

quarters that of the larger terns. The top and sides of their heads were greyish with white throat. The upper feathers of wings and body were medium grey, showing very distinctly dark against their neighbours. When they flew we saw that the upper tail feathers were white, and the tail made a hollow curve about an inch deep. The breasts seemed very pale grey or off-white, but at no time did we see these birds face on — always a sideways view, and then back view when they flew away. They showed no signs of flying away, only changing position now and again, until the tide changed. (The tide was fully in when we first saw them and they were just resting and a few preening.) Their legs and beaks were tomato or orange coloured with the exception of two or more, which were dark. A few of them were sitting on individual piles and crosspieces, but quite a number were intermingled with the White-fronted Terns, which numbered thirty-four, and all seemed to be contented to be together.

In company with these birds were twenty-two Oyster-catchers, both black and smudgy.

A. and J. Prickett

[There seems to be little doubt that these were Black-fronted Terns, which had moved northwards in the autumn from the South Island. Stragglers have occasionally been reported on the Auckland coast, but the only comparable record of a flock is of five seen at Muriwai on 10/3/40 (*Notornis* 3, p. 11).—Ed.]

MYNAS DESTROY YOUNG STARLINGS

At Wanstead, Waipukurau, in 1946, my husband and I heard a great commotion at a starling nest in the eaves of a building. Two mynas pulled out a large partly-feathered chick from under the roofing iron into the open spouting. They each gripped a wing of the chick with their bills and flew together with it for twenty to twenty-five yards and dropped it to the ground from a height of fifteen to twenty feet. They did not alight, but left the chick alive and dazed. This performance was repeated until three more chicks had been disposed of in the same manner. All died very soon. The parent starlings made a great fuss but did not attack the mynas, which completely ignored them.

Mention has been made in *Notornis* of mynas taking young birds from nests, but I have not heard before of two birds combining to carry one chick when it was too large for a single bird to handle.

(Mrs) R. P. Stoddart

WILD DUCKLINGS DROPPING FROM NEST IN TREE

On 19/9/55 I had been chopping the rotten sap off some totara logs and was just going to stop to boil the billy when I heard the loud quacking of a duck which sounded to be coming up the bulldozed road towards me, but on looking more closely I saw that she was coming through the bush. I could also hear something dropping down out of a matai tree and for a moment thought it was one of the local pair of kaka pulling off bark or rotten wood. I then heard a rustling sound in a whara-whara (*Astelia banksii*) and saw that it was the little ducklings scrambling out of the nest and dropping to the ground like bits of bark falling. They just seemed to crash-land, scramble to their feet and head to where the old Grey Duck was calling a few feet away. The nest would be forty feet from the ground, but two heavily leaved woolly punga grew directly underneath and broke the fall of the little ones.

I was only about half a chain away when they were coming down and I