

## LATE BREEDING OF BLACK-BACKED GULLS

During a routine visit to Somes Island (Wellington harbour) for the night of 18-19 February, 1961, a Black-backed Gull (*L. dominicanus*) was found incubating an egg on a fresh nest near the north end of the island; and in addition, two small downy chicks, about two weeks old, were found on the eastern slopes.

Under normal conditions, egg-laying of this species on Somes Island starts during the last week of October, with a peak during the first two weeks in November, and all the chicks have flown by the end of January.

F. C. KINSKY

## REVIEWS

*A Treasury of New Zealand Bird Song. Supplement No. 1*, by Kenneth and Jean Bigwood. Published by A. H. and A. W. Reed.

The splendidly original work of the Bigwoods in recording the voices of birds in New Zealand is well known through three records published in 1959. Now a fourth record fills some of the inevitable gaps, so that the claim that these records have a scientific as well as an entertainment value is very much strengthened. Sitting quietly at home the listener may now compare the calls of North Island and South Island Brown Kiwis and the songs of Yellowhead and Whitehead, though the Whitehead has a considerably wider repertoire than is here recorded. Students of bird-song, especially if they live outside the South Island, will be grateful for the opportunity to hear the rather elusive warbling of the unique Brown Creeper. It is regrettable that only the monotonous call-note of the Pipit is given and nothing of its lively song.

Text and commentary are by Gordon Williams, who has again ranged widely in search of quotations.

May the good work continue!

— R.B.S.

*Focus on New Zealand Birds*, by G. J. H. Moon. Published by A. H. and A. W. Reed.

As the popular interest in natural history increases, such is the demand for books like "Focus on New Zealand Birds" that they are apt to go rapidly out of print and become obtainable only second-hand as a collector's piece at a greatly enhanced price. It was therefore good news to hear that a second edition, revised and enlarged, was being prepared and the reviewer was happy to note that immediately on publication it was conspicuously displayed in the bookshops of Westland.

The author is well known to readers of *Notornis* not only for his fine photographs but also for the acuteness of his observations on the behaviour of birds at the nest. In the light of wider experience much of the text has been rewritten, so that the principle has been to describe each species under six headings, namely habitat, distribution, field characters, voice, food, breeding.

To the reader, as he turns the pages, this book offers a feast of delight in the photographs alone. Special mention may perhaps be made of pictures of the Banded Rail, masterly examples of what your genuine modern naturalist can achieve when challenged by a beautiful but secretive bird. The text is well stocked with sound information for all who wish to learn or further the art of bird-watching.

— R.B.S.