

In November 1961, E.W.D. and D.H.B. began a study of a colony of Black-billed Gulls (*L. bulleri*) on the Ashley River, Canterbury, a week or so prior to what proved to be the start of hatching. A variation in pigmentation similar to that noted in *L. dominicanus* was found to occur, and the eggs were then marked (with "Maruzen" ink) X, Y, and Z in what was judged to be the order of laying. This was on November 19, and the colony was visited frequently in evenings and week-ends up to December 3, and again on December 9, covering most of the hatching period. This proved to be a fairly difficult test of the theory, as there were only eight 3-egg clutches and 44 of 2 eggs only. Of these we were able to determine the hatching order of six of the former and 26 of the latter. In the 6 3-egg clutches, the hatching sequence proved to be XYZ in three cases, XZY in two cases and YZX in one case. In the 26 2-egg clutches, the hatching sequence was XY in 24 and YX in the other two.

Until it can be proved that the eggs in a clutch of Black-billed Gulls hatch invariably in the sequence in which they are laid, this test cannot be regarded as conclusive, but we suggest that it justifies further investigation by anyone with suitable opportunities to work with large colonies of gulls or terns.

REFERENCE CITED

Preston, F. W., 1957: Pigmentation of Eggs: Variation in the Clutch Sequence. *Auk*, 74 (1): 28-41, 4 text-figs., 6 tables, plates 2-4.

— E. W. DAWSON & D. H. BRATHWAITE



BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL NEAR OAMARU

On 9/10/63, laden with photographic gear, I was crossing the Kakanui River near its junction with the Kauru, a few miles from Oamaru, when I noticed a small dotterel which looked unfamiliar; but I gave it only fleeting attention. When I returned about 4 p.m. and was recrossing the river, I flushed the bird again. It had a distinctive flight and markings, quite different from those of a Banded Dotterel (*C. bicinctus*). I spent the next two hours watching it and trying to secure satisfactory photographs. Some of these I was later able to submit to Dr. R. A. Falla, who was able to identify the bird at once as a Black-fronted Dotterel (*C. melanops*).

— IAN L. MCVINNIE



NORTH ISLAND FIELD STUDY WEEK-END ROTORUA, 25th - 28th OCTOBER, 1963

When the visitors arrived they learned with regret that the R.O. for Volcanic Plateau, Mr. C. D. Blomfield, had been ill for some time and had gone to hospital. However, Raymond Jackson had been appointed Acting R.O. and he and a band of local stalwarts had performed a prodigious amount of work and organisation and the situation had been well and truly saved. The use of the Tourist Dept's. Social Club Hall had been given free of charge and it was the rendezvous for meetings and the assembly point for outings. On the Friday evening when most members had arrived F. E. Gee welcomed the visitors and outlined the programme. Before midnight all of the thirty-three visitors