

PIED TIT NESTING RECORDS.

By C. H. and Mrs. Parkin, Little Barrier Island.

The first of the two nesting records of the pied tit on Little Barrier Island in 1950 was unfortunately incomplete owing to desertion. It has particular value, however, in that it provides an account of the egg-laying, as follows:—

November 13.—9.25 a.m., a visitor to the island, W. P. Mead, noticed a female taking nesting material from an old stump on the creek-bank near the house. He followed her and located the nest site in the furry side of the trunk of a Japanese fan palm, nine feet from the ground. The male was present but was not seen to assist.

Nov. 14.—2.15 p.m., both birds present and nest apparently complete.

Nov. 15.—3.10 p.m., 1 egg.

Nov. 16.—4.46 p.m., 2 eggs.

Nov. 17.—12.40 p.m., 3 eggs.

Nov. 18.—11.15 a.m., 4 eggs.

Nov. 19.—Gale and rain. No visit made.

Nov. 20.—5.45 p.m., female sitting. Violent storm had continued until this time.

Nov. 21.—12.45 and 5.10 p.m., birds not seen. A watch was kept for several further days but they did not return. The cause of desertion was not evident. A three-legged orchard ladder was used in observing. It did not touch the tree and was not left near it. In any case the birds showed no fear of us. The storm may have temporarily worn them out, or they may have been frightened by a morepork or long-tailed cuckoo.

It is practically safe to assume that an egg was laid each day. The nest was built of moss, fibre and tea-tree bark, lined with moss and a few small feathers.

The second record, in November, 1950, was obtained from another pair located on the flat at the edge of the bush in high kanuka and mixed under-scrub. Details are:—

Nov. 14.—Mrs. Parkin found a nest 3.5 feet up in a vertical crevice in the trunk of a huge kanuka. It contained a dead chick which had reached the age of about one week.

Nov. 22.—11.50 a.m., H. R. McKenzie found a nest in a broken stump of kanuka, 10 feet up, and only 18 feet from the site of the other nest. It was almost certainly the pair which had owned the nest found on the 14th. The female was sitting on two eggs; 5.50 p.m., still two eggs.

Nov. 23.—12.10 p.m., three eggs. Female on nest. A mirror on the end of a long stick was used to examine the nest. That she was apparently incubating already is indicated by the following particulars taken by H. R. McK.: 12.10 p.m., put her off nest. She displayed on the side of a tree trunk two feet from observer's face, then moved off to six feet. The male came and fed her with a large moth at 10 feet. Female came back nearer nest and male fed to her what appeared to be two blowflies together. She then went back on the nest in full view of three observers standing 12 feet from the tree. H.R.McK. now posted himself 18 feet away in full view. 12.19: Male came to 22 feet from nest; female left nest, took food from male and returned. 12.21: Female left nest and returned quickly; did not see where she went. 12.31: Male fed her at 24 feet; she then waited about. 12.32.5: Male fed female. 12.33.5: Female returned to nest. 12.44.5: Male fed female at usual spot on small dead branches under canopy top of *Coprosma arborea*. Female then fossicked a little for herself. 12.48: Returned to nest. 12.54: Observations ceased; female still sitting. The male called when approaching with food and showed himself at 10 to 15 feet. The female would then leave the nest and fly, usually in a direct line, to the feeding place at 22 feet, waiting there for the male. She would not accept food nearer the nest. After

feeding she would return indirectly. The great amount of food consumed by the female was remarkable.

Nov. 24.—12.15 p.m.: Female sitting and coming off to be fed as before.

Nov. 28: 4.45 p.m.: Female sitting.

Nov. 30.—5.30 p.m.: Female sitting, but flew off and feigned injury.

Dec. 4.—6.55 p.m.: Female sitting. She flew off but returned quickly.

Dec. 6.—3.25 p.m.: Male feeding female.

Dec. 8.—4.5 p.m.: Female sitting; three eggs. 6 p.m.: Three chicks; all had hatched since 4.5 p.m.

Dec. 10.—10 a.m.: Female on nest; male near.

Dec. 12.—3.35 p.m.: Female feeding chicks; male near.

Dec. 14 to 24.—Ten visits; parents always present.

Dec. 25.—10.40 a.m.: Parents near. 3.10 p.m.: Parents up above nest; chicks in nest. 6 p.m.: Chicks had left nest; seen with parents nearby.

The incubation period was apparently 16 days. The period from hatching to flying was 17 days. This nest was made of punga scales and odd bits of tea-tree bark, lined with feathers, mostly of red-fronted parakeet.

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SUGGESTED DISPERSAL MOVEMENT BY SACRED KINGFISHER.—The behaviour of the sacred kingfisher (*Halycon sanctus*) in the Wellington Peninsula definitely suggests that limited dispersal movements take place. During autumn, winter and early spring the species is vagrant throughout the district. In the Makara Valley it has been seen in February, April and August. From April to August it also resorts to parks and gardens, and to the seashore. In August, small groups consort on the cliffs of the Tererewhiti area. According to Dr. Oliver ("N.Z. Birds," 1930) kingfishers breed from November to January. In Wellington the birds are breeding in forest at Eastbourne and west of Wellington City by mid-November. However, kingfishers do not occupy territories in the scrublands at South Karori and South Makara for breeding until the summer solstice. Since kingfishers have been heard screeching in built-up areas in Wellington where no nesting sites exist, in late November, it is logical to assume that these birds are late breeders still on passage.—H. L. Secker, Wellington.

BIRD NOTES FROM CANTERBURY.—Several of the pupils of the Hawarden District High School have seen a white heron and in two cases two birds, as follow: May 8, 1951, at Saltwater Creek, on main North Road, about 30 miles from Christchurch (Joan Tindale); May 11, at Scargill, which is just off the main North Road, about 40 miles from Christchurch (Penny Kellock); May 15, at Sheffield (Roger Scott); May 24, at Woodend, about 12 miles from Christchurch (Dudley Hartnell); June 1, do., (Pat Currey); June 7, do., (Margaret Beaton); June 15, at Saltwater Creek, two birds (Mary Neeve); June 21, do., two birds (Ivan Stack). On June 15, at The Peaks, in the Hawarden district, a native pigeon was seen (Peter Haszall).—Margaret Beaton, Hawarden District High School.