

## A DABCHICK'S NEST IN HAWKE'S BAY

The finding of the nest of the Dabchick (*P. rufopectus*) always seems to have been difficult in New Zealand and is such an uncommon event now that a short account of the successful search for a nest at Horseshoe Lake, Hawkes Bay, may be justified. Dabchicks, not in large numbers, are known to frequent the many scattered lakes of Hawkes Bay, but Guthrie-Smith was never able to find a nest (Sorrows and Joys of a New Zealand Naturalist, 194-150).

On 24/1/63 Mr. B. D. Hankins took R. H. Sibson and me to Horseshoe Lake, a private wildfowl sanctuary, to look for Coots (*F. atra*), one pair of which was quickly located. The resident shepherd kindly lent us a pram dinghy. The lake and its surroundings are much modified by drainage and grazing (v. *Notornis* X, 185). Yellow waterlilies cover much of the lake's surface so that there is comparatively little open water. Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) thrive in the lake and grow to a large size. At least three pairs of Dabchicks were present. One pair had either one or two chicks riding pick-a-back. Another pair was occupying a small bay of open water near the middle of which was a domed Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), some twenty feet in diameter with its lowest boughs sweeping the water. The nest was a heap of soft waterweed about a foot across just above water level. It was very hard to see, being in the gloom at the very heart of the willow where the many twigg branches originated from a matted network of fibrous roots. The two eggs had been well covered with weed by the sitting bird as it left the nest and were quite invisible. It was not easy to push the light dinghy into the springy tangle of willow branches and the finding of the nest was an act of faith.

— R. B. SIBSON

PARTIAL CONFIRMATION OF TWO OF REISCHEK'S  
LITTLE BARRIER RECORDS

Last century the German naturalist, Andreas Reischek recorded Fairy Prion (*Pachyptila turtur*) and Fluttering Shearwater (*Puffinus gavia*) breeding on Little Barrier Island (Trans. N.Z. Inst. 18: 94, 183). Neither record has since been confirmed.

At 2034 hrs. on 1/12/62 Mrs. Anne Blanshard, Susan Blanshard and myself were sitting about ten feet below the summit of Little Barrier (2374ft.). As I swept my torchbeam across the sky a Fairy Prion fluttered into my lap. This is the only one I have recorded in thirteen nights on the summit, although Mr. R. H. Blanshard, caretaker of the island, has a photograph of a Fairy Prion found injured on the Summit Track on the 26/11/60. No evidence of its breeding has been found.

On 29/1/63 Mr. Blanshard landed C. G. Cathie, R. H. Sibson, P. D. G. Skegg and myself on Lot's Wife, a small andesitic stack off the northern end of the island. Diving Petrels had earlier been recorded breeding on Lot's Wife (Turbott N.Z.B.N. 2 (5)) and several of their burrows, unoccupied by this date, were located. On a rocky ledge an addled Fluttering Shearwater egg was found, and feathers belonging to this species were collected. Other burrows inspected were much larger than those of the Diving Petrel, and presumably belonged to Fluttering Shearwaters.

— LOIS J. BISHOP