zealand, will surely take home memories of a happy and instructive week. Especially are we grateful to Mr and Mrs Jack Taylor who had worked so hard to prepare for our coming and to ensure our comfort. Nor are we likely to forget the staff of the Kea Restaurant who tended so tastefully — in every sense — to our inner needs at midday and in the evenings. Finally, a loud resounding cheer for Brian Bell, who was the brains and the driving force behind a very successful Summer School.

R. B. SIBSON

Some Taranaki wader sightings

In recent years the run-off on the seaward side of Bell Block Oxidation Ponds, situated on the northern outskirts of New Plymouth, has provided an excellent resting and feeding area for visiting waders.

During October last year Ron Lambert, David Medway and I recorded up to 4 Red-necked Stints, 28 Knot, 18 Bar-tailed Godwits, 5 Turnstones, 1 Wrybill (in breeding plumage) and 68 Pied Stilts.

This year has proved to be just as interesting. On 19 October I visited the ponds and noticed an unusual wader feeding amongst a group of Pied Stilts and Bar-tailed Godwits. Close examination revealed this bird to be a Greenshank. The following day Ron Lambert and I returned to the ponds and found not only the Greenshank but also an Asiatic Whimbrel.

Waders are not the only rare visitors to be seen at the oxidation ponds. On 20 January this year David Medway saw a White-winged Black Tern in winter plumage flying about the ponds. Canada Geese, Black Swans, Paradise Ducks and Shoveler Ducks have also been recorded.

ROB WHEELER

Avon-Heathcote wader counts

Regular counts have been made at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary high-tide roost this year. Bar-tailed Godwit numbers followed the usual pattern with a steady decline in numbers through March before reaching the winter population of 100-150 birds during April. This number remained until early September when they increased steadily to 940 at the beginning of November. SIPO numbers peaked at 3500 at the end of February and after some fluctuations the winter numbers averaged out at 2400. There was a decrease to 600 during July and August and a further drop to 500 in October and November.

During the year there have been a number of sightings unusual for the Avon-Heathcote Estuary; a Reef Heron in July, a Hudsonian Godwit during August and September and Knot and Whimbrel in October.

BARRY ARMSTRONG

N.Z. Falcons

Little information is available on the distribution and numbers of N.Z. Falcon populations in the North Island yet most ornithologists, and several recent authors, give the impression that it is a 'rare' or 'scarce' species.

We have been making a population survey on this species in the coastal ranges between Mt Pirongia and Mokau since late June and to date have been able to locate, without excessive effort, 7 pairs in or near the Kawhia Harbour area. We feel that further work will reveal at least similar numbers again in this area and that an even higher population density will be found farther south towards Mokau. Also encouraging to us have been the number of sightings of Falcons wintering over farmland and near townships such as Pirongia, Kawhia, Otorohanga, etc. Sightings such as these are probably of juveniles and as such are apparently indicative of a reasonably productive breeding population in nearby ranges. We hope to ascertain just how productive and numerous this population is over the next two years.

Any additional data readers may have on Falcons in this area, or the wider region, would be greatly appreciated. Information concerning nest sites, predation, etc., are of particular interest. Perhaps with this information a more accurate estimation of the size and general health of this population, and others in the North Island, can be made. 'Restricted' rather than 'rare'?

LEX & SANDRA HEDLEY, Box 47, Huntly.

Australasian Gannet Census

During the summer of 1980/81 it is hoped to census all colonies of the Australasian Gannet. The New Zealand Wildlife Service is grateful for the assistance promised by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania and the Victorian Fisheries and Wildlife Division in Australia. This is the first time that a total census for this species has been attempted.

The first New Zealand census was made in 1947 and the results published later by Fleming and Wodzicki (1951). Since then new techniques of air survey have greatly improved the feasibility of accurate counting without expensive and costly ground surveys. An air census was made of 80% of New Zealand colonies in 1969 which showed a close correlation with ground counts at Cape Kidnappers. This summer ground counts will again be undertaken at Cape Kidnappers, but the main series of ground controls will be done by Mrs E. Waghorn at Bush Island in the Hauraki Gulf.

All requests for further information should be sent to: C. J. R. Robertson, Wildlife Service, Department of Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington.

