

In the 1966/67 season two pairs again nested, about 250 yards apart.

On 28/9/66 No. 1 pair had nest, two eggs; 30th, two eggs; 10/10/66, one small chick about 100 yards away across a very small tidal creek containing water only at high tide; 11/10/66, chick found dead. On 21/11/66, this pair had another nest with one egg, birds showing very little interest; 23/11/66, still one egg, deserted.

On 28/9/66 No. 2 pair, also with two eggs, about 270 yards from No. 1 pair's nest; 10/10/66, four eggs; 14th, five eggs; 24th, five eggs, bird sitting; 7/11/66 and 9th, and 12th, five eggs, bird sitting each time. On 15/11/66 the nest had been washed out by a high tide. The eggs had been scattered and two were not found. One was in tide wrack. The other two were at high water mark about four feet apart and five feet from the nest site. New nests had been made for each of these eggs where the tide had left them and the bird was sitting on one which was warm.

It being long past a possible hatching date, I took home the cold egg and the washed out one. Both were addled. The third egg was later found to be addled also, and the birds had left the vicinity.

In each case No. 1 pair's record has been shown, as it indicates that the four and five-egg nests were not the result of two birds laying in one nest. There were no other than the two pairs present in either year. It could be that the No. 2 pair was responsible for both the four egg and the five egg clutches. The only other four-egg nest of which I have knowledge was found by J. L. Kendrick and party at or near Ruapuke, south of Raglan. I have not heard of a previous five egg clutch.

— (Mrs.) M. E. McKENZIE

[Five egg clutches are certainly rare; but at Mangawhai on 20/12/39 C. A. Fleming and I saw a nest containing five eggs which we noted were "all of the same type and did not look like the product of two hens." — Ed.]



### STRONG HOMING INSTINCT IN A PUKEKO

Mr. J. Mackintosh has recently been capturing Pukekos (*Porphyrio melanotus*) which cause some trouble around his Grey Partridge pens at the Southland Acclimatisation Society's Game Farm; and after banding they are transported to far-away places. Two captured Pukekos were taken to Tautuku, which is towards the coast from Balclutha and some 60 miles in a direct line from the point of capture. Eight days later one of these birds was retrapped back at the Game Farm. Mr. Mackintosh checked and rechecked his banding records before he was satisfied it was one of the same birds. There have been some similar instances of Pukekos homing in the past, but over much shorter distances; and this is by far the most surprising yet recorded.

Recently (1966), two other instances of the strength of the homing instinct in New Zealand rails have been described. One concerned a Spotless Crake (*Porzana tabuensis*) as reported by Kendrick (Notornis 13, 11) and the other a young Weka (*Gallirallus greyi*) which tramped 80 miles home (Notornis 13, 64).

— R. R. SUTTON