

Included among the interesting observations made by the party, were the following :-

* Little (Fairy) Penguin (Eudyptula minor)

About 20 birds were observed on Seal Island and two nests each containing 2 eggs were seen. The adults continued to brood the eggs and were not disturbed by the inspection. One adult was also seen under a rock ledge on Bird Island.

* White-capped Hair-Seal (Neophoca cinerea)

Three bulls observed on Bird Island.

* Pied Cormorants (Phalacrocorax varius)

About 300 nests, the majority of which contained nestlings in various stages, were seen closely packed along the north-east cliff on Bird Island. Most nests contained 3 juveniles while some had 2 and 1 but very few had eggs. No attempt was made to band these birds as it was anticipated this would have frightened the juveniles into the sea.

500 adults were seen on Shag Rocks. 132 nests were counted closely packed along the north-east cliff face, the majority containing 3 eggs, while others contained 1, 2 and 4. In strange contrast to the breeding stage on Bird Island, no nestlings were seen on Shag Rocks.

AN INTERNATIONAL DUCK

A press report from New Zealand, dated June 21, recounted what was said to be the first record of a Mallard having crossed from New Zealand to Australia. The duck concerned had been banded at Lake Tuakitotou in the South Island of New Zealand, and was shot at a place called Marrung Narrows between Lakes Albert and Alexandrina, approximately 90 miles south-east of Adelaide. The distance between the point of banding and the point of recovery was estimated at about

1,850 miles - as the duck flies!

There are many varieties of the Mallard, which is of the same genus (Anas) as our Black Duck. In fact the female mallard (and even the male mallard when in eclipse plumage) is difficult to distinguish in the field from either the male or female black duck. In past years, quite a few mallards were to be seen in Queen's Gardens, near Head Office, but they have disappeared in recent times. Whether they have shifted into the country, or become the victims of poachers, we do not know.

It is understood that the first mallards introduced into New Zealand were of British stock which are non-migratory. Later, quite a few American mallards were acclimatised, and some of these, particularly the Californian, does have migratory tendencies. Nevertheless, we cannot help but ponder on this reported inter-continental flight, and wonder whether a practical joker might not have been at work. However, there are previous records of ducks crossing the Tasman Sea, so that this report cannot be discounted.