

## HOW HIGH DO BIRDS LIVE IN THE SOUTHERN ALPS?

Between 22nd December, 1957, and 10th January, 1958, the Godley, Murchison and Tasman Valley were visited. As this region rises to a greater altitude than the range of most birds, opportunity was taken to record the highest elevations at which several species were seen. The heights in the table were estimated by an interpolation of the spot heights on the map "The Mount Cook Alpine Regions" (Lands and Survey Department, Wellington) and will be correct to  $\pm$  200 feet.

The habitat in which each bird was seen does not imply that this is the typical habitat for the species. Although a heavy snow-fall during the period may have driven the birds below their maximum altitude, these heights may help to record one extreme of a bird's range of tolerance to its environment. The notes are thus offered as a contribution to the description of the range of several birds.

Species	Greatest height seen	Habitat
Southern Black-backed Gull	7,200ft.	Snow and rock
N. Z. Pipit	5,800	Snow and rock
Kea	5,500	Alpine tussock and fell field
Yellow-hammer	5,300	Alpine tussock
Lesser Redpoll	5,000	Scrub - snow totara ( <i>Podocarpus nivalis</i> )
Blackbird	4,700	Scrub - <i>P. nivalis</i> , <i>Phyllo-</i> <i>cladus</i> sp. <i>Dracophyllum</i> spp.
Grey Warbler	4,300	" " "
Paradise Duck	4,000	Glacial lake
Black-fronted Tern	3,800	River bed
Banded Dotterel	3,500	" "
Chaffinch	3,200	Trees over 12 feet high
Chukor	3,000	Scrub - matagouri ( <i>Discaria toumatou</i> )
S.I. Pied Oystercatcher	2,900	River bed
Starling	2,500	Buildings
House Sparrow	2,500	"

N.Z. Forest Service

GRAEME CAUGHLEY.

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## DOTTERELS ON MOUNTAIN TOPS

While I was doing geological field-work along the north coast of Stewart Island in the summer of 1951-52, a friend and I saw a Red-breasted Dotterel (*C. obscurus*) at the summit of Mt. Anglem (3200 ft.). Here I should think the vegetation and general conditions are very similar to those found on the rather less elevated Table Hill, from which area they were reported many years ago by Guthrie-Smith (Mutton Birds and Other Birds, p. 111).

The summit area of Mt. Anglem shows several hundred acres of open tussocky, and in places, boggy ground. At the time of our visit the weather was very cold and misty; and it was probable that more birds than the single one which we saw were present.

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