

flight line extended for about a quarter of a mile and in this distance beneath the cable there were the bodies of 21 swans, almost all of which appeared to have been killed within the previous one or two months, when up to 70 swans had been using the reservoir, of which 90% were adults. This proportion was reflected in the 21 dead, all of which were adults except two. If the flock was composed of the same birds during this period, which is a reasonable assumption, then the cable caused a mortality of 30%. It might seem surprising that the swans had not learnt to avoid the cable, which is easily visible, but one does not know at what time of day most were killed. Certainly a number caused "black-outs" at the farm during the evenings, when of course the cable would be difficult or impossible to see. Judging from the state of the bodies, the rate of kill had been fairly evenly distributed during the period. All except four, which were in water too deep to reach, were examined for rings and three adults carried them. They had been ringed as follows:—

23rd April, 1960, at Lydd, Kent, full-grown male. (Dungeness Bird Observatory);

1st August, 1960, at Lydd, pull. (Dungeness Bird Observatory);

10th March, 1961, at Maidstone, Kent, first-winter. (Mid-Kent Ringing Group).

Jeffery Harrison

### **Aspergillosis in an immature Bewick's Swan**

AN immature male Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* was present at Maidstone, Kent, by the town bridge over the Medway, from 10th January to 14th February, 1962 when it was found dead. It was brought over to Sevenoaks by Mr. E. G. Still, to whom I am indebted for the specimen. It had previously been ringed by Mr. Eric Philp. The bird was autopsied on 16th February when the sex was established anatomically. There was no wasting and in fact, the bird could be described as in fat condition; death was clearly attributable to acute aspergillosis. The main fungus mass was in the bronchial tree, from whence it had infiltrated the abdomino-thoracic air-sac. It seems likely that the fungus had been ingested with bread fed to the swan by the general public. It had joined a herd of Mute Swans and had become completely tame.

I am indebted to Dr. Keith Randall, Consulting Pathologist to the Orpington and Sevenoaks Hospitals for investigating the fungus, and to Mr. A. H. Heather for culturing the fungus, which has been identified as *Aspergillus fumigatus*.

James M. Harrison

### **The wedge-shaped yellow area on the bill of a Bewick's Swan**

AN opportunity to observe wild Bewick's Swans *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* from only a few yards occurred at the Wildfowl Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire on 24th November, 1962, when towards the late afternoon fifteen flew into the enclosures, of which eight alighted on the largest pool in the Big Pen. An adult particularly attracted my attention because although its bill conformed in shape and size to that of the western race (*bewickii*) the area of