

JUVENILE CHATHAM ISLAND SHAG OBSERVED OFFERING NEST MATERIAL TO A BREEDING ADULT

On 22 November 1973 I observed a small breeding colony of Chatham Island Shags (*Leucocarbo carunculatus onslowi*) from 12.15 to 3.15 p.m. on the main Chatham Island at Cape Fournier near Owenga.

The clifftop colony comprised a tight knit group of 60+ nests with another group of 20 nests some 50m distant. There was a distinct difference in the stage of development between both groups in the colony. The larger group contained many nests with 1-4 large, downy chicks, some with flight feathers. There were also some nests with smaller young and the odd nest still contained eggs. In the smaller sub-colony further along the clifftop most of the nests still contained eggs, although in one nest there were chicks with the egg tooth still visible. One or two juveniles from the previous year were also present around the colony.

The plumage of the juveniles was brownish on the head, back and wings with grey-white on the underside in comparison to the black and white of adults. The caruncles of juveniles were also less developed.

While observing birds in the smaller group, one of the juveniles appeared from the larger group, proceeded past the smaller group and disappeared further around the cliff. This juvenile re-appeared later with a beakfull of dried plant material and walked back to the larger nesting group. As it approached the perimeter of the group some of the adults on nests near the edge of the group threatened with necks stretched forward, bills open and uttering a quiet guttural noise. The juvenile shag walked up to one of these displaying adults sitting tight on a nest at the edge of the colony and placed the material in the adult's opened bill. The material was then incorporated into the nest while the juvenile stood nearby.

Nesting adults threatened in a similar manner to that already described when a human intruder passed close to the colony, and on a similar, though more localised scale, when an intruding bird passed close to an occupied nest.

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FLUCTUATIONS IN WHITEHEAD POPULATION

The numbers of the Whitehead (*Mohoua albicilla*) recorded in the Mount Holdsworth area of the Tararua Range have shown considerable variation during the past fifty years, suggesting a cycle of decline or a periodic abandonment of habitat. The Whitehead is