

**PIED STILT** — Numbers variable throughout the year. c. 20 on 28/10/60; c. 30 on 3/12/60; c. 60 on 28/12/60; c. 100 on 3/1/61; 50+ on 25/2/61; c. 30 on 19/3/61, 1/4/61 and 14/4/61; 50+ on 30/4/61; c. 140 on 5/6/61 was the highest count for the year; c. 40 on 9/7/61 and 18/8/61. There is evidence here of 2 peaks with the main one in May/June, as noted last year.

**RED-BILLED AND BLACK-BILLED GULL** — Throughout the year there were generally slightly more Red-billed than Black-billed Gulls, the ratio being about 7 to 5. c. 12 from October to January; c. 20 on 25/2/61; c. 120 on 25/3/61; c. 80 on 1/4/61; c. 60 on 14/4/61; 28+ on 5/6/61; c. 55 on 9/7/61; c. 155 on 18/8/61, about equal numbers of each species.

**BLACK-FRONTED TERN** — None seen at either of the estuaries this year and apparently very few visited the Wellington west coast during their non-breeding season.

**CASPIAN TERN** — Counts were generally lower than last year. c. 6 present on most visits. 21 on 3/1/61; 24 on 14/4/61.

**WHITE-FRONTED TERN** — A few occasionally come into the estuary in summer and autumn. 120 on 8/1/61 and c. 130 on 19/3/61 at the rivermouth.

**KINGFISHER** — Present in the estuary from autumn to end of winter. First seen on 1/4/61. Normally 2 or 3 counted. Last seen on 18/8/61.

**GOLDFINCH AND LESSER REDPOLL** — Seen in the upper estuary in moderate numbers in autumn feeding on the seed heads of *Salicornia* and of estuarial grasses, sedges and rushes. Several hundreds on 30/4/61; c. 30 on 5/6/61.

— M.J.I., I.G.A.

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## SHORT NOTES

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### DABCHICK NESTING IN A BOATSHED

After an initial setback, a Dabchick (*P. rufopectus*) nesting in a boatshed at Tokaanu, at the southern end of Lake Taupo, has successfully reared some young birds.

The Dabchick first laid two eggs on 1st and 2nd November, 1959, in the nest which was placed nine inches above the water and two feet back from the edge of the water, under the loading platform in a boatshed. A rise in the stream destroyed this nest and forced the bird to build another six inches higher; but in the process she lost one egg over the side into the water, and the egg which she did save was infertile. It is not known how she transferred this egg to the second nest.

In 1960 the bird again nested in the same place and in early November laid two eggs. The hatching period was between three and four weeks. The two young chicks were seen with the parents which used to stay in the boatshed overnight.

The female Dabchick became quite tame, coming into the boatshed when called. She did not appear to be unduly disturbed when the motor was started alongside her.

— R. J. BIDDLE