

ATLAS COMMITTEE

Report for year ended 30 April 1979

Last year's report (*Notornis* 25: 242) recorded the publication of the *Provisional Atlas*, and stated that "publication of a definitive atlas in the near future will need both new information and money. The first depends on renewed enthusiasm among field observers and the second on selling all copies of the *Provisional Atlas*."

Field observers have certainly done their part. About 3350 new cards have been received since January 1977 when computer staff ceased accepting new data and began producing maps for the *Provisional Atlas*. More cards are coming in all the time, and I hope there will be an avalanche of new ones between now and 31 December when field work ends. By 30 April 1979, lists (including those used in the *Provisional Atlas*) had been received for 92% of the 1614 North Island squares and for 88% of the 2061 southern ones (South Island plus Stewart Island). Nationally, the coverage improved from 85% in the *Provisional Atlas* to 90% by 30 April 1979, and this figure will increase still further. A few intrepid ornithological explorers are planning trips to neglected squares in remote areas, and the Wildlife Service has promised bird lists from recent faunal surveys. While the increase in coverage is gratifying, it represents only half the story; no less important are the many new records from squares which, though technically "covered," had been surveyed inadequately.

Sales of the *Provisional Atlas* have also been encouraging. By the end of April, 600 copies had been sold for a total of \$4593. The cost of production was \$4702 so the atlas has almost paid for itself within a year. Once the hundred dollars or so still outstanding have been paid off, sale of the remaining copies will provide funds that can be set aside as a modest deposit towards the cost of producing a definitive atlas. So far, only about ten copies of the *Provisional Atlas* have gone overseas; but more orders may arrive when reviews appear. One review has already been published in USA (*Maryland Birdlife* 34: 63; "special Atlas issue") and others should soon appear in Britain and Australia.

The Committee will be preoccupied for the rest of this year with encouraging visits to squares that remain blank or poorly surveyed. The main task for 1980 will be to arrange for all the new data to be coded and added to those already in the computer. Sample maps and tables can then be produced which, together with financial considerations, will determine the scope of the definitive atlas and when and how it is to be produced.

Credit for the achievements of the bird mapping scheme belongs to the 635 people who have contributed cards since the scheme began late in 1969. Special thanks are, however, due to the Society's Regional Representatives (past and present) who have spent long hours receiving, checking and despatching other people's cards, and ensuring that observers know which squares are most in need of further visits. Finally, we are grateful to Dr J. A. Gibb of Ecology Division, DSIR, and Dr G. R. Williams of the New Zealand Wildlife Service for the clerical and computing assistance provided by their respective organisations.

P. C. BULL, *Convener*