

## LITTLE EGRETS AT GREYMOUTH

On 2nd May, 1964, after I had just discussed the Cattle Egret report with Mr. Jones, Cobden, I visited a popular wading-bird pool at Cobden. I was agreeably surprised to see three Little Egrets, *Egretta garzetta*, and one White Heron, *Egretta alba modesta*, together in one pool. I hurriedly picked up Mr. Jones and took him to the scene. In good light and at close range he studied the birds carefully and said that they were not the same as the bird he had seen at Coal Creek. The White Heron was much bigger than the Cattle Egret and the Little Egrets were sligher and smaller than the Cattle Egret. The Little Egrets were behaving in their usual frantic way and it was amusing to see them dashing around fishing very actively. Two raised their wings at each other as if about to begin sparring and, when one landed alongside a White-faced Heron, *Notophoxyx novaehollandiae*, both raised their feathers noticeably and displayed at each other. Later, the two that seemed to keep together had a further display session.

Unfortunately, I was not able to spend much time observing the birds that day. However, the bills of the birds were noticeably different. Two had black upper mandibles from the tip to nearly the facial mask, the lower mandibles being yellowish green. The other bird had black upper and lower mandibles from the tip back for some distance, then changed to orange on upper and lower mandibles before reaching the facial mask. I saw the last-mentioned bird at close range in flight and its feet and a short anklet above the feet were a greenish colour. Underneath the feet was not noticeably yellow as in a bird seen here previously; more greenish (*Notornis* 9: 4, p. 122). The upper parts of the legs were dark grey, then grey down the front of the legs until the green anklet was reached; the back of the legs turned from dark grey to a greenish colour above the tarsus and this continued down to the greenish anklet. On one occasion I saw a short plume from the nape. I was soon unable to locate more than one Little Egret, my last sighting being on the 10th May.

— P. GRANT



## CATTLE EGRET NEAR MASTERTON

On 25/5/64, R. Stidolph and B. Irons and I visited the dairy farm of Mr. W. Greig near Masterton and identified a "small White Heron" as being a Cattle Egret, *Ardeola ibis*. The bird had been at the farm for a week but when R. Walker (who had been told of the bird by Mr. Greig) had visited the farm he was unlucky enough not to have sighted it.

The day of our visit was overcast but the bird was clearly seen to have a yellow bill. The small dark portion at the tip was not clearly seen because feeding on the muddy fields had somewhat discoloured the area. The legs and feet were a dark greyish colour. No buff coloration was visible — the plumage was pure white. In general appearance it was stockier and shorter than the Little Egret and was considerably smaller than the White Heron.

Feeding characteristics were typical of this species in that it was constantly in close attendance on the dairy herd. Mr. A. Greig said that when the cows were taken in for milking the bird flew over to other cattle in another field.

On 30/5/64, which was bright and sunny, Mr. Irons and