C. J. R. ROBERTSON

Scottish sojourn

During my recent visit to Scotland I took a greater interest in the local bird-life than I had done when I lived there many years ago.

At first I was puzzled by a persistent 'tic tic' call until I saw a Robin calling from the top of a bush. These birds were plentiful, being seen and heard wherever there was cover nearby. Great Tits and Blue Tits were fairly common in the trees and bushes around houses. It was interesting to watch the Great Tits with a food item held against the rough bark of a tree with one foot while picking away at the seed or insect.

Nearby, c.800 Rooks and Jackdaws in a mixed colony was quite a sight, with birds coming and going all day long. Occasionally a Sparrowhawk would fly into the rookery in pursuit of the many small birds and the entire population of the rookery would take to the air with much calling, before settling again after about five minutes.

There seemed to be quite a few Sparrowhawks in the area and a few Kestrels were more commonly seen hovering over open ground.

I was fortunate to see a group of five or six Fieldfares that now live in the valley. This species has been breeding

in Scotland since about 1968, having spread from Scandinavia.

A Wren was seen moving in and out of the dark recesses of an old roof that had seen better days and it was easy to see how the name 'troglodytes' was conferred on this species.

A visit to the Isle of Mull proved to be one of the highlights of the holiday. Thanks to Barbara Cook who gave her time (and borrowed her mother's car) we were treated to a tour of the island. Of the many bird species on Mull I shall always remember the Golden Eagles and Buzzards. While driving along the road, Buzzards were seen frequently on top of power and telephone poles, but were rather camera shy. The Golden Eagles — seven in one day — were nearly too much. They were beautiful to watch as they soared round and round and along the side of a steep mountain. They are known to breed on the island but the nests are well protected and not of easy access.

In the bays were many Eider with the males a striking black and white.

To me the Isle of Mull is a real paradise of birds. When a recent survey was taken, one observer recorded 63 species in one day. That is better than my total for my entire stay in Scotland as I only managed 61 species identified.

STEWART LAUDER

Albert, the Wandering Albatross

On 20 August 1980 a large brown bird with an injured wing was reported to have come down at a farm at Colton. When Bob Creswell arrived at the sheep yards he discovered that it was a large bird indeed, an immature Wandering Albatross which ate about half a cupful of mince brought by local children and then sat quietly in the back of the estate car for the journey to Palmerston North. For ten days the bird was in the care of Elizabeth Lee at the Massey Veterinary Clinic. The bird was exhausted; the wing was scarred and bruised, but not fractured and after treatment with antibiotic, delousing and a diet of squid with added vitamins its condition improved.

On 30 August it was taken to the Manawatu Estuary and carried out into a metre of water and a steady breeze. It drank and preened but despite many attempts it did not rise off the water. A local resident watched it until dusk. The next day there was no sign of Albert so we hope that he made it.

SYBIL CRESWELL

Vacation and Hospitality Exchange

A directory is being planned for ornithologists and bird observers who would like to vacation by exchanging homes or hospitality. Interested persons are asked to send an International Reply Coupon, available at any Post Office, to: Max Lazan, 55 Grand Avenue, Rockville Centre, New York 11570, USA.

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The past twelve months have shown poor rewards for beach patrollers on the stretch of coast from the Waikato Rivermouth to Karioitahi on the west coast of the Awhitu Peninsula. However, DAVID LAWRIE reports that the patrol on 25 May turned up 21 birds of 13 species. Two unusual birds were an adult Yellow-nosed Mollymawk and an adult Light-mantled Sooty Albatross.

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DEREK BETTESWORTH reports that on the morning of 5 November, after 24 hours of strong to gale force onshore winds, a stream of birds was visible from the cliffs above the south head of Hokianga Harbour. All were heading north and about 50% were Buller's Shearwaters with Flesh-footed Shearwaters and small groups of Gannets in strings and Vs. About 100 birds were counted passing in one five-minute period and the movement continued for at least the two hours that Derek was on the coast. Presumably they were heading for North Cape and the safer waters of the east coast.

