

of this activity, including the uttering of some rather gentle, high pitched moaning noises, the male suddenly began leaping from branch to branch until he was standing at the end of her branch. He was now standing about three feet from her. He then faced her, walked about three steps closer and jumped onto her back. She had assumed a squatting position as he had begun jumping up the branches. Upon his leaping onto her back, she immediately lowered her head so that she was looking at the ground. Her long tail was then raised vertically. The male, maintaining his balance by flapping his half opened wings, then started to twist the rear half of his body around behind her raised tail. Having achieved this, he suddenly looked in our direction and stopped his movements. He stood quietly for about seven seconds at which the female suddenly looked up too. He then hopped back down to the branch. After standing still for a moment he flew off into a nearby mountain beech. During the while proceedings, one or both of the pair made the described moaning noise. As my colleague and I did not have time to raise our binoculars to our eyes we could not ascertain which bird was making this noise — we think it was the male.

From my observations on another pair in the Ruahines, copulation is preceded by a spectacular and noisy mutual courtship flight in which both birds seem to chase each other around the sky for minutes at a time. During this courtship flight, they both carry out a variety of aerobatics including sudden dives and climbs, stalls, steep turns, loops and rolls off the top. Upon first sight they would appear to be quarrelling, but upon closer observation it will be seen that there is no violent contact. The male seems to be the initiator and aggressor in the proceedings and both birds are very vocal, emitting loud “kek kek kek kek’s” and the afore-mentioned whine.

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PIPITS IN THE SOUTH ISLAND IN WINTER

Whilst on a visit to the Tasman Saddle Hut at the top of the Tasman Glacier in Mt Cook National Park in May 1971, I was surprised to find a Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) in the vicinity of the hut (altitude 7,700 feet). It was watched for several minutes, during which no clue was gained as to what food the bird was finding. There was almost total snow cover surrounding, and the nearest uncovered rock was on the glacier moraine wall a thousand feet lower.

Another record was of a loose flock of about 30 Pipits in the Matukituki Valley, west branch, in June 1971.

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