

bathed in the very shallow water of the runnel, lying on its side and flapping. This gave ample opportunity to see plainly the quite large white area right across the rump, including the lower rump, as compared with the all-dark upper surface of the tail. The latter was clearly seen several times and some further views of the white rump were obtained also. The bird then preened, showing small parts of the white area. It was notable that the white of the rump was a true white, while the undersurface was off-white. A summary of the statements of the various authors shows that this is the only one of the small streaked sandpipers to have the white rump right across, to be straight-billed and to have short legs. As to be expected from the literature, these birds were very tame.

As a photograph in the field would have proved nothing except size and shape, A. M. C. Davis was asked to come with a clapnet to catch the birds to be photographed in the hand and banded. Unfortunately they left before this could be done; nor could they be found on any subsequent visits.

REFERENCES

- FISHER, J., and PETERSON, R. T., ? date: *The World of Birds*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York. (Illustration only). (*Calidris fuscicollis*).
 GODFREY, W. E., 1966: *The Birds of Canada*, Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, Ottawa. (*Erolia fuscicollis*).
 PETERSON, R. T., 1941: *A Field Guide to the Western Birds*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. (*Pisobia fuscicollis*).
 PETERSON, R. T., 1947, 3rd Ed.: *A Field Guide to the Birds*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. (*Erolia fuscicollis*).
 PETERSON, R. T., MOUNTFORT, G., HOLLOM, P. A. D., 1954: Collins, London. (*Calidris fuscicollis*).
 ROBBINS, C. S., BRUN, B., ZIM, H. S., and SINGER, A., 1966: *Birds of North America*, Golden Press, Inc., New York. (*Erolia fuscicollis*).
 STOUT, G. D., MATTHIÉSSON, P., CLEM, R. V., and PALMER, R. S., 1967: *The Shorebirds of North America*, Viking Press, New York. (*Calidris fuscicollis*).
 WITHERBY, H. F., JOURDAIN, F. C. R., TICEHURST, N. F., and TUCKER, W. T., 1940: *The Handbook of British Birds*, Vol. 4, H. F. & G. Witherby, Ltd., London. (*Calidris fuscicollis*).



SHORT NOTES

STILTS RAISING NESTS ABOVE FLOOD WATERS

Stilts (*Himantopus*) of the New World have been known to build up their nests when surrounding water rises, and threatens to engulf the eggs. F. K. Truslow in the *National Geographic* for August 1960 (118.2: 240-245) illustrates this in a remarkable series of colour pictures. On this occasion the nest was built up no less than 4½ inches, the eggs being rolled from side to side as each side of the nest was raised in turn.

The habit does not appear to have been recorded in New Zealand, although Mr. H. R. McKenzie informs me he has observed it. On 28/10/67 I photographed the nest of a Pied Stilt *H. leucocephalus* at the Seaview reclamation, Wellington. The nest was on the edge of a rain soak (Plate XXVII). Heavy rain occurred a few days later and on my next visit, 12/11/67, having expected to find the nest under water, I was surprised to find it had been built up with mud and small stones (Plate XXVIII). The extra height gained was only about 2 inches but it was sufficient to keep the eggs above the higher water level. Two eggs of the four had gone but the remaining two were pipping and the chicks which hatched were reared successfully.

The original photographs were colour transparencies of the utmost clarity, but their quality has regrettably suffered during their conversion to black and white.

— J. M. CUNNINGHAM



Plate XXVII — Stilt's nest — normal, 28/10/67.



Plate XXVIII — Stilt's nest. The same nest as in Plate XXVII, photographed 12/11/67 after being built up above flood waters.