

No increase in numbers in the *lawsoniana* hedge. 7 birds arrived in the hawthorn hedge from the Papakura direction.

6.20 — All birds in the paddock moved to the *elaegnus* hedge with one bird flying from the latter to the *lawsonianas*. Now 10 birds in the hawthorn hedge.

6.21 — 30 birds in two parties of 15 arrived from Clevedon direction, the leader singing.

6.22 — 10 arrivals from Clevedon. Considerable fluttering in the *elaegnus*. Estimated 200 birds in the *lawsonianas*. Getting darker with visibility three miles.

6.23 — Birds have moved deeper into the foliage and the volume of song is decreasing in the *lawsoniana* hedge. Loud chorus in the *elaegnus*.

6.26 — Sudden silence in the *lawsoniana* hedge for a second or two, and then only the odd call heard. Visibility 2 miles. *Lawsoniana* birds invisible with only about 12 visible in the *elaegnus*.

6.30 — All birds singing again.

6.31 — *Lawsoniana* birds stopped singing. Visibility 1 mile. Odd call heard from the latter roost but the *elaegnus* birds continued unabated.

6.32 — Same, except for odd pauses in *elaegnus* group.

6.33 — Similar. Visibility $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. *Elaegnus* group quietening down and only the odd Myna and one Thrush audible in the *lawsonianas*.

6.37 — Sudden pause in the song of the *elaegnus* roost, with only a dozen birds taking up the song. Another pause and fewer still resumed singing.

6.38 — A few birds at the Clevedon end of the *elaegnus* hedge singing.

6.40 — Visibility 100 yards. Intermittent chorus with frequent interruptions.

6.41 — Sudden silence for 10 seconds, one bird called, 20 seconds silence, and then a small chorus.

6.44 — Final silence, except for the Thrushes and Blackbirds.

J. A. PEART



MORE RECORDS OF WELCOME SWALLOWS

In March, 1959, I first noticed a bird which I took to be a Welcome Swallow (*H. neoxena*) about two miles from Matata in the Bay of Plenty. Work was being done to make an improved habitat for wildfowl and the Swallow was hawking insects over about an acre of shallow open water in a very large area of swamps. It eventually alighted on a stump and allowed me to approach to about 20 feet before it again flew. On subsequent visits a single Swallow was seen by myself and others, including Mr. K. H. Miers, over this pool. In November, 1959, I observed three of these birds over the swamp near Secombe's Canal, which is only about half a mile from the place of the original sighting.

A. G. HALL

On 17/5/60, with my wife and son, I casually visited Ngawha Springs, near Kaikohe. Here at 450 feet above sea level is a small lake, Tuwhakino, about an acre in extent. It is an old blowhole among rather barren gumlands, where cinnabar was once mined. Springs

bubble along one side of the lake and up the little valley; and there is a smell of sulphur in the air. Here we were able to watch two Welcome Swallows. Much of their time was spent flitting or skimming over the water, but occasionally they flew low over a grassy slope recently broken in from gumland. Sometimes they flew together in playful chases. Their favourite perches were the tops of two stakes near the middle of the lake. They also alighted frequently and rested on the mud at the edge. One of the Swallows was an adult with long tail-streamers and much red on face and throat; the other, less brightly marked and with a shorter tail, appeared to be a young bird of this season. From time to time a passing House Sparrow would vainly try to chivvy them.

Mr. J. P. Baker, the manager of the Spa Hotel, informed me that he had first noticed Welcome Swallows over Lake Tuwhakino about four months ago; sometimes there were three, sometimes none; they would be missing for a few days and then return. He was hoping they would eat the sandflies which were only too prevalent around the lake.

Ngawha Springs is about ten miles distant from Kawakawa where Welcome Swallows bred successfully last summer (Notornis VIII, 262). These Swallows are evidently hardy enough to survive the colder months in the 'winterless north'; and it appears that a resident stock is becoming established. Other suitable waters where they are likely to occur near Kaikohe are Lakes Owhareiti and Omapere.

R. B. SIBSON



ANTING BY STARLINGS AT ROTORUA

On 28/1/60 my wife and I had an opportunity of watching Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) indulging in this strange practice. Looking out of the window on to the back lawn, we noticed a family party, consisting of two adults and three youngsters all in varying stages of moult, diligently "working" a small patch of newly-mown lawn. At first, we thought that they were feeding on the grass-grub, which has been prevalent this summer, when I suddenly realised that we were at last actually eye-witnesses of "anting," something which we had never seen before. The modus operandi was as follows:— The Starlings would pick up not one, but several ants, raise a wing, push the bill laden with ants under the wing, pressing the bill and wing hard against the body, then quickly withdraw the bill, to repeat the operation on the other wing. Having done this, the birds would then fluff their feathers, assume a crouching stance and what appeared to be a most rapturous expression, before resuming the hunt for more victims. This behaviour was watched from a window at a distance of twenty feet for at least ten minutes. How long the Starlings had been doing this, or how long it would have continued I cannot say, as a neighbour's cat terminated the proceedings by flushing the operators. On examination of the lawn I found a colony of the small red ant of an individual length of eight millimetres.

M. J. S. BLACK



GREENSHANK NEAR INVERCARGILL

On 10/3/56, a grey morning of light, misty rain, we found a Greenshank (*T. nebularia*) resting on the Awarua shellbank slightly