Australasian waders

A meeting to discuss the co-ordination of wader counting and banding in Australasia was held in Melbourne on 22 August 1980. It was chaired by the President of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union and attended by 25 people representing all Australian states, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

Discussion on wader counting showed quite clearly that New Zealand is well to the fore. We now need more comprehensive counts. In Australia the habits of the smaller waders and their varied habitats make counting more difficult. There are also fewer observers spread over a much greater area.

Wader banding started in Australia more than 25 years ago, but until the last two years has been on a very small scale and therefore without significant results. There have also been less than 1000 birds banded per year in Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia. The major possible conflict on wader banding is

the use of colour bands, markers and dyes. Apparently Japan has been using colour bands on the few godwits caught. If true, this could negate proposals to colour-band godwits in New Zealand.

From our discussions on both wader counting and banding it became obvious that a single person was needed to co-ordinate work and circulate information. It was suggested that such a person be employed full time. The RAOU will underwrite such an appointment to A\$10,000 until June 1981.

I recommend that the Miranda Naturalists' Trust and the OSNZ support the appointment of a 'Wader Studies Organiser.'

C. R. VEITCH

Publications

Designing forest reserves. K. R. Hackwell and D. G. Dawson. *Forest and Bird* 13 (8): 8-15. 1980. Reserve area, isolation, altitude and modification are established as criteria for maximising the number of native bird species protected within reserves, the most important being that the reserves should be large. New Zealand's present reserves were checked against this list and were found lacking. It is suggested that a national co-ordinated conservation strategy based on biogeographic criteria is needed.

Behaviour and systematics of New Zealand plovers. R. E. Phillips. *Emu* 80: 177-197. 1980. Courtship behaviour and related aspects of reproduction in four endemic and a fifth self-introduced species of plover are described and used to suggest that the monotypic genus *Anarhynchus* (Wrybill) be merged with *Charadrius* and that *Charadrius* is also the proper genus for the New Zealand Dotterel.

Effects on birds of spraying DDT and DDD in orchards. P. R. Wilson. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 3: 117-124. 1980. The quantities of organochlorine residues in Mynas reflected the concentrations of these pesticides in the soil of the birds' territories. Nearly all residues were derived from contaminated invertebrates, no fruit.

Fewer Myna eggs hatched, and fewer nestlings survived in areas with much residue in the soil than elsewhere.

Some empirical information concerning the diet of moas. C. J. Burrows. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 3: 125-130. 1980. The paper summarizes information on the identity of plant fragments from 14 moa gizzard contents and outlines some features of moa diet, feeding habits and habitat. Twigs of shrubs

and trees, which were sheared off, formed the bulk of the diet but seeds, fruits and leaves were also present. These moas were browsing animals living at the edges of forests and mires.

Winter use by Takahe (Notornis mantelli) of the summer-green fern (Hypolepsis millefolium) in relation to its annual cycle of carbohydrates and minerals. J. A. Mills, W. G. Lee, A. F. Mark and R. B. Lavers. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 3: 131-137. 1980. A close correlation exists between Takahe use of the rhizomes of the summer-green fern, a major item in the winter diet, and the peak of the rhizomes' annual cycle of carbohydrates and certain minerals. It is suggested that the high carbohydrate concentrations in the rhizomes are required by the birds to meet the metabolic requirements of thermoregulation in the subfreezing temperatures of mid-winter. The likely adverse effects of competition from red deer are discussed.

Foods of the Shining Cuckoo (Chrysococcyx lucidus, Aves: Cuculidae) in New Zealand. Brian J. Gill. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 3: 138-140. Weights, measurements and stomach-contents of a sample of Shining Cuckoos are summarised. The diet comprised only insects, mainly caterpillars and beetles. A third of the caterpillars were magpie moth larvae whose spines embed in the lining of the gizzard, and most beetles were ladybirds. Thus many prey were insects generally avoided by other birds.

Cattle Egrets following the plough. V. Cooper. *Sunbird* Nos. 3 & 4. 1979. The birds have apparently lost their usual fear of man.

Artificial platforms for nesting terns. Gunther Langer. *Der Ornithologische Beobachter* 77 (1). 1980. Photographs of platforms 5 x 5 m erected in a lake. Nesting success of Common Tern was increased considerably.

