

The hatching-to-flying period is not quite definite but can be no more than one day out. This is 38 days.

I have not been able to obtain comparisons, as there seems to be no other detailed account of the breeding period of this bird.

From 15/11/49 to 27/12/49 the chick was nearly always found at a distance from the parents. It would keep very quiet while the parents fussed about an area where there was nothing to guard at all. This ruse is very effective and succeeded often.

The laying date for the 1949 nest should, I think, be the earliest record for the species. The first egg would be laid on either September 9 or 10.

I have specially to thank Mr. H. A. Kemp for his splendid work in traversing the mudflat for so many days and successfully observing the hatching. Also I thank members F. Murray, L. H. Munro, W. W. Renouf and D. E. Alexander for their assistance; also Mr. M. Thorn, who did some fine running in the later stages when testing the flying ability of the chick.

BREEDING PERSISTENCE IN BANDED DOTTEREL.

By E. W. de Lisle, Kaiaua.

I was shown the nest of a banded dotterel on October 12, 1947, close to my home at Kaiaua on the western shore of the Firth of Thames. The single egg was apparently newly laid because two others were later added. So tame were the birds that the female returned and sat on the nest only 27 yards in front of an occupied car. The male then put her off and sat on it himself. The nest was made in some loose shingle which at high tide had washed over into the short grass above the beach. Some beach cottages, occupied at weekends and on holidays, stood only 20 yards away, while cars and trucks frequently passed between the nest and the buildings.

In this situation there seemed little hope of success for this breeding pair. However, I resolved to assist them and I had a busy time keeping their area clear of picnic parties, playing children and frolicking dogs. Twice the nest was actually straddled by cars. The people occupying the beach cottages became keenly interested and assisted readily.

About two weeks had passed when a party of "Maori" horses came into the area. Two stallions fought, after which the victor chose the patch of shingle for a roll. In preparation for this he pawed the ground in the usual manner. I arrived breathlessly on the scene at this juncture and found that he had pawed the nest right away. I found one egg between two and three feet away and another between four and five feet away from the nest site. The third one I could not find. By a small thistle which had stood besides the nest I built up the shingle again and made a new nest in which I placed the eggs. I took the greatest pains to make the nest the same as the original and thought I had done it well.

The female quickly came up to the "nest" and looked at it critically. She dropped down into it and first with her bill and then with her breast pushed the eggs up onto the edge. She then filled in the nest somewhat, replaced the eggs with her bill and sat on them with apparent satisfaction. I had a full and clear view of this operation, using powerful binoculars from a short distance.

This incident greatly increased our sympathy and admiration for these lovely little birds and it was a great joy and relief when the eggs hatched, one on November 12, and the other on November 13. The fond parents moved with the tiny chicks to a safer area where I saw them frequently as they grew up. The devotion of these parents surely deserved this success.