

contained a nest, often at very low level. Incubation time, 11 days; the young birds left the nest in a further 12 days.

**Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)**—Found three nests on ground in long grass and grass-lined. We noticed particularly one nest with four eggs; when two hatched the other two were kicked out of the nest. When blown they were found to be infertile.

**Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)**.—Seemed to favour willow and elderberry trees for nests at about 8 to 10ft. from ground.

**Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)**.—Observations of the goldfinch were not wholly successful as repeatedly nests were found torn up and eggs broken.

**Wild Duck (*Anas sp.?*)**—Frequented a flaxy swamp in the next paddock. Family of five half-grown ducks was seen on the river near the camp at dawn. Another family of seven ducklings was seen on a nearby stream.

**Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*)**.—A solitary bittern flew up the river almost every day.

**Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)** and **Ground Lark or Pipit (*Anthus novae-seelandiae*)**.—Not numerous; ground larks seen on stony beaches by riverside.

**Harrier (*Circus approximans*)**.—Always two or three overhead most of the day.

**Gulls (*Larus sp.*)** and **Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*)**.—In late afternoon numbers of both flew over on several occasions; flying from inland towards the coast; very noisy.

**BLACKBIRD'S NEST IN WASHHOUSE.**—On August 8, 1947, a blackbird (*Turdus merula*) flew into the washhouse on a tour of inspection for a nesting place. A blackbird had built in the washhouse the previous year. On Sept. 22 the first egg was laid in the nest which was built behind a ladder against the wall of the washhouse. The male bird was very excited and made a great fuss and outcry. On Sept. 28 the blackbird was sitting on four eggs, and on October 10 two vigorous young birds were out of the nest and two much more feeble ones still in it. A second family was hatched in this nest. The male bird met an untimely death by dashing into the closed window (his usual exit), and falling stunned into a tub of water in which he was drowned. To prevent a repetition of this tragedy the birds were shut out of the washhouse. The female found a new mate, not so confiding as the former one, and a third nest was built on the ledge of a fence among the branches of an American pillar rose. Four young were hatched but were devoured by a wandering cat, which possibly accounted for the disappearance of most of the other young birds, only two (one a female) being known to have reached maturity. When feeding worms to the young, the parents were noted to break them into pieces before carrying them to the nest.—Mrs. J. A. Moore, Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club.

## REVIEW.

**Bird Recognition. Vol. 1; Sea-Birds and Waders, by James Fisher. Pelican Books. 190 pages, 86 illus., 77 maps and 72 charts.**

A pocket book for field use, this publication is one of the best of its kind ever seen. It is a model of conciseness and its pages contain a wealth of information. There is an excellent illustration of every species dealt with in this volume. Distribution maps and "clock" charts provide a ready means of bringing out salient points regarding seasonal movements and breeding habits that would require many more pages of text to cover in the more orthodox manner. Habitat and field character keys add to the value of the volume, which is useful to New Zealanders as it provides aids in the identification of several waders and other migratory birds that occur in this country.—R.H.D.S.

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