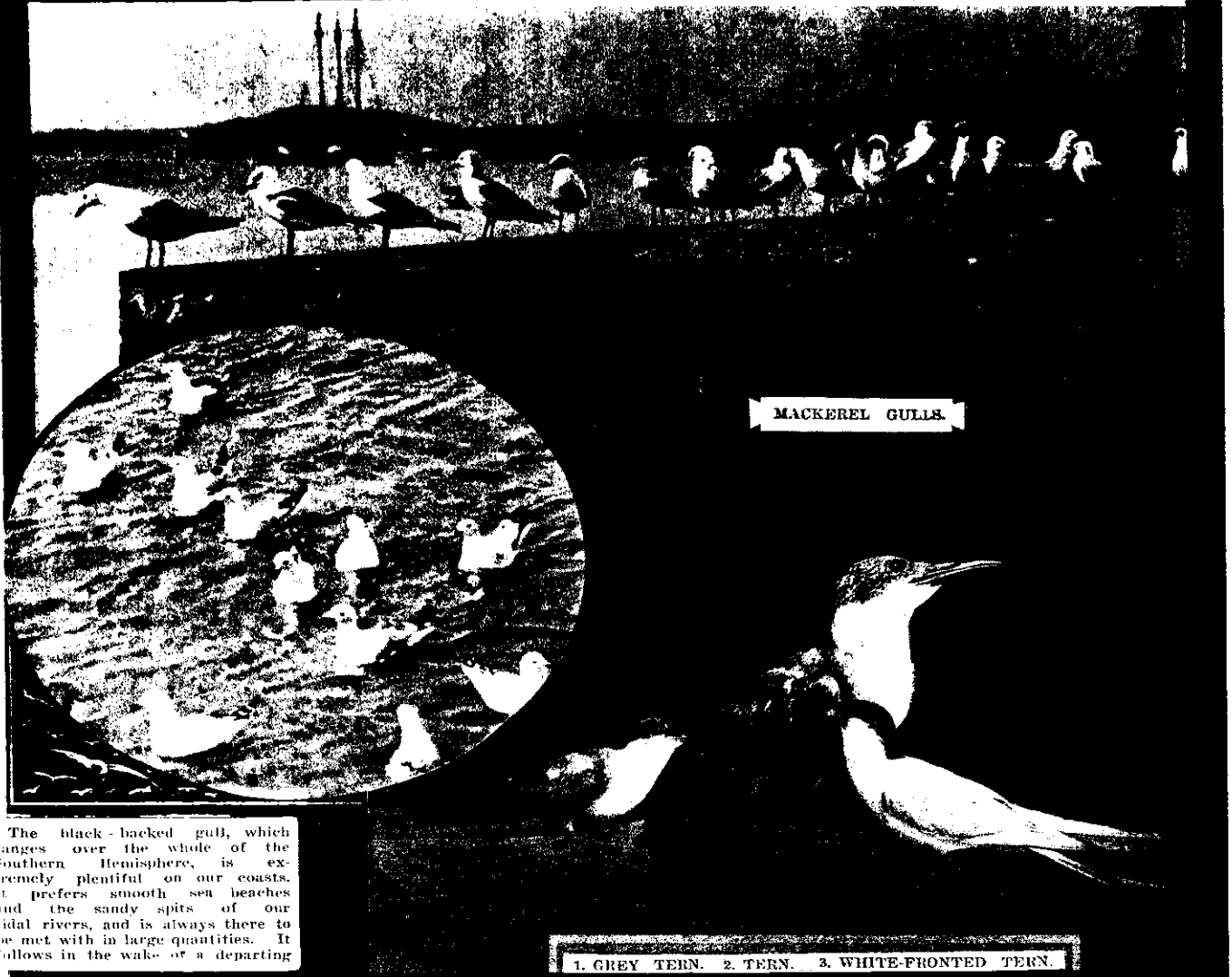


# SEABIRDS AUCKLAND HARBOUR



MACKEREL GULLS.

1. GREY TERN. 2. TERN. 3. WHITE-FRONTED TERN.

The black-backed gull, which ranges over the whole of the Southern Hemisphere, is extremely plentiful on our coasts. It prefers smooth sea beaches and the sandy spits of our tidal rivers, and is always there to be met with in large quantities. It follows in the wake of a departing

steamer, and often accompanies it far out to sea, eagerly watching for any scraps thrown overboard.

The term "sea swallow," as applied to the tern, is a very appropriate one, for, on watching the evolutions of a flock of these birds one is forcibly reminded of a flight of swallows coursing through the air. Their aerial manoeuvres are truly beautiful, and the apparent ease with which they dip into the water and capture their prey cannot fail to interest an observer.

The mackerel gull is easily tamed, and will do much good in a garden, eating snails, etc. It will eat cooked vegetables or almost any scraps, but prefers raw meat. Sir Walter Buller chronicles the peculiar fact that, when tamed, this bird is very fond of music, and will always come to a window if music is being played in the room.



1. BLACK-BACKED GULL (Young). 2. MACKEREL GULL. 4. BLACK-BACKED GULL (Aged.)