

Some of the information on habits, behaviour and distribution has already appeared in print, but spread over many years; I make no apology for presenting it again in summarised form, for the benefit of those who are not fortunate enough to live in areas where these dotterel are easily available for observation. By one's own observations to correct or amplify what has already appeared in print is a most rewarding exercise for a field observer; I hope that many members will take the opportunity to do so, those in "dotterel areas" by gathering additional information on population, flocking, local movement and ecology, those in less favoured localities by keeping a good watch for wandering dotterel or occupation of new breeding areas. All such information which may be gathered should please be recorded, if not in *Notornis*, at least in O.S.N.Z. Recording Scheme.

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## SHORT NOTE

### BEHAVIOUR OF BLACK-BACKED GULLS

The sight of Black-backed Gulls (*L. dominicanus*) dropping pipis and other bivalves on to hard beach sand and coastal rocks is a common one, and is a type of behaviour probably acquired by learning, as opposed to instinct. By what process, other than reasoning, has the bird acquired the habit of dropping shellfish on to the bitumen surface of roads? I was interested recently to observe four Black-backed Gulls dropping pipis on to the bitumen of Wainui Beach Road, some 200 yards from the source of the food.

— J. W. BAIN