

NESTLING FOODS OF THE SOUTH ISLAND FERNBIRD
(*Bowdleria punctata punctata*)

In the course of a study (by MB) of population dynamics and territory size of the South Island Fernbird, new information on the food of nestlings has been obtained. The study area is a 1 km fringe of coastal land verging on the Invercargill estuary (46°27'S 168°19'E).

Nest 1978/22 contained three eggs which hatched on 17/1/79. At 0700 hours on 20/1/79 an adult was seen feeding the chicks. At the next visit at 2030 hours on 22/1/79 the nest had been raided (predator unknown), and three gizzard linings (measuring 10 x 8 x 8 mm approximately) with contents remained in the nest. Examination (by AM) of the contents revealed a varied diet consisting mainly of spiders (Araneida), caterpillars (Lepidoptera) and plantbugs (Hemiptera). Other arthropods and seeds were also present in lesser numbers (Table 1). The food ranged in size from about 1 mm (mites) to 20 mm (caterpillars).

TABLE 1 — Species composition and the number of foods fed to three nestling Fernbirds.

Food items	Gizzard number			Total (n = 3)
	I	II	III	
Blattodea				
Blattidae				
<u>Celatoblatta notialis</u>	1	0	1	2
Hemiptera				
Aphrophoridae				
<u>Carystotera pingens</u>	1	2	2	5
Nabidae	4	3	4	11
Coleoptera Ad.	2	1	2	5
L.	0	0	1	1
Diptera Ad.	indet.			
Stratiomyiidae Ad.				
<u>Odontomyia</u> sp.	0	0	1	1
Calliphoridae	Ad. indet.	1	0	2
Tipulidae	Ad. indet.	0	1	1
Lepidoptera	Ad. indet.	1	1	3
Nymphalidae	L.			
<u>Argyrophenax antipodum</u>	1	3	2	6
Noctuidae	L. indet.	1	2	5
indet.	L.	9	7	23
Amphipoda	indet.	0	1	2
Acari	indet.	0	3	3
Araneida				
Lycosidae	indet.	18	27	78
Thomisidae				
<u>Diaea</u> sp.	7	4	4	15
Theridiidae ?	indet.	11	8	28
Opiliones	indet.	0	0	2
Seeds	indet.	2	3	6

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