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SHORT NOTE

OYSTERCATCHERS AND BANDED DOTTERELS NESTING HIGH IN CENTRAL OTAGO

SOUTH ISLAND PIED OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus ostralegus finschi*)

Pairs assemble below the retreating snows (about 4000ft.) during November on the unforested inland ranges where suitable swampy meltwater basins, cirques and subalpine tarns and swamps occur e.g. Old Man, Dunstan, Pisa, Carrick Ranges. (It is interesting to note that in the ranges further to the north and northeast of the area, where the Otago green schists grade into less metamorphosed 'grey-wackes,' the summit slopes are steeper and suitable habitat of the type mentioned above is lacking, e.g. Kakanui, Hawkduns and St. Bathans Ranges.)

Nest-sites range from ca. 4000ft. to 6000ft. close to the wet habitats mentioned, the nests themselves being invariably situated on top of a dry, well-drained frost hummock in the subalpine tundra zone, which usually is a *Dracophyllum muscoides*-*Raoulia hectori* community.



BANDED DOTTEREL (*Charadrius bicinctus*)

Preferring the drier type of habitat, with short vegetation, these dotterels are to be found both on the subalpine tundra zone as above, and on suitable neighbouring zones both below and above that altitude, e.g. among Blue Tussock (*Poa colensoi*), among the mixed subalpine herbfield, and at the top of the ranges on the fellfield. Altitudinal distribution is thus about 4500ft. to 6200ft., varying somewhat on each range.

An unusual extension of their normal lowland distribution occurs on the semi-arid northern slopes of the Old Man Range towards the Fraser Dam, where they are to be found in small numbers on the short turf-scabweed areas up to ca. 3000ft.

— PETER CHILD