

billed Pigeons seem higher pitched because of an upper harmonic missing in the territorial coo of males. This relatively unspecific sound is uttered as irregular, frequent repetitions at intervals of 6-7 s, seldom 10 s.

The call lasts about 1.5 s. I have counted calls of 2 - 87 repetitions. The birds always call from tops of trees. Each call is uttered with a slight bow of the head.

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## SHORT NOTE

### Harrier attacks Dabchick and Welcome Swallows attack Falcon

I have seen two very interesting instances of birds attacking other birds in flight in the last twelve months. The first example is of an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) attacking a New Zealand Dabchick (*Poliiocephalus rufpectus*).

Sarah Beadel and I visited Te Arero Bay on the northern side of Lake Rotoiti by boat on 2 December 1989. This small bay has two arms, and as we proceeded up the western arm we saw a pair of Dabchick, which we subsequently disturbed as we got closer to them in the boat. One lifted off the water and flew up the arm in front of us. A nearby Harrier quickly swooped at one of the Dabchick as it was flying just above the water. This was a definite attack, not a chance intersection of flight paths. The Harrier attacked from above and behind the Dabchick and so the Dabchick did not see it until it was within one metre, whereupon the Dabchick took evasive action and plummeted into the water, diving underwater. It did not resurface for a considerable period, and was very agitated when it did.

The second incident was witnessed on Motuhora (Whale) Island on 29 March 1990. A single New Zealand Falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) was seen above Sulphur Bay and it was attacked repeatedly by a small flock of Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*). The Falcon was taking minor evasive action but the swallows posed only small nuisance value. However, they were far quicker and more manoeuvrable than the Falcon at such close quarters.

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