shelter behind any stone or in a hollow (Stonehouse, 1956). It is suggested by Murphy (1936) that after one of the chicks has been fed and the parent has discharged its feeding response, the other chick if not immediately nearby would be regarded as extraneous matter and thus eaten. He thinks that the two chicks produce a conflict between the parental response and the desire to eat. It can be seen that this hypothesis is in conflict with Lack's theory as it is most likely that the larger chick would be first to leave the nest and thus be eaten by one of the parents. Furthermore, the rearing of one chick is not limited to periods of unfavourable conditions but shows every indication of being a constant heritable behaviourism.

Paludan (1951) and Wynne-Edwards (1954) have suggested that mechanisms to reduce breeding potential in sea-birds constitute a density-dependent control on the recruitment rate, but this does not explain infanticide in this case where its extent does not seem to vary with the density of the population. It may be that more detailed work on the life history of this bird in the future will explain this puzzling behaviour.

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OBITUARY — JAMES SHARON WATSON

The death occurred on August 11th of James Sharon Watson, who was a senior scientific officer in the Animal Ecology Section of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Mr. Watson was born in Oxford, England, and after attending Rugby School, graduated B.A. in Zoology at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1941. During the war, Mr. Watson carried out important studies on the ecology of rats on behalf of the Port of London Health Authority and later undertook similar work in the Middle East.

In 1949, Mr. Watson came to New Zealand to join the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and undertook work on the ecology of various introduced mammals — especially the rabbit. He had a life long interest in birds, and, as an undergraduate, was Secretary of the Oxford Ornithological Society. He joined the Ornithological Society of New Zealand soon after his arrival here, and later published an important paper on the recovery of ringed harriers as well as two short notes on mynas and cuckoos. His main ornithological studies, however, remain unpublished. They include a ten-year study of the distribution and abundance of the two colour phases of the introduced magpie and also important contributions on the inter-relationships between cats, rats and birds on Little Barrier Island. Mr. Watson's colleagues hope to have some of this work published in due course.

Mr. Watson, who was 40, is survived by his wife.

— P.C.B.