

forest. Much of this is hill-country rimu/hard beech forest, where present logging techniques cause great damage. If these proposals are adopted, we can expect to find in winter only the five or six most widespread New Zealand native forest birds at all commonly, with the other species reduced to very low numbers, to vagrancy, or to local extinction.

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SHORT NOTE

SOUTH ISLAND PIED OYSTERCATCHERS NESTING IN HAWKES BAY

During Labour Weekend, October 1980, we saw a pair of South Island Pied Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus finschi*) with two well-grown but unfledged young on the Ngaruroro River near Mangatahi in Hawkes Bay. This is a large expanse of shingle riverbed about 30 km inland. We saw this family on three occasions, but the last time we saw only one of the young. We had previously seen a pair of SIPO in this area in the summer of 1979.

In 1981 they were again present but frequent observation throughout spring and early summer produced no real evidence of breeding. A second pair was also seen, but they were on a section of shingle inaccessible to us.

1982 proved to be a luckier season. On 31 August we made the first sighting, a lone bird which spent most of the day feeding along a small stream. On 12 September, two birds were present and our approach produced 'false brooding' behaviour. On our next visit on 26 September, both birds were together. On investigation we found a nest containing two eggs. The scrape was on a small sand mound among the shingle and was lined with small dry twigs. A

second scrape was also on this same sand mound, which was raised slightly above the level of the surrounding stones and so gave the birds a good all-round view. A piece of driftwood provided shelter for the nest.

We saw these birds again on a number of occasions. Both shared incubation, and the off-nest bird always fed nearby and was quick to raise the alarm when necessary. Several times a harrier ventured too near and always both birds pursued it until it was well clear. The last time we saw eggs in the nest was on 16 October, and on 22 October the nest was empty. The adults were present in the general area but ranged widely and from their behaviour it did not seem likely that they had chicks with them. Later that afternoon one bird was seen to go to a new scrape and revolve around on its abdomen and lower chest. On 24 October we saw this same scrape-forming behaviour, after which the birds mated. Both birds fed in the area all day with one returning to the scrape occasionally. No eggs were laid.

A visit on 30 October revealed 2 eggs in the nest. The scrape had been made about 100 m upstream from the first one and once again was on a small sand mound, c.0.25 m² in area, and was sheltered by two pieces of driftwood. Both birds were in attendance. On our next visit, on 6 November, the nest was empty. There were no signs around the site to suggest what may have happened to it. The birds were feeding together in a side stream about 500 m away.

A second pair of SIPO occupied an area a few hundred metres upstream. This pair was not closely observed but on several occasions produced 'false brooding' behaviour. One of these birds had a marked limp, and we have noted this each year since 1979.

We should like to thank our Regional Representative, Kathleen Todd, for confirming this North Island nesting of the SIPO.

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