

Harbour a small nesting colony of five or six nests was observed at the end of Onawe Peninsula. The nests were about ten feet above the water. This is unusual, as a more inaccessible site normally is preferred.

Gannet (*Moris serrator*).—Although of infrequent occurrence south of Cook Strait, a lone individual was seen in flight off Port Levy on January 10.

White-fronted Tern (*Sterna striata*).—Except at the Sail Rocks, near Little Akaloa, where there was a nesting colony of about 80 birds, few specimens were seen, only four being noted on Akaroa Harbour.

Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*).—This gull was seen in small numbers only round the coast of Banks Peninsula. In Akaroa Harbour about 20 were counted.

Red-billed Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*).—About 30 were seen in Akaroa Harbour; present in small numbers round the coast between Akaroa and Lyttelton. A breeding colony of about 100 birds was observed at the entrance to Port Levy.

Black-billed Gull (*Larus bulleri*).—One individual was seen with a small flock of red-billed gulls in Lyttelton Harbour.

Reef Heron (*Demigretta sacra*).—One heron was seen in flight near Onawe Peninsula, Akaroa Harbour, on January 7.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*).—One white swan exists in Akaroa Harbour, this being the last of six or seven which formerly lived there in a semi-wild state. The existing bird is accustomed to being fed from small craft, as almost daily it visited yachts at anchor, and in most cases was successful in getting bread and other scraps of food.

A noticeable feature of the distribution of birds off the coasts of Banks Peninsula is the fact that, as far as my limited observations go, the petrels are concentrated on the southern side, while the spotted shag is present in large numbers on the northern side. The shags have their nesting sites on the cliffs, thus accounting for their presence off this northern shore; but in the case of the petrels it seems that the southern side facing the great southern ocean is preferred, as conditions there more closely resemble the open sea, which is the home of most petrels.

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## CROMWELL BIRD DIARY.

By J. Middleditch, Cromwell.

A pair of banded dotterels (*Charadrius bicinctus*) appeared on the Cromwell Flats on 13/8/47 in a locality that had been used for nesting the previous year. Another bird seen on the same day, about a mile from the first, may have been one of the birds seen earlier.

A pair of pied oystercatchers (*Haematopus finschi*) seen on the morning of 14/8/47 were gone at midday.

18/8/47.—Two dotterels which appeared on 13/8/47 did not stay and have now disappeared.

1/9/47.—A native pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) has visited the willow trees on the river bank at Cromwell. It arrived early in August and is feeding on the young buds of the Chinese creepers (local name). I believe a pigeon (possibly the same one) visits this locality every spring.

7/9/47.—Saw several pairs of banded dotterels on the flats. These may be the birds reported earlier.

24/9/47.—Saw a pair of pied stilts (*Himantopus himantopus*) beside an irrigation ditch; new arrivals.

4/10/47.—Banded dotterels seen again in the same place where I saw them on 18/8/47. These have just arrived as I have watched this area daily since the birds departed from there between 13/8/47 and 18/8/47.

4/10/47.—Saw a pair of pied oystercatchers on the Sugar Loaf. This is on a much higher level than I usually see them.

16/10/47.—A pair of banded dotterels were seen with two chicks in the area where birds were reported on 7/9/47.

25/10/47.—Pied oystercatcher on nest with two eggs about 30 yards from the main road. I saw this bird sitting two days ago when passing but did not investigate; only one bird was visible.

31/10/47.—Visited the breeding dotterels. The chicks have grown considerably but still have much of their down left. I had much difficulty in catching one. The parent bird came within two yards of me while I was holding the young one.

2/11/47.—Visited the oystercatcher's nest. I have not yet seen the male (assuming that the sitting bird is the female).

3/11/47.—Visited the oystercatcher at night but there is no sign of the other bird.

5/11/47.—Located another oystercatcher about 500 yards from the nest; it does not seem to have a nest of its own.

9/11/47.—Visited the black-billed gulls (*Larus bulleri*) that I reported breeding last spring. The nesting colony has been shifted slightly. I counted 33 nests and many young birds were on foot. They were in a variety of sizes. There were 15 eggs left. Many nests had one egg only. There seemed to be two different colours of eggs; some were more green and did not have so many spots.

9/11/47.—Found a young pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) in a hole in the ground (not its nest). It was fully feathered but had signs of down on its head. It was quite healthy and seemed to be sheltering from the wind.

10/11/47.—The pied oystercatcher visited on 2/11/47 has now two young ones, hatched out this morning. The presumed male bird has not appeared yet.

10/11/47 (evening).—The other bird has appeared beside the nest, and the young ones are running about.

12/11/47.—The oystercatchers and chicks have disappeared.

19/11/47.—I have located the oystercatchers and one young one about 500 yards from the nesting place in the locality where I reported seeing the second bird on 5/11/47.

25/11/47.—Saw a pair of dotterels and young where the birds were reported on 4/10/47. The young ones are much the same age as the last one reported on 31/10/47.

19/12/47.—Visited the banded dotterels today. The young ones seem to be able to fly quite well.

20/12/47.—This morning a bird which I believe to be a broad-billed prion (*Pachyptila vittata*) appeared in the dredge pond beside the Austral New Zealand Mining Co.'s dredge. It seemed very tame and quite fit. The shift men fed it biscuits and took it on board the dredge. Its beak was 1.3 inches long and .8 inches wide at its maximum point. The bird seemed to like dark corners. It wandered about my desk pecking at anything coloured red—the labels on the ink bottles and a stump of red pencil. I tried to feed it some slaters but although it seemed keen enough it did not seem to be able to pick them up from the flat desk. It climbed up on my arm using its beak to help it, much the same as a parrot does, but more as a hook than a grip. I returned the prion to the river and it splashed about, apparently enjoying itself, and then crept into a hole in the bank, where I left it.

21/12/47.—The prion disappeared during the night. I hope it reached the sea.

1/1/48.—The banded dotterels seem to have left the locality where I have been watching their nesting. I can see no sign now of the pied oystercatchers and young.

4/1/48.—Saw a single banded dotterel in the Lindus Valley. Found in the Lindus Valley a young pied stilt that had apparently been killed by a stoat.

15/1/48.—At midday today after a dull morning and a brisk shower of rain two pied fantails (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) appeared in my garden. I do not usually see fantails until after the frosts start.