

itself largely by fluttering with wings vibrating strongly and audibly. We had ample opportunity to note the shape of the bill, the white throat and generally light colour underneath, down-curved tail and reddish-brown colouring on top of the tail. Unfortunately the two cameras carried by the party were not ready. On returning home later we checked with the photo by W. P. Mead and all agreed that the bird we had seen was certainly a Pio-Pio. The bird departed quietly through the trees.

A mile from the above place we flushed another from the undergrowth. It flew low and settled in a bunch of hard-fern a little way ahead. It did not move so I bent down and parted the fern fronds, causing it to make an unhurried departure from within six inches of my hands. It showed no fear while being followed at a few feet from perch to perch by Mr Holloway and Mrs Shaler with their cameras. No photograph was obtained owing to the dull light under the bush and the leaves and twigs of the undergrowth. This bird was silent. Between the two places where the birds were seen several others gave alarm and other calls. The alarm call was the most frequent. It is a succession of even staccato notes like that of the bellbird, louder and slower. This is usually given three times with very short pauses between. Mr Holloway remembered having often heard this call up the Patea River fifteen or more years ago, but he had not seen the bird.

The chatter of the Bush Hawk (*Falco novaseelandiae*) has a similar tone but trails down at the end and is not usually repeated in quick succession. The illustration in *New Zealand Birds*, Oliver, of the head of the Pio-Pio by the late Mrs L. A. Daff I consider to be a perfect likeness.

## A VISIT TO A NESTING COLONY OF CRESTED PENGUINS (*Eudyptes p. pachyrhynchus*)

By OLGA SANSOM and PHIL DORIZAC

During the last week of August 1956, while on a five-day visit to Doubtful Sound, Western Southland, on the advice and through the courtesy of Mr George Howard, we landed at Rolla Island, a high forest-clad half-acre island in deep water at the junction of Hall's Arm and Deep Cove in Doubtful Sound. With some 95 miles of waterway this sound is shallow at the entrance - 200 feet in places - due to the slowing down of the ancient glacier, but in Deep Cove, at the head, there are depths of over 1000 feet. Rolla Island stands steep to the sea. The Spanish names of this island, of Bausa Island, Malaspina Sound and Espinosa Point, were given by Malaspina, the Spanish explorer of this sound, in 1793.

From our launch *Constance* seals and penguins were seen at close quarters, while Deep Cove harboured a somewhat unusual visitor, a nine-foot Leopard Seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*). Complete with spots, a surprising turn of speed and athletic abandon, he shot under the *Constance* and out again to toss a fish with an impressive snapping of teeth.

Rolla Island appears to be vermin-free. Its coverage is magnificent. A few massive kahikatea, rimus and miros crown the island; there is a coastal strip of Rata and great Grass Trees (*Dracophyllum*) with trunks eight inches in diameter swinging out over the deep water of the fiord. Coprosmas, the aromatic green flowered *Ascarina lucida*, some pseudo-panax and notho-panax and a small tangle of supplejack compose the scrubby cover. A rug-sized patch of *Imesipteris*, related to the lycopods, and usually epiphytic, makes unexpected ground cover, while *Asplenium flaccidum*, also a tree dweller, was growing in the ground alongside it. Veined white marble was noted on this island. There is no water on the island.

