Owing to much evidence of the presence of vermin, visits were discontinued in case the young should be exposed to attack after being separated from the parents by observers.

27/11/51—Went to ring chicks but found none. One fussy male, one dead bird, eaten, perhaps his mate and the mother of the chick, or chicks; one pair a little fussy at first, but became indifferent. Rashly I concluded that the first pair had been the parents and had lost their chicks through vermin. My previous experience should have taught me to look for chicks 200 to 400 yards away, on the edge of cover. I realised my folly when I later found a pair guarding a flying youngster. They probably were the "indifferent" pair, though this cannot be proved.

No. 4 NEST.

9/12/51—Three eggs (F. Murray).

26/12/51—Eggs gone. My dog found a rat close to the nest and we had a long hunt through heavy weed, a tidal lagoon and low mangrove. The dog was willing but inexperienced and at last when it appeared that the rat might escape, Miss Joyce Atcheson, aged 14, plunged through a deep muddy tidal creek and despatched it with my stick, while her sister Helen, aged 6, who had assisted ardently, danced an excited haka on the mudflat. Such being the calibre of our young naturalists I think we have little to fear for the future.

Determined efforts were made to assist the breeding birds. Cattle were a grave menace to the first two nests so iron post standards and wire were carried out and fences erected round the nests. When a beast grazed up to a nest the pair would make aggressive passes, try to lead it away, or flutter close to its face, but entirely without avail. The birds still did this after the fences had been put up. They were not in the least worried by the fences. Traps were set for vermin but no catch was made until the autumn in 1952 when a polecat ferret, or fitch, was caught in a wire-netting cage trap with a funnel entrance, baited with raw meat.

A full egg-laying clutch period still remains to be obtained. In the case of No. 2 nest, found with one egg, the second egg was laid the next day and the third four days later. This is probably not usual.

In the account of the 1949 nesting ("Nesting of New Zealand Dotterel," Notornis, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 24) I suggested that incubation may start immediately the third egg was laid, or even when there were only the two first eggs. I am now satisfied that this was not correct. One good record was obtained in 1950 and two quite good ones in 1951. These showed that incubation twice almost certainly began the day after the last egg was laid, and once two days after. Diligent observing showed that the desultory sitting of either bird at odd times ceases abruptly and the female takes over completely. Nothing definite can be arrived at yet; these birds seem to be particularly regardless of any idea of set rules.

This account shows little of the great amount of work done by many interested persons to produce it. The intensive watching and recording was carried out mainly by Miss G. M. Cowles, K. E. Fox, F. Murray and myself, while a great mass of general work was willingly performed by a large number of members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, the Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, and other good friends.

DISPERSAL MOVEMENT OF WHITE-NECKED HERON (**Notophoyx pacifica**).—In view of the recent record of a bird of this species in New Zealand (Notornis, Vol. 5, p. 38), readers may be interested to learn that white-necked heron are unusually plentiful in the south-west of Western Australia this year (1952). Evidence of this invasion is being collected and summarised. The influx has been attributed to the drought conditions prevailing in parts of northern Australia, but evidence of this is not entirely satisfactory.—Eric H. Sedgwick, Wooroloo, West. Aust.