



*Wildlife Service photo by J. A. D. Flack*

Kowhai River, Kaikoura. The robin population being studied occurs in the scrub in the centre foreground.

Christchurch, and the University of Canterbury Edward Percival Marine Laboratory in Kaikoura means that intensive studies can be made of robins and other birds. Indeed, except for those on a few island reserves, no other robin population sharing these features exists in New Zealand.

### Unique Area

For both scientific and aesthetic considerations this unique area must continue to remain unspoilt. Three organisations—the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, the New Zealand Ornithological Society, and the Wildlife Service—have been involved in varying degrees in its presentation.

The area is owned by the Marlborough Catchment Board, which has plans to convert it from native to exotic forest to help meet the costs incurred by the flood relief programme. This, with engineering works for a proposed drainage scheme, could be extremely harmful to the robins, depending on where the works were carried out and the methods used.

To preserve most of the robin population would involve setting aside only a small acreage from the cutting and planting programme (with no additional costs to the scheme), and the Wildlife Service has made this submission to the Marlborough Catchment Board. The service has also suggested a series of precautions to the board which would enable the drainage scheme to proceed with the least damage to the robins' habitat.

### First Study of Kind

The present study at Kaikoura is the first of its kind for this country. Apart from providing essential information for the future management of the Chatham Island black robin, it is also producing broader insights into more general problems associated with native birds, which in turn could mean more effective management of both mainland and island populations.

It is presumptuous to assume that the future of any species will always be bright. The South Island saddleback appeared to be doing very well on the southern Muttonbird Islands,