

We record these broods because Baker (1973) had no record of Pied progeny from Black X Intermediate parentage.

REFERENCE

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INCUBATION OF AN ADELIE PENGUIN EGG BY A SOUTH POLAR SKUA

During the austral summer of 1972-73, I observed and photographed a pair of South Polar Skuas (*Catharacta maccormicki*) incubating the egg of an Adelie Penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) at Hallett Station, Antarctica (72°19'S, 170°13'E). Both members of the pair incubated the egg from 6-14 January 1973, and both defended the nest and territory much as has been described for other members of their species (Young 1963). The nest resembled that of other South Polar Skuas (Spellerberg 1969), and was located about 20 m from the nearest penguin colony.

From all outward appearances the egg seemed to be normal, except for a small crack on one side, possibly indicating that at one time it had been frozen. It was of average size (71.7 x 56.5 mm) and only slightly soiled on the surface. The ambient temperature ranged from -8° to 0°C during the incubation period, but the egg was checked several times and was never found to be frozen.

An unincubated penguin egg was in the gravel about 3 m from the skuas' nest and remained there unharmed for the entire 9 days the other egg was being incubated. Several other penguin eggs were scattered about the rookery, but were usually eaten within a day unless frozen or on the interior of a penguin colony. On 15 January both the incubated egg and the egg near the nest were gone, and only one member of the pair was observed defending the territory.

How this incubated egg got in the nest was not determined, but since skuas normally carry penguin eggs between their mandibles, and since no military personnel were allowed on the rookery during 1973, it is assumed that the egg arrived there through normal behaviour and was subsequently incubated by these birds. Eklund (1961) has described examples of South Polar Skuas incubating Adelie Penguin eggs experimentally placed in their nests, but to my knowledge this is the first reported case of skuas voluntarily incubating a penguin egg. One possibility for this unusual behaviour is that these birds might have picked up the egg from the rookery while frozen, and

thus not edible. The stimulus to brood the egg might have then overcome the stimulus to eat it and incubation was then begun. I suspect that these were immature birds as they did not lay eggs of their own during the breeding season. Unfortunately the ages of the birds were not determined.

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SUNBATHING SWALLOWS ?

Recently an interesting incident concerning the Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) was related to me by an Eketahuna farmer, Mr R. Waldman. In his district the swallow is a new arrival and it was he who noticed the birds' unusual habit of "sunning."

Six swallows were watched for often an hour at a time on a lawn just in front of the Waldman's house. The swallows would lie on their sides, one wing extended, tail fanned out and head back apparently lapping up the sun. This behaviour has been seen several times by Mr Waldman and might be related to the extreme tameness of the swallows living near the house and outbuildings.

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HOUSE SPARROW PLUCKING BARBARY DOVE

Bird watching in the garden has its surprises, however common the species. A few days ago I was puzzled when I saw a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) making darts at a Barbary Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*) perched on a power line outside the house. The dove avoided the sparrow on this occasion by flying a few feet. This morning, 21 January 1974, my wife saw a sparrow pluck several