

## WRYBILL IN NORTH-WEST NELSON

There are curiously few reports of the Wry-billed Plover (*A. frontalis*) in the northern parts of the South Island, through or over which these birds must pass on their seasonal migrations between the Canterbury river-beds where they breed and the northern coast of the North Island where most of them spend the autumn and winter. The following record therefore is of some interest, especially as it seems to be the first report of a Wrybill actually on the west coast of the South Island.

On 20/1/59 after visiting the big West Wanganui Inlet in north-west Nelson, I reached the open sea-coast at the mouth of the shallow Paturau river. Here among the stones was a small flock of eight Banded Dotterels (*C. bicinctus*) which but for their quiet calls might have escaped notice. With them was a single much greyer bird, which on closer inspection — to approach within ten yards of it was not difficult — proved to be a Wrybill. It looked leggy and slender; and as it lacked a black pectoral band, it was evidently a young bird of the current season.

It would be interesting to know the destination of these Banded Dotterels which were obviously on passage. There passed through my mind the thought that a 'lost' Wrybill which got caught up with a flock of migrating Banded Dotterels in this part of New Zealand, might well reach south-east Australia which is the autumn destination of many of these dotterels, though the route which they take is still a matter of conjecture.

At one time or another the beaches and tidal flats of Farewell Spit have been visited by several of New Zealand's leading ornithologists (v. Stidolph 1948. *N.Z. Bird Notes* III. 64-67); yet none of them has reported the Wrybill from this most likely area. When I mentioned the finding of a Wrybill at Putarau to Mr. B. D. Bell, who has been collecting data on the birds of Marlborough and Nelson, he informed me that he had seen two Wrybills on 2/1/59 at L. Grassmere, but he knew of no other occurrences in the northern region of the South Island.

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## UNUSUAL SITE FOR A BUSH HAWK'S NEST

My sons have a farm at Okure Bay near French Pass; and as they came up their hillside road one day in October they were surprised to see a Bush Hawk (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) diving rapidly at their truck. They stopped and got out to face a violent onslaught from a pair of Bush Hawks. At first they could not resist ducking as the angry birds struck at them. Deciding that there was a nest not far away, the boys searched and found it under a heap of stacked posts right beside the road. The nest was well made of sticks and feathers but there were no eggs.

In due course three eggs were laid at the beginning of November; but after incubation had lasted more than a fortnight the nest came to grief. The eggs were found outside the nest with their sides broken away and the contents gone. Perhaps a stoat or polecat was the culprit. The farm dogs would not go near the nest.

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