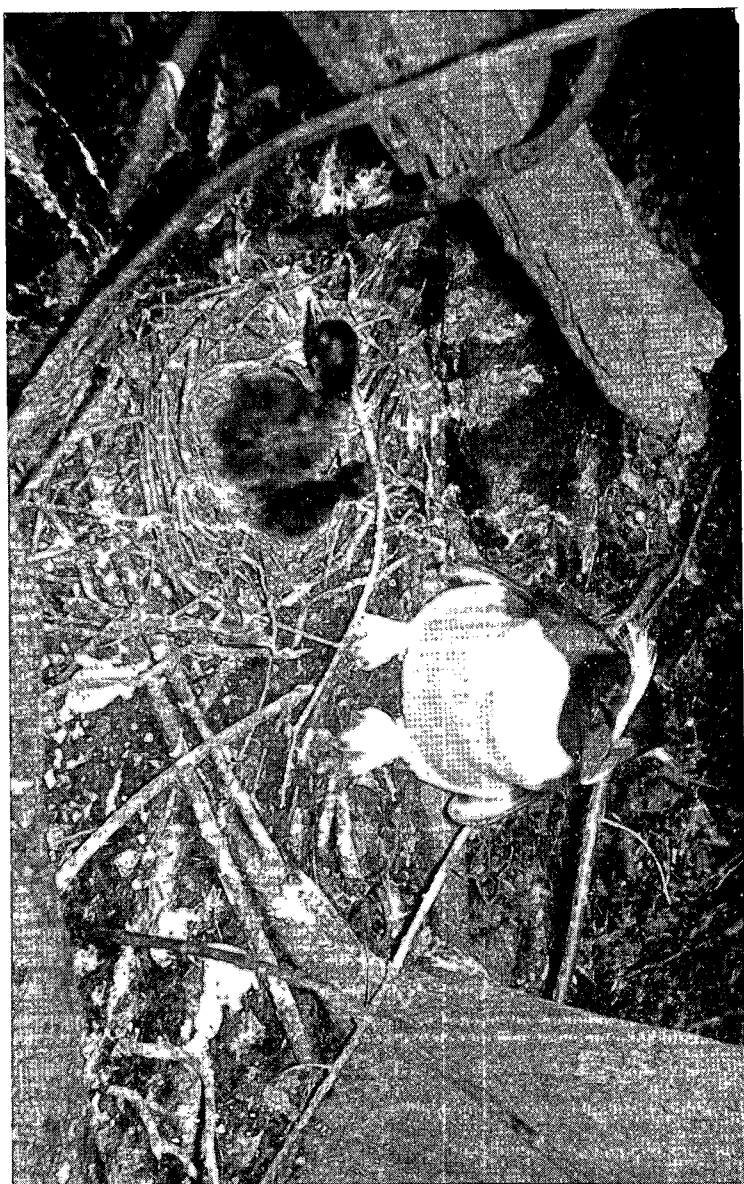


Plate V: Open nest of Crested Penguins on Seymour I.

PHOTO BY PHIL DORZAC



Plate VI: Crested Penguin on Rolla I.

PHOTO BY PHIL DORIZAC



Plate VII (a): Young Crested Penguins.

PHOTO BY PHIL DORIZAC



PHOTO BY MAY PARKIN

Plate VII (b): Little Blue Penguins on nest: Little Barrier I.

It was under the gnarled dry roots of old rata trees that the breeding colonies of Crested Penguins were found. Under our feet the springy peat was alive. Murmurs of the incubating birds were as soothing as the purr of kittens; but in one hole an argument between two birds was conducted in a raucous tenor.

Twenty-six nests were located. Under one tree in various tunnels, by means of a torch, and flat-on-the-face stance, we could see ten birds on nests. Although we restricted our count to observed nests, we could hear birds which were inaccessible to eye and torch. All birds were sitting closely. In three nests when the bird moved we noted two eggs in each, but six nests had only one egg. Old moulted pin-feathers lay at the entrances to the holes. The crests were bright yellow, prominent with an upswept look. With their pale pink feet, large bright eyes and well-groomed plump black and white bodies, these penguins are a fine sight in their peaty recesses.

P.D. visited this island again and also landed on Seymour Island, near the entrance of the sound, on two occasions in September. In the meantime he had procured a suitable camera in order to photograph the birds in their dark recesses (*vide* Plates V, VI and VII).

### SUMMARY

#### Rolla I.

28/8/56. 26 nests found.

12/9/56. Three chicks seen, two being in one nest.

25/9/56. Chicks well grown, the bigger being the size of an adult Little Blue Penguin. On one nest were two dead chicks. There was still one incubating bird with egg unhatched.

#### Seymour I.

11/9/56. One nest with eggs in open under supplejack. This was the only nest seen in the open. On 26/9/56 the nest contained two chicks.

Other birds noted on Rolla I. were: Pigeon 1, Tomtit 2, Fantail 2, Yellow-head 2 in full song, Grey Warbler 1, Bellbird 1, Black Oyster-catcher 4.

## THE ROYAL SPOONBILL

By ROBERT A. WILSON

The establishment of a new species in any country is an interesting study. When the bird is as large and striking as the Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*) it is doubly so. With the breeding of three pairs last season at the white heronry near Okarito, South Westland, and return in May 1956 to the estuary of the Manawatu River of twelve birds, it may be considered that the Royal Spoonbill can be struck from the list of stragglers in New Zealand and promoted to the status of a resident species.

New Zealand has been colonized by several new species in the last hundred years. Buller records the first appearance of the White-eye (*Zosterops lateralis*) in the North Island in 1856, but it was not recorded as breeding till 1862. It was presumed to have come from Australia and was named by the Maoris as 'tauhou' or 'stranger'.

The Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novaehollandiae*) had only one specimen recorded before 1930 which was taken in 1886. Now it is breeding freely in Southland.

The White-faced Heron (*Notophox novaehollandiae*) has been recorded as a straggler fairly frequently over the years. I myself shot one on the Rangitikei River over sixty years ago, but no record exists of its having bred in this country before 1930. It is a common bird in Australia. Shortly after this date it was recorded as breeding in South Canterbury and it is now spreading rapidly over both Islands and is becoming almost a common bird.