

previously been recorded lodged in a duck's nasal passage. It is possible that both birds would have overcome the effects, or have voided the eels, either by erosion, or decomposition, but with the latter bird, recovery seemed unlikely.

During the 1969/70 summer the Waikato and Manawatu regions were severely effected by drought, many shallow impoundments were dried out and even large bodies of water were markedly reduced. In drought conditions both eels and waterfowl are necessarily confined to whatever water remnants remain. That we should find two ducks affected in the manner described in a year of very severe drought may be coincidence, but is more likely to be the result of the two animals sharing a drastically reduced habitat.

— W. J. PENGELLY

P. J. HOWARD

Wildlife Service,
Auckland



ROOSTING BEHAVIOUR OF SADDLEBACK

During a visit to Cuvier Island in June, 1970, an observation was made on the roosting behaviour of the Saddleback *Philesturnus carunculatus*. On occasions, late in the day, we had heard a bird calling briefly about 50 yards distant from the old radar barracks, and after several unsuccessful attempts, we finally traced the pair to their roost. The male was first seen at 1650 hrs. on the ground, apparently feeding in the litter, for he was vigorously tossing leaves aside. Closely observed at about 12 feet, he was not seen to take any food, and in fact at that hour the light was failing fast under the canopy. This was quite probably a form of displacement behaviour whilst awaiting the arrival of the hen bird. It went on until 1657 hrs., when he called sharply three times, and waited. Meanwhile Mr. Don Merton, who was 50 yards ahead, observed the hen bird making a wide circuit on the ground. She apparently entered the roosting hole at 1659 hrs. but was not seen to do so as the location of the hole was not then known. Obviously her entry was observed by the male, for at that time he moved along the ground about 10 yards, climbed the bole of a pohutukawa, and entered a hole in a bough about 5 feet from ground level. This bough had a girth of 3 ft., and the entrance hole was 2½ ins. wide, 4¾ ins. long, with a vertical depth of 14 ins. and horizontal depth of 10 ins. On examination next morning, no trace of droppings in or about the hole could be found, nor had it been used as a nesting site.

There is no earlier recorded observation on roosting behaviour of the Saddleback, and if future records can be made, it will be of interest to note whether the ground approach by both birds is normal. The significance of such behaviour, in the traditional absence of predators, is not easy to see.

— A. BLACKBURN