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SHORT NOTE

A six-egg clutch of Yellow-breasted Tit

On 12 December 1987 I came across a nest of Yellow-breasted Tits (*Petroica m. macrocephala*) in the bank of a stream at Craigieburn, approximately 35 km east of Arthur's Pass. It was tucked in beside a tree stump with overhanging grasses concealing it. To fill in a Nest Record Card I carefully lifted out the chicks and to my surprise found there were six. They were a few days old but still naked. On 19 December I checked again and all six chicks were still alive. I spent some hours watching the nest on the 19th but at no time did I see more than one female.

In a search through the literature available to me the only other record of six that I can find is Stidolph's report in *The Birds Around Us* (1971) of a Pied Tit (*P. m. toitoti*) in the Wairarapa with 5 eggs and a newly hatched young. (He does mention a Robin's nest on Kapiti Island with 6 eggs.) The Nest Record Scheme has no cards for Yellow-breasted Tit with 6 eggs (H. A. Robertson, pers. comm.). The usual range of clutch size given is 3 or 4 (Oliver 1955) or 3 - 5 (C. A. Fleming in *Complete Book of New Zealand Birds - Readers Digest* - and Falla *et al.*, *New Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*).

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