AGM - 1981

Arrangements for the 1981 AGM are underway. Accommodation will be available at Auckland University hostel and meeting rooms are available in the Auckland Museum. However, there is a need to know approximately how many people will be requiring accommodation in the hostel. Therefore would members considering attending the AGM and requiring hostel accommodation please contact Sylvia Reed, 4 Mamaku Street, Auckland 5, as soon as possible.

Weekend Camp at Kawhia, 6-7 September

This has become an annual event in the Waikato region over the past five years, and once again well supported by Auckland and South Auckland members. After a rather chaotic arrival at the Oparau Lodge on Friday night, due to an overlap with a large group of Junior Naturalists, peace was restored on Saturday and bird study was underway at an early hour.

The group exploring the harbour by dinghy found one Black Stilt. It was a different bird from any of the eight seen during the June census and was thought to be a juvenile from its plumage.

The south side of the harbour, the area around Taharoa and the ocean beach were explored by several groups. This remote beach is seldom patrolled but yielded only one Blue Penguin, a change from the big hauls at the same time in previous years. Fernbird, Spotless Crane and Banded Rail were seen in good numbers in the swampy areas.

No Kokako were seen or heard by the bush groups. The forest was very wet after the heavy winter rainfall and singularly silent, particularly on the west side of Mt. Pirongia. Whitehead, Tomtit, Tui, Bellbird, Fantail and Grey Warbler were seen in the Houturu area.

Many friendships were renewed and new ones made over dinner on Saturday night. An interesting and happy weekend.

BETTY SEDDON

Coastal Harriers

On 30 September, near Channel Island, which lies 7 km offshore in Colville Channel, I was surprised to see a strange 'petrel' pass across our stern. This proved to be a Harrier in very dark plumage. It was flying very low over the water, rising with each 3 or 4 flaps, then dropping out of sight into the trough of the waves, which were roughly parallel to its course out to the island. I have seen a Harrier previously soaring over this area and wondered what prey it would find in the dense scrub, or whether it was intent on raiding the Red-billed Gulls and White-fronted Terns which appeared to be nesting on the steep rocky stack lying nearby.

The Harrier's prey was indicated on 2 November when a group of members was watching the Red-billed Gull colony

across from the wharf at Whitianga. The nests were on two mushroom-shaped rocky islets and a steeply shelved sandstone cliff. A few gulls appeared to be roosting or nesting on the horizontal trunk of a pohutukawa tree.

With a sudden deafening commotion about 100 birds rose in a dense flock and we watched an unusually pale Harrier persistently work its way towards one of the islets. Tony Habraken's sharp eyes saw it pick up a downy chick before the Harrier disappeared around the headland with it. Three hours later, just before dusk, we saw the performance repeated, but this time the Harrier flew onto a nearby tree and did not reappear.

ANTHEA GOODWIN

Library Notes

The response to the new journal circulation scheme has been encouraging and the first journals are now being circulated. Don't despair if your choice is slow arriving as some journals come at erratic intervals or, in a few cases, annually. Please remember to pass them on promptly as this is vital to the scheme's success. It is not too late to take part if you have not decided upon your choice of journals. See *OSNZ news* 16 for details.

ANTHEA GOODWIN, *Librarian*

Rock Wren banding

In March this year I observed and photographed a pair of Rock Wrens in the head of the Pearson Valley, South Westland (NZMS 1 S106 662595). The male bird had a band, which appeared to be aluminium, on its right leg. According to the Banding Office, there have been only four Rock Wrens banded (all in 1972) and only one with a metal A-band on the right leg. This bird also had a coloured plastic band, and was released in the Homer Cirque, Fiordland.

If it is the same bird in each case, this represents a remarkable distance (over 80 km) and age (at least eight years) for one so small. However, the band on the bird photographed in the Pearson looks too short and too loosely fitted to be an ordinary A-band unless it has worn in a most unusual way.

It is possible that the banding of this bird has gone unrecorded and I appeal to anyone with information which may help to clear up this puzzle to contact me at: MWD Geothermal Project, Private Bag, Taupo.

PETER SYMS

Colour-banded Oystercatchers

While at Stewart Island last summer Jim Watt and I made sight recoveries of three Black Oystercatchers which had been colour-banded by A. J. Baker. Two of the birds were seen on Bravo Island. Both had been banded on Stewart Island, one on 6/6/71 as an adult and the other on 5/6/71 as an adult male. Therefore both of these birds were over 9 years old.

