the parent birds desert them. There were no results from this hatch. On 10 January two young chicks appeared from the same two adults. Two of the young ones from the October hatch frequent the fowl run, but are kept out of the garden by the old birds. On 12 February they were mating again, but in this case I think it was a different hen, though the cock bird was the old one. I was then away for a year, and since coming back have only noticed one clutch of two. I found a weka's egg in the vegetable garden which had been punctured and contained a half-grown chick. As they are inveterate egg-eaters, I am wondering whether this is stopping their increase. One I found in the fowl house had speared an egg and was running off with it. Usually they suck them in the nests. Some few years ago I was having about twenty acres of dense scrub fallen on the hill. The scrubcutters found freshly constructed wekas' nests, and just as they were finishing they found a third nest with two young wekas a day or two old. From the first nest to the last was a distance of about seven chains, and I am convinced that the parent birds had successively transferred their eggs from one nest to another. The egg is a big egg for the size of the bird, but apparently they can carry an egg in their bill. *J. M. MONCKTON*

## REVIEW

E. G. TURBOTT: Notes on the plumages and breeding cycle of the Spotted Shag, *Phalacrocorax (Stictocarbo) punctatus punctatus* (Sparrman 1786). Rec. Auck. Inst. Mus. 4 (6): 343-363 (1956).

Details are given of the distribution of this species on some islands in the Hauraki Gulf, on the west coast mainland of the Auckland Peninsula and off-lying Oaia Island. An account then follows of the various plumage sequences, and, since it conforms to data on the colony at Bethells, Murphy's terminology for South American Shags is followed. Adult plumage is divided into three phases – pre-nuptial, nuptial and post-nuptial, correlated respectively in New Zealand with pair formation in April and May, nest building in June and July, and egg laying and hatching in August and September. All the sequences are very fully described and illustrated with some excellent field photographs by O. Petersen. Juvenile plumages are also divided into three sequences – nestling, juvenal and sub-adult. These, too, are fully described, or rather the first two are, for the third is ill-defined, but eventually seems to resolve into a plumage very similar to the contemporaneous adult post-nuptial.

A table summarises details of the breeding cycle in the eastern (Hauraki Gulf) and west coast colonies, and makes obvious some interesting differences which are briefly discussed. However, Mr Turbott emphasises that satisfactory explanations for these differences in the timing of the breeding cycle will have to await the collection of more data.

It is extremely useful to have this painstaking and accurate account of a complicated problem in natural history, though I found the general clarity of the account a little clouded by the occasional use of 'fledgling', 'immature' and 'post-juvenal' without it being stated in what way, if any, the meaning of these terms differs from the apparent equivalents used to describe the plumage phases. May we hope that Mr Turbott will soon be able to extend his attention to the Spotted Shag populations of the South Island and Cook Strait?

*G.R.W.*

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