

PIED STILTS' SHORT INCUBATION AND FLEDGING PERIODS

On 25/8/59, a pair of Pied Stilts (*H. leucocephalus*) was seen making a nest in a wet hollow, the site of the first nest of 1944.

Aug. 27th, 2 eggs; 28th, 3; 29th, 3 at 8 a.m.; 30th, 4 at c8 a.m.

Sept. 21st, 6 a.m., one chick almost out of egg. The other three eggs chipped a little. 6 p.m., one chick two yards from nest and two others just hatched, being still wet.

Sept. 22, 7 p.m., three chicks away from nest. The fourth egg still chipped. The bill of the chick was seen moving.

Sept. 23rd, 6 a.m., last chick had hatched.

Sept. 24th, last chick dead one foot from nest. Its hatching was abnormal, so is not further treated.

The incubation period, from Aug. 29 or 30 to Sept. 21, was either 23 or 22 days, depending on whether the last egg was laid after 8 a.m. on Aug. 30, and whether incubation began on 29th or 30th. It is unlikely that the bird started to sit before Aug. 29 as all the eggs chipped on the same day, Sept. 21. It seems highly probable that the incubation period was only 22 days.

On Oct. 18 the three young Stilts all flew. The hatching to flying record, Sept. 21 to Oct. 18 is definitely 27 days. These chicks grew very fast and were fine specimens.

Summary

The incubation period was almost certainly not more than 23 days and is thought to have been really 22. The shortest record previously was 23 days for one chick only of a brood in 1947 (N.Z.B.N. III, 108). Previous records have been 23 (one only) to 27 days, with an average of 25.

The hatching to flying period was 27 days, also the shortest yet recorded. The shortest periods previously were 29 days for one brood and for one chick of another brood (*Notornis* IV, 119). Earlier records were 29 to 37 days and averaged 32.7, excluding winter breeding.

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TATTLER AND HUDSONIAN GODWIT IN THE HEATHCOTE-AVON ESTUARY

On 17/7/60 a Tattler (*H. incanus*) was present with about 3000 Oystercatchers (*H. o. finschi*) and 115 Godwits (*L. lapponica baueri*) at the high-tide roost near the entrance to the Heathcote-Avon estuary. A strong south-west wind was blowing and the Tattler was standing with the Godwits, maintaining its foothold with difficulty; in fact, it seemed literally to be sheltering behind them. Characters particularly noted were the yellow legs; a dark line through the eye, white face, uniform dark crown and back; faint bars on upper flanks but otherwise no markings on the underparts. It was evidently a young bird. If adult, it should have assumed breeding plumage and left New Zealand in March or April instead of staying over a southern winter. After its discovery by E.G.T., it was closely studied by several members of the O.S.N.Z. when they were carrying out a quarterly wader count.

It could not be found amongst the larger waders when approximately monthly observations were made during the following five months (E.G.T., J. R. Jackson and E. H. Southerill). It was possibly missed owing to the numbers of birds present. However, it is likely that it