The third bird was seen on several occasions in Trail Park. This bird had been banded at Nelson Harbour on 4/8/69 as a two year old female. Therefore this bird is 13 years old, but the interesting thing is that it had travelled so far as apparently it is uncommon for Black Oystercatchers to move around much.

We think that it will be important to watch for these banded Black Oystercatchers at Stewart Island in the future.
JEAN ACKLY.

Great Barrier visit, Easter 1980

As an enthusiastic newcomer to ornithology, I enjoyed a first visit to Great Barrier Island with my family during Easter. The most delightful memories of the stay are the insistent call of the Moreporks at night and the numerous calls of Kaka by day. We stayed in a bach among manuka and pohutukawa at Puriri Bay, Tryphena, where Fantails and Silvereyes were numerous; N.Z. Pigeons enjoyed fruits off huge puriris; 15 Brown Teal slept by day on the banks of a small stream, almost outside Tryphena Hall and six Gannets were seen diving in Tryphena Harbour one evening.

At Kaitoke Beach on 8 April we saw 3 Variable Oystercatchers, 13 Caspian Terns, 63 White-fronted Terns on the beach plus a further 30 fishing at sea.

As our plane took off from Claris airstrip we barely missed five Pheasants on the runway!

JOSIE DRIESSEN

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ERIC JONES reports that Galahs appear to be nesting in Sands Road, south of Lake Horowhenua. The birds have been seen in the area for the past two years and are probably nesting in a thick growth of macrocarpa trees.

Eric also reports that a Barbary Dove has taken up residence in Levin. The bird was seen on 22 October and appeared to be quite at home in a flowering cherry tree.

An Oriental Cuckoo has been reported in a garden at Maungaturoto, Northland, by MARION WALLIS. First seen on 25 November, it was still there on the 29th. The habitat is cleared farmland with macrocarpas, gums and shrubs round the house. As has been noted before with these cuckoos, the bird worked a regular beat, perching in turn on clothes line, electric fence standard, mandarin tree, garden fork, basketball hoop, dropping to the ground to take worms. Its appearances were sometimes brief; although unaffected by farm noises, it was not popular with resident birds, especially Tui and Blackbird. It matched the Field Guide description, except that it always held its tail down, like a Long-tailed Cuckoo.

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A Yellow-billed Spoonbill, the second NZ record, has been seen in the Wairarapa. First reported by COLIN SCADDEN on 5 December, it was frequenting flooded pasture on a farm at Te Whiti near Masterton. More details in next issue.

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Classified Summarised Notes

We are sorry that this year's notes were received too late to go in the December issue as usual; they will appear in March instead. Their compilation was not helped by many late returns from members. You may not realise the great deal of time and care that must go into putting these notes together; they must be assessed for value and then assembled in clear but concise form, thoroughly checked, written out, typed, corrected and perhaps retyped — all this taking 2-3 months — the editor then has to work on them, they are devilish for the printer to set, and the proofs have to be given even more care than usual. Yet everyone does them willingly because their value is so apparent.

The chain of preparation is not efficient if the first link, the contributing member, is late getting his material to the convener or his RR.

Doug Booth has now taken on the Recording Scheme for 1981. We hope he will find the task as interesting as it should be and that members will cooperate with him in sending him their material promptly and in clear form.

BARRIE HEATHER

Terns at Horowhenua

More frustrating terns at Horowhenua. On 25 November, ERIC JONES of Levin saw 3 terns, the first at the lake since September 1978. By his account, they may have been Gull-billed, but when Alan and Iris Gollop and Barrie and Rosemary Heather got to the lake on the 29th, 7 terns were there, sitting calmly on the grass and road tarmac beside the lake. Two were Little Terns and the other five were tentatively identified as Common Terns. In subsequent discussion (argument?), one bird with shorter brighter-red legs than the others and with a different head pattern was thought more likely to be an Arctic Tern.

The next day, members from Wellington and Manawatu found only the two Little Terns there, and since then, there have been no terns at all. We'll keep looking.

BARRIE HEATHER

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