

- PHILLIPS, R. E. 1977. Notes on the behaviour of the New Zealand Shore Plover. *Emu* 77: 23-27.  
 PIERCE, R. J. 1979. Foods and feeding of the Wrybill *Anarhynchus frontalis* on its riverbed breeding grounds. *Notornis* 26: 1-21.  
 PIERCE, R. J. 1980. Seasonal and long term changes in bird numbers at Lake Wainono. *Notornis* 27: 21-44.  
 ROBERTSON, H. A.; DENNISON, M. D. 1979. Feeding and roosting behaviour of some waders at Farewell Spit. *Notornis* 26: 73-88.  
 TAYLOR, R. H. 1971. Influence of man on vegetation and wildlife at Enderby and Rose Islands, Auckland Islands. *NZ J. Bot.* 9: 225-268.

R. J. PIERCE, *Département of Zoology, University of Otago, Dunedin.*



## SHORT NOTE

### BIRD AND STOAT ENCOUNTERS IN FIORDLAND

Stoats (*Mustela erminea*) are able to attack large birds.

On 24 January 1979, S. Field and J. Ayto (pers. comm.) heard a loud squawking behind the Martins Bay Hut, Hollyford Valley. Rushing outside they saw an adult Fiordland Crested Penguin (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) walking with a stoat hanging from the back of its neck. The stoat had its teeth embedded and its front paws were clenching the bird's feathers. S. Field swung a stick at the stoat, which released its hold and ran off. The penguin rushed into the coastal scrub.

Occasionally birds get their own back.

In 1972, H. Nuttall (pers. comm.) saw two Western Wekas (*Gallirallus australis australis*) attack a stoat on the beach at Deas Cove, Thompson Sound. The stoat was crouched low on stones and the wekas were in frozen postures beside it. One weka hit the stoat a fast blow with its bill and the groggy stoat tried to move off. The birds continued to peck the stoat about the head until the animal was dead. Some of the stoat's guts were eaten by the birds.

In February 1973, R. Lavers (pers. comm.) found a freshly decapitated stoat, surrounded by a pile of Takaha (*Notornis mantelli*) droppings and feathers, in the Point Burn, Murchison Mountains. It appeared to the observer almost certain that a Takaha had killed the stoat.

Also in the early 1970s, A. Cragg and J. Cragg (pers. comm.) saw a New Zealand Falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) flying with a freshly killed stoat at the Worsley River mouth, Lake Te Anau. The falcon flew low over the river with the stoat dangling in the water.

On 28 December 1979, J. Ayto (pers. comm.) saw a New Zealand Falcon swoop down and catch a stoat outside Dumpling Hut, Arthur Valley. Gripping the small stoat in its talons, the falcon flew back to its usual perch in a nearby dead beech and began to pluck its prey.

KIM MORRISON, *Fiordland National Park, P.O. Box 29, Te Anau.*