

SHORT NOTE



HARRIER HAWK — NEST BUILDING TO EGG LAYING

In "New Zealand Birds," the author quotes Stead as saying that nest building "takes about a fortnight . . . and adding more material after laying." The following observations of two nests in the Te Akau district, may thus be of interest owing to the length of time taken from when nest building was first observed to the laying of the first egg. Both nests were in the same swamp, one found in 1968 and the other in 1969. The 1968 nest building was first observed on 14/9/68 when I was in a hide further down the swamp photographing Pied Stilts. Two Harriers (*Circus approximans*) were seen circling over an area of raupo, one descending into it and then flying over to a nearby hillside. While two Hawks were in attendance only one was seen to carry nesting material. I visited this nest from time to time and it was not until 6 p.m. on 13/10/68 that the Hawk flew off as I approached and one egg was seen to be in the nest. Even if the Hawk had been building for the very first time on 14/9/68 this still makes the time lapse nearly a month. However, the 1969 nest-building to egg-laying period was even longer. A Hawk was noticed building on 23/8/69 when the writer, his wife and R. B. Sibson were on a bird-watching circuit of the Te Akau-Waingaro district. The weather was warm and sunny. The Hawk appeared to be building in haste, visiting the nest with material four times in 10 minutes. It was observed once picking up material in its beak and transferring it to its feet in flight. This building in August is quite an early record, but yet the nest was not laid in till 4/10/69. On this date I visited it and the Hawk flew off revealing one freshly laid egg. The length of time from nest-building to egg-laying in this instance must have been at the very least 42 days.

— D. W. HADDON