

The nest was re-lined with cob-web, cotton-wool and palm fibre; the sides were built-up with palm fibre over-laced with cob-web. On October 1st the first egg was laid, the second on October 2nd. No accurate dates are available for third and fourth eggs. But on October 17th four young were hatched. Activity was once again at fever pitch. All four young grew very rapidly and by October 24th were almost fully fledged. At this stage the four young were banded along with the male adult. Attempts to catch the female all failed, so a complete family banding was missed. The banding was done by Mr. Ken Rowe of Rangiora and his son. By November 1st the young were flying about the room very strongly and it was no surprise when they left the house for the outdoors. All four young survived and were observed in the area on many occasions. Last sighting in a group was on November 20th.

It was interesting to note that about fourteen days after the departure of the second hatching another nest was discovered in some willow trees about 100 yards from the second nest site. It contained two young, which were being fed by a banded adult, presumably one of the parent birds of the first and second hatchings, because there had been no other reported bandings of this species in this vicinity.

After four months since the second hatching the banded adult still visits the site of the first nest.

The fourth nest was built in the area in a pine tree belt 12ft. above the ground. After a week's work on this nest all activity stopped and it became clear that the nest had been abandoned.



NESTING OF WHITEHEADS ON LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND

By R. H. BLANSHARD

From 28/9/62 to 11/10/62 my daughter and I observed a pair of Whiteheads (*Mohoua albigilla*) constructing a nest in the fork of a young mahoe near the Te Waikohare Stream beside our house. It was in its earliest stages on the first date and was finished on the last. It was noted by constant observation that, as the nest grew, the birds behaved most affectionately, bringing presents to each other. They took little notice of our near presence. The nest was built of fibre from fan-palm trees, grass, cobwebs, feathers and small moss.

Oct. 13, 8 a.m.: First egg. Pale pink with small brown spots.

Oct. 14, 8.30 a.m.: Second egg.

Oct. 15, 8 a.m.: Third egg. A third bird appeared to take interest.

Oct. 18: Incubation began. At 1750 hrs. bird left nest for 8½ minutes to feed with mate.

Oct. 19 to 30: Incubation continued, sitting bird leaving nest once or twice for five to eight minutes at a time.

Nov. 1, 0834 hrs.: Weather overcast, windy and showery; the first inclement weather experienced. Female left nest, revealing that two eggs had hatched. Chicks very small and pink. Interior of nest appeared to have more down lining in it. 0930 hrs., female back on nest.

- Nov. 2: Still only two chicks. Weather fine and windy.
- Nov. 3, 0830 hrs.: Third egg hatched. First two chicks now twice hatching size; still naked.
- Nov. 4: Weather showery; passing thunderstorms. Apparently three adult birds feeding young. Adults not upset by observers standing on step-ladder at distance of six feet. Chicks now about twice size of eggs and sparsely covered with blue-grey down. The adults gathered insects from bark of pohutukawa, mahoe, Coprosma and fruit trees. Each chick seemed to be fed by one adult in fairly strict rotation at intervals of about 15-20 minutes. Sometimes a second bird waited close to the nest while the other bird was feeding chicks and removing faecal sacs. This continued for one and a half hours at a time.
- Nov. 5, 1330 hrs.: Fine, sunny. After feeding period was finished, two adults moved higher in trees and sang, while the third bird returned to nest to brood the young. No significant behaviour changes from to-day to Nov. 8.
- Nov. 8, 0830 hrs.: Only two chicks now in nest. Covered with blue-grey down, active, eager for food; bills well developed; eyes open and wing feathers showing.
- Nov. 11 to 13: Chicks well feathered and outgrowing nest. Adults absent most of the time gathering food. Observed four feedings of each chick in 45 min. period. 1400 to 1445 hrs. before female resumed nest.
- Nov. 13: No change in behaviour pattern.
- Nov. 14, 0730 hrs.: Fine, sunny, no wind. Nest askew, damaged and empty. One dead and partly eaten chick on ground below. No sign of other chick and parents distressed and hanging around the nest. 0930, Saw parents gathering insects. 0940 hrs., feeding surviving chick on ground on edge of opposite stream-bank about 15 yards from nest site. Chick unharmed and eager for food. 1010 hrs., chick moved to better cover under small fern amid debris. Still being fed by three adults.
- Nov. 15, 0900 hrs.: Chick back on nest side of stream in coprosma bush being fed by adults. Remained in same bush in sheltered position all day and was fed. Nov. 16: Not seen.
- Nov. 17, 1004 hrs.: Observed chick with three adults back in old nest site. Fed twice, then all flew to plum tree, the chick calling continually to the adults. There were no further sightings that could be identified as the same group of birds.
- It is thought that the nest was destroyed by Long-tailed Cuckoos which were numerous nearby at the time.

The method of settling on nest was closely observed:

- (1) The bird landed on the edge of the nest, feet somewhat apart.
- (2) Both feet moved further forward on each side of the nest, the bird falling forward and digging bill into far side of nest.
- (3) Feet moved further forward to about halfway along nest.
- (4) Bird now sinks gently down and backward until tail rests on rim of nest and the bill is lifted clear of nest edge.

Several writers have noted the presence of a third bird about a nest. In this case the association of the third bird was constant from at least the laying of the third egg to the feeding of the flying young.