

FEEDING

Food has consisted almost completely of waterweed (*Elodea*), though occasional birds have been seen eating young willow leaves. It is possible that small animal life is obtained from amongst the weed, but this has not been determined definitely.

During the last year, some birds have taken bread, which visitors to the lake have thrown to the ducks. One adult Coot also fed this to a chick. However, they do not appear to take very much of this food.

An interesting change in feeding behaviour was noted during the last year, when ducks were seen feeding with Coots. After the Coots dived for waterweed and brought it to the surface, Grey and Mallard Ducks frequently milled around and shared in the food. This has occurred when the adult Coots have been feeding young, but no real attempt was made by the Coots to chase the ducks away. It could not be determined definitely whether the ducks were always taking weed, or instead, small animal life brought up with the weed.

This is a contrast to the coot behaviour, when they first became established on this lake — they vigorously chased all waterfowl, except a male Paradise Duck. Aggression towards other waterfowl has gradually reduced during the last two or three seasons. In fact, during the last breeding season, aggressive action appeared to be directed more towards individuals of their own kind, than other waterfowl.



SHORT NOTE

REACTIONS OF BIRDS TO FALCONS

On 1/4/66 at 1525 hrs. R. E. R. Porter and P. R. Wilson saw a Falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) flying 15-20 ft. above the D.S.I.R. Research Orchard, half a mile from the centre of Havelock North. Fantails, Sparrows, Whiteyes, Chaffinches, Thrushes, Blackbirds, Mynas, Hedgesparrows and Greenfinches took to trees and gave alarm calls. A flock of 30-40 Mynas gave alarm calls for about 15 minutes after the Falcon had left and two Fantails sat quietly huddled side by side on a piece of wire in a large shed for the same time. In contrast to these reactions, Harriers (*Circus approximans*) elicit much less response from the orchard birds.

Early in March 1967 at 1300 hrs. K. J. Dawson and J. Jones (pers. comm.) saw two Falcons attack three or four Keas on the open rock and snowgrass tops at about 5500 ft. between the East Matukituki and Corner Burn (Lake Wanaka). The first thing they saw was a Kea reeling back, flapping and squawking wildly after a Falcon had attacked it in mid-air. Then both Falcons attacked, flying about 50 ft. above the Keas and swooping on to them. The Keas could not evade the Falcons and, though no feathers were knocked off, they were hard pressed and hid amongst a jumble of rocks. The Falcons moved off 10-15 minutes later when their swoops failed to dislodge the Keas.

— R. E. R. PORTER

— D. G. DAWSON