

Of the 260 nests in the first group the following is the analysis of clutch sizes on the above date:

Eggs:	0	1	2	3	4
Nests:	8	52	185	13	1

plus 1 nest containing 1 chick

The average size of 11 eggs measured was 50.9 x 37.0 mm. One abnormal egg, 29.0 x 24.1, was found in a nest with a normal one, 51.9 x 36.0.

On the following day a pair of Grey Duck, a pair of Paradise Duck, and a Black-backed Gull were feeding in and near the stream; a large immature Black-backed was harassing the colony and constantly being chased by adult Black-bills.

Pied Oyster-catchers, Pied Stilts, Banded Dotterels and Black-fronted Terns also nest in the vicinity.

— P. CHILD

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL IN CANTERBURY

I have been interested in recent reports by Brathwaite and Andrew (*Notornis* 6, 146 and 185; 7, 57) of the Australian Black-fronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*) in the North Island. I can now add a South Island record.

Some time in April 1956 Mr Bruce Todd saw at Leithfield Beach, North Canterbury, a plover of a kind which he knew he had never seen before. It was feeding in very shallow water. He was able to photograph the bird on colour film and obtained some fairly close shots with a telephoto lens. Subsequently the film was twice run through for my benefit. The orange bill was very evident in some of the photos and the rest of the bird answered well to the written description. I have no doubt about the identification.

— R. J. SCARLETT

NORTH ISLAND ROBIN 'ANTING'

On 31/12/56, returning from the summit of Kapiti down the track leading to the caretaker's house, I noticed a male North Island Robin (*P. australis longipes*) repeatedly picking up something from the track; and performing unusual movements. I soon realized that the bird was 'anting'.

It was turning over dry leaves lying on the ground and picking up ants from underneath and stroking them along the edges of its primaries. The right and left wing were each treated alternately and the feathers stroked from both sides. I was very sorry that owing to the large group of people I was leading, and the short time available, I could not stop long enough, and had to move on, flushing the bird after a short time. The picking up of ants and stroking them along the wings alternately was repeated eight times during the short time of observation. Sometimes one ant was used for both wings, and at other times a fresh ant was picked up after it was used on one wing only.

This was the first time I ever saw a bird anting, and it was therefore of special interest to me.

— F. C. KINSKY

LONG-TAILED CUCKOO AND HOUSE SPARROW

On 29/12/56, a Long-tailed Cuckoo (*Eudynamis taitensis*) was observed stealing a naked chick out of a House Sparrow's nest in the top of a kanuka tree near our kitchen tent. (The camp was on Webber's property at the north end of Kapiti Island.) The next day a second chick was taken from this nest by a Long-tailed Cuckoo.

On 4/1/57, at about 7 p.m., I observed a Long-tailed Cuckoo settling in the same tree, and moving from branch to branch approaching the sparrow's nest. Perched on a small branch just outside the nest opening, the Cuckoo pushed its head and half of its body into the nest (I thought it was looking for another chick), and after a short while flew off and returned to the bush