

with black down. After about three or four weeks this bright colouring fades and is replaced by a patch of dull greyish-white down the front of the neck and breast. They are almost full grown before they show black on the neck and the frontal shield begins to appear.

In conclusion, our thanks must be given to many of the local residents who took a keen interest in the proceedings and were able to give us much useful information; above all, our thanks must go to Mr. E. Housby of Lake Okareka, who originally found the two nests and who was always able to provide us with a boat when we wanted one. We are also extremely grateful to Mr. M. J. S. Black, of Rotorua, but for whose encouragement a good deal less might have been done.



SHORT NOTE

CATTLE EGRET NEAR GREYMOUTH

On 28th April, 1964, Mr. R. H. Jones of 92 Ward St., Cobden, told me that he had seen a strange small white heron near the roadside in the Coal Creek area. He said that he was familiar with the ordinary White Herons, Royal Spoonbills and White-faced Herons, but did not know this bird. The bird was white in colour; bill yellowy orange but shorter than a White Heron's bill; head and neck appeared thicker in proportion than on a White Heron; the legs were very dark; the wings in flight rounded and blunt. On the ground the bird had a sawn-off appearance, tail short and well off the ground, stance upright. When the bird was disturbed it flew to some grazing cattle, landed by the head of one, skipped sideways with half-raised wings when the cow butted at it, then moved around behind the cow. The bird was still following the cattle some four hours later. There were no other birds to be seen in the area. From the general description and behaviour the bird was clearly a Cattle Egret, *Ardeola ibis*.

I was not successful in seeing the bird on the ground but probably saw it in flight over Greymouth on 30th April, 1964. The relatively short and rounded wing compared with White Herons, *Egretta alba modesta*, and Little Egrets, *Egretta garzetta*, was very apparent. The bill appeared orangey and the legs very dark. The wingbeat was noticeably faster than that of White Herons or Little Egrets. However, I had only a brief glimpse in good light from below the bird while I was driving a vehicle.

On 3rd May, 1964, Mr. T. Hartley-Smith reported that he had followed a White Heron-like bird near Totara Flat. Unfortunately the fog was very thick and a good view was not obtained. The bird had a short, rounded wing, very dark legs, quick wingbeat — about twice as fast as the wingbeat of White-faced Herons, *Notophoxynovaehollandiae*, it was with; bill appeared dark. Smaller than the White-faced Herons.

Whether or not the same bird was seen at Greymouth and Totara Flat is problematical, but the Greymouth bird was not reported after 30th April and it could easily have moved some twenty miles up the Grey River by 3rd May. It is very likely that the Totara Flat bird was in fact a Cattle Egret.

— P. GRANT