

- No. 5 Mouse, 1 lower left incisor, 1 lower right incisor and molar 1; bird, unidentified feather and bone fragments; grass seed.
- No. 6 Mouse, 1 lower right incisor; bird, unidentified feathers and bone fragments and gizzard with grass seed and insect fragments; grass seed.
- No. 7 Mouse,, upper left 1 incisor, molar 1, 1 upper right incisor, 1 lower left incisor, 2 lower right incisors, 1 molar 1 & 2, 1 humerus; bird, unidentified feathers and bone; grass seed.
- No. 8 Mouse fat; bird, unidentified feather and bone fragments; grass seed.

Pellet Fragment: Mouse, 5 upper left and 4 upper right incisors, 2 upper right molar 1, 6 lower left and 5 lower right incisors, 1 lower left molar 1 & 2, 2 lower right molar 1, 1 humerus and bone fragments, fur; bird, Yellow Hammer? (proximal femur) or bird of that size, bone fragment and feathers.

The contents of these pellets shows that Nankeen Kestrels in New Zealand prey on a range of species similar to those found in Australia. Yellow Hammers and Redpolls are not found in Australia, but are prey of the European Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*).

I am most grateful to Mr B. J. Karl, Ecology Division, DSIR, for his analysis of these pellets.

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#### BANDED DOTTERELS ON THE VILLAGE GREEN

On the evening of 11 January 1961 when I was staying in Hokitika, I found at least 25 Banded Dotterels (*Charadrius bicinctus*) feeding over The Square, a sort of village green and sports ground with a concrete wicket near the middle. The dotterels flew in over the houses from the direction of the riverbed and some were running actually over the surrounding footpaths and roads.

Nine years later, on 4 January 1970, I was again in Hokitika and towards dusk made my way to The Square. This time I counted 29 Banded Dotterels, sharing the short turf of The Square with c. 100 Black-billed Gulls (*Larus bulleri*), two dogs and some children. Again some of the dotterels appeared to be finding something to eat on the tar-seal. This confident acceptance of a man-made facility is most encouraging. Perhaps evening strollers who watch birds in Hokitika will be able to confirm whether this acquired habit persists.

During three visits to Westland, all in January, these are the largest gatherings of Banded Dotterels that I have seen; although on the evening of 5 January 1970 at least 20 were moving between the shingle banks of the Whataroa River and adjacent pastures down Flat Road. At Okarito between 3 and 7 January 1940 — and this involved walking the length of the boulder bank and lagoon both ways — W. Ridland and I noted only three; on 18 January 1961 I counted up to 6 near the rivermouth and on 5 January 1970 there were a few scattered among the stock which grazed the hummocky ground beneath which lie relics of one of New Zealand's deserted villages.

As breeding birds in Westland, Banded Dotterels are sparsely distributed on beaches, estuaries and the few suitable riverbeds. They have probably increased as European Man has thinned the forests and opened up the country; but short grass such as post-nuptial flocks favour is rather a scarce commodity.

The presence of flocks in winter suggests that some Westland Banded Dotterels are more or less sedentary. Peter Grant has reported (Classified Summarised Notes 1963-1970, *Notornis* Suppl. p. 48) that "a flock always winters on parks near Greymouth" and in early May 1976 P. M. Sagar recorded a flock of 20 on a paddock at Okarito township (*Notornis* 23: 337). The composition of these wintering flocks would be interesting to know. Do they contain any first-year birds? Are they made up entirely of adults?

The history and present status of Banded Dotterels in Westland could prove a fruitful field for research.

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