

tered launch was choppy, and a squally westerly meant landing at von Luckner's Cove on the south-east corner.

## Volcanic cliffs

The beautiful colours of the volcanic cliffs — purples, yellows, and all shades of red — showed how well named was the island.

Two dinghy trips to the boulder beach in a slight swell landed us for our specified 3 hours' study. The sun soon warmed both us and the numerous skinks darting about among the beach boulders. They were probably *Leiopisma suteri*, common to the North Island east coast.

Ngaio near the beach was low growing and flowering profusely, attracting bellbirds and white-eyes. Grey warblers were common and four red-crowned parakeets were seen in the pohutukawas on the cliff.

We used precious time scrambling up the steep cliff, hanging on to pohutukawa roots and coprosma. When we reached the top walking was easy under the canopy of mapou and mahoe except for numerous grey-faced petrel burrows. These were unoccupied except for one near the beach.

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## Waikaremoana Lodge Building Fund

The Wairoa Branch proposes to donate the amount held in the Waikaremoana Lodge Building Fund, about \$6,000, to the Bushy Park Trust for the purposes of maintenance, renewal, and additions to Bushy Park.

Any member having objection to this proposal should contact the secretary, Wairoa Branch, by 31 March.

## Saddlebacks

We soon saw our first saddleback and, with help from a squeaker, encouraged it close and heard the intriguing typical "chatter" song. It was a beautiful bird and for all of us our first sight of one. Eight saddlebacks were seen and possibly more heard during our short walk of about 400 m inland. Two swallows, a chaf-

## BOOKS

### *Birds at Risk*: Text by Richard B. Sibson, illustrations by Bill Howard

In the previous issue of *Forest and Bird* the advertisement for this book did not give the price — a sort of hiding one's light under a bushel.

So here it is. The book costs \$39.95.

*Birds at Risk* has been tastefully handled by the publishers, and the combination of full-colour reproductions of the bird paintings and a section with text and excellent line drawings with easy cross-reference is a boon to the reader. It is a beautiful book to handle, which heightens the interest and impels attention to the plight of these New Zealand birds at risk.

Some of the reproductions of the colour paintings of the birds have colour disparity, and one supposes that these fall within the artist's licence, though some are possibly to do with the separation balance in the processing. However, these faults do not detract from the general worthiness and clarity of the pictures. I refer in particular to the blue duck and the kakapo.

I am disappointed that in the treatment of three birds which have engaged the Society in research and rescue attempts over the past 5 years the Society gets no mention. Yet at a cost of well over \$100,000 we have made possible the rebuilding of black robin habitat on Mangere Island by the provision of 120 000 *Olearia traversii* seedlings. Moreover we helped the Government to purchase the island as a sanctuary some years ago.

We have maintained a scientist, Rod Hay, in Pureora for a 3-year research on the needs of the kokako, which resulted in the Government's stopping logging and making a reserve of the kokako habitat.

We have supported Ray Pierce in protection of the black stilt in the Mackenzie Country and have built two successful exclosures encompassing

finch, and a fantail were also seen. In all we observed eight bird species on the island.

The beautiful maidenhair fern *Adiantum aethiopicum* flourished in damp places, and *Asplenium lucidum* was abundant.

Those landed on the island were Graham Falla, Betty Harris, Ellice Keys, Shane Kake, Martin Fey, and myself.

over 20 acres each, wire-netted and electrified against wild cats and ferrets, to make safe breeding areas for the black stilt. These moves, with other nest protection outside the safe areas, have boosted the numbers of that bird in the wild by almost 100 percent over the last 3 years.

Admittedly, the Society's work on these projects has been in support of the Wildlife Service, who have allowed us to work under their statute, but it has always been where the work on these birds at risk could not be done alone by the hard-pressed Wildlife Service.

I think the author is mistaken to underrate the Society efforts when dealing with these three endangered birds. Perhaps he did not appreciate the importance of the Society's work to these birds.

Anyway, we get no mention throughout the book, and as I know Society members, who have been so much involved, will buy the book and question the omission, I hope these words will allay their concern.

There are some errors (mostly where time has outdated the information), and one is that G. R. Williams is shown as director of the Wildlife Service, a position he left over 3 years ago to become a professor at Lincoln College.

Otherwise the book is a good and extensive dissertation on New Zealand birds at risk.

The book is welcome and it succeeds admirably in its aim — to highlight the serious problem facing New Zealand in caring for its birds at risk. As this objective is central to the Society's role, I recommend the book to members as a very readable and important publication.

— David G. Collingwood

A.H. and A.W. Reed

\$39.95