

on the very inviting flat. Other birds were Canada Goose, South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Wrybill and Turnstone, in very small numbers.

The Sunday brought a fierce gale with lashing rain, but the party set out for Edwin Sheat's, near Palmerston, to see ledge-nesting Spotted Shags, all along a single cliff-face ledge of rock. On the way stops were made to look at the birds of small lagoons and c. 580 Spotted Shag with c. 150 Black-backed Gull feeding on a shoal of fish close to the shore. A Giant Petrel sailed close by. The journey on foot to the shags was successful, at the cost of being soaked. All were invited into the house and Edwin Sheat and his wife and family dried the bedraggled party and fed them royally. Some went out in the rain to look at nests of Blue Penguin and Sooty Shearwater at the cliffs on the farm.

Lake Ki-Wainono was the goal for the Monday, a fine day. The 'bag' was pleasantly varied, including many Little Shag, Black Swan, Mallard and Shoveler, 12 Banded Dotterels, a few Pied Stilts, a Black-backed Gull colony of 23 nests, 5 Caspian and 12 White-fronted Terns, 2 Canada Geese, 4 Wrybills, 4 Godwits and one each of White-faced Heron, Knot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Stint, Southern Skua and Little Tern.

The very keen and happy party dispersed on the Monday afternoon, very thankful to the McVinnies for all they had done to achieve such success and to the Sheats for their liberal hospitality.

— H.R.McK.

———— ★ ————

NOTICES

HORUHORU GANNETS — Disaster or Very Late Season ?

Landing on Horuhoru, 9/11/68, the Steins expected to find fifteen to sixteen hundred occupied nests — instead they found three hundred. The occupied nests were wide apart, spaced irregularly. Between them were traces of a thousand or more nesting sites of which many seemed to have had recent use of considerable duration. No sign of egg or chick remained however, but several hundred adults were floating on the waves, half-a-mile to the north-west.

We had expected to see chicks up to seven weeks of age. Instead we found very few much over a fortnight. This means that every chick that had hatched before 1st October had subsequently perished. There were a few eggs that had been laid in the last day or so, and these were in old nests. Some years ago we established that if a pair had lost their first chick, they were sometimes able to lay again, after the lapse of four to five weeks.

Whatever the cause, and however the Gannets now act, it seems likely that this season will hold the record for chick mortality. The bad weather we have experienced over the last few weeks must have made family life very difficult for the Gannets. We would like to know how widespread the effects have been and would be very pleased if those who visit other gannetries would write to the editor.

At Kaikoura during the 1968-69 breeding season approximately 500 breeding pairs of Red-billed Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*) have been individually colour-banded.