

LETTERS

20 January 1980

The Editor,

Sir,

By one of those strange coincidences I have just come across some very recently published corroborative evidence for my observation on the brood size of the North Island Kokako (*Notornis* 26: 318-319). Westerskov (*Forest and Bird* 13-3, August 1979) incorporates a translation of an 87-year-old paper by Reischek. At page 8, quoting Reischek in translation, he says, 'The bird was nowhere abundant and was observed in pairs or families consisting of male and female and *three to four* young ones' (my italics). This recently resurrected observation agrees with my sighting of a family party of six birds. It would seem from Reischek's paper that he was fairly familiar with the bird in the wild, even to the extent of making soup out of them (p. 9)!

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5 February 1980

The Editor,

Sir,

Black-winged Petrel behaviour at new breeding sites

In reply to the points raised by Thomas (1979, Black-winged Petrels in the Far North, *Notornis* 26: 352), I can confirm that the behaviour described in his note was regularly noted at the newly colonised breeding sites on Lord Howe Island by myself and other observers during the colonisation processes (Fullagar, McKean & Van Tets, 1974. 'Report on the birds' in Environmental survey of Lord Howe Island. Eds H. F. Recher & S. S. Clark. Sydney: Australian Museum. 86 pp.). On the basis of a few collected specimens, there was no evidence that any of the birds colonising had previously bred, and while the aerial behaviour described certainly occurs after egg-laying in established breeding colonies, I do not know whether it is carried out then by established breeding birds or only by non-breeding birds. It seems highly likely that the petrels (*Pterodroma nigripennis*) will eventually attempt to breed at the areas where they have been displaying in northern New Zealand.

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