

squares occupied pre-1900 to 81 in the 1960-1970 period. The story gleaned from his maps is as follows:

No. grid squares	Pre-1900	1900-1939	1940-1960	1960-1970
	35	40	51	81

Mr Lavers claims on p. 173 "However, it was not until the 1960s that, with added concern for this rare bird, more people began to record sightings *and the extent of this contracting distribution became evident.*" The reader can find other statements in his paper which cannot logically be drawn from the data it presents.

JOHN M. CLARK

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The Editor,
Sir,

13 June 1979

Mr Clark is correct in pointing out that there is an increase in the number of grid squares with Kokako from before 1900 until 1970. However, it cannot be inferred from this that the Kokako has increased numerically or that the pattern of distribution has been enlarged, as your correspondent may be suggesting.

Of the few records available for the early period, most give only vague locality references, whereas the more numerous reports over the past two decades can usually be placed in a particular grid square. This tends to show an *apparent* increase in distribution in certain districts (Rotorua, South Auckland, Taranaki and Urewera) where in fact, with a reduction in forest area, such an increase is most unlikely.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from the available records is that the distribution has contracted in areas to the north and south of the Volcanic Plateau as suitable forest habitat has been removed.

R. B. LAVERS

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REVIEWS

The Dromornithidae, an extinct family of large ground birds endemic to Australia, by Pat Vickers Rich. Bulletin 184. Bureau of Natural Resources, Geology and Geophysics. Canberra 1979.

In this profusely illustrated book of 196 pages, Dr Pat Vickers Rich has done for the Dromornithidae what Sir Gilbert Archey and Dr W. R. B. Oliver did for the Dinornithiformes of New Zealand, and he has done it excellently, despite one of the biggest handicaps that any avian osteologist can encounter — no cranial material; so that the