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## SHORT NOTE

## THE WHITE-FACED HERON

The recent article on the White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae* in New Zealand (Carroll 1970, *Notornis* 17, 1: 3-24) provides a summary which must be of considerable value to future workers, and the author is to be commended on an exhaustive treatment of records. However, the frequent use of the term 'colony' in regard to this species, is likely to be misleading.

I know of no case where the White-faced Heron's behaviour has included the gregarious breeding which typifies a colony (Thomson, 1964). In the Shag Valley, Otago, it nested first near Bushy Park Estate, from 1931 according to the late Mr. Alex. Twaddle, manager of the estate for many years. I believe only one pair nested there until the late 'thirties; about 1938 a second pair nested some five miles away near Inch Valley, then a third pair took up a site two or three years later at the old Waihemo Estate property some three miles away, where some records were obtained (Ellis, 1944). In each case a site was occupied in consecutive seasons by only one pair (Ellis, 1954).

Although some areas now carry quite heavy populations, with consequent demands on available nesting sites, in New Zealand this heron continues the pattern of its behaviour in Australia, most recently described by Frith (1968): "Normally single nests are found, and they do not form nesting colonies, although occasionally several nests are found in adjacent trees."

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