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SHORT NOTE

Welcome Swallows breeding near Te Anau

In October 1985 Welcome Swallows (Hirundo tahitica neoxena) attempted to breed for the first time in the Te Anau district. Welcome Swallows built three nests under a wooden bridge on Stony Creek c. 11 km east of Te Anau. However no eggs were laid (R. B. Lavers, R. G. Thomas, pers. comm.). For a few weeks in spring 1986 three Welcome Swallows were flying around the bridge but the birds did not nest (R. G. Thomas, pers. comm.).

On 30 November 1986 I found Welcome Swallows nesting under a concrete bridge 5 km south of Te Anau on the Te Anau-Manapouri main road. Two nests were empty but the third held three small downy nestlings. They were seen again on 4 December, 10 December and 11 December, when two adults were feeding them. On 12 December at 1740 hours the chicks were gone but at 2130 hours (dusk) they were roosting in the nest with their parents. The three juveniles were perched on the power line by the bridge on 16 December.

A second nest held three nestlings with their first feathers on 17 January 1987. These chicks were fully feathered and overlapped their nest by 22 January and 24 January. The nests were empty on 29 January and have remained so on several later visits up to May 1987. Only two adults were present throughout both nesting periods.

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