

MORE INSTANCES OF ANTING

I was interested to read the reports regarding "anting" in birds. I saw two similar occurrences early in the year 1959 in Hastings.

On the first occasion I noticed three Mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*) acting in an unusual way. They were grouped at the edge of a concrete footpath, and were very agitated and excited.

I was able to get quite close to them and saw that they were picking up ants and apparently tucking them swiftly into the feathers under their wing. During this process the wings were kept half extended and the birds were almost sitting right back on their tails. All their movements were characterised by urgency, almost amounting to a frenzy.

I had a look at the ants and they too were very excited and boiling up out of the entrance to their nests. Many of them were winged and getting ready to swarm.

Two days later I saw a similar incident in an adjacent street. This time the birds were Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

Again there was the same frenzy of action which led to my almost being able to stand on the birds before they flew away; and I was able to identify large numbers of winged ants present in the swarm on the footpath.

Whether the birds were picking out only the winged ants or not I don't know. But I was impressed by the fact that something about the ants had, in both cases, triggered off the birds' reactions and impelled them into this urgent and extraordinary display of "anting."

D. A. BATHGATE



TEREK SANDPIPER IN KAIPARA

In the late afternoon of 3/5/59 we were scrutinising Banded Dotterels (*C. bicinctus*) and Wrybills (*A. frontalis*), as they fed widely scattered over the sandy tidal flats of mid-Kaipara between Okahukura and the 'island.' Here the area over which shore-birds can feed is immense, especially at low tide, when a thin film of water may remain in very shallow but quite extensive depressions in the firm sands. For the season of the year the weather was typically south-westerly with big variations in the light. Sometimes the westering sun shone brightly from a clear sky, sometimes it was hidden by swiftly passing light clouds.

In one of the depressions at a distance of about 120 yards, we noticed four Bar-tailed Godwits together with a much smaller wader which had vividly yellow or orange legs. In the shimmering light the size and shape of its body could not be accurately estimated; and our first impression was that the legs were long enough for the bird to be a tattler (*Heteroscelus*), but unusually bright. As we drew nearer, we realised that the yellow legs were reflected in the glassy surface of the water and so appeared nearly twice as long as they really were. We could now see clearly the proportions of the bird and its long slender upcurved bill; and it was obvious that the bird was not a tattler, but