

bird by the upper leg while the chick, with its beak, held on to the facial wattle of the adult.

The roof was a large flat area that was covered with dazzling white crushed quartz. Within a few minutes we located the two old nests. the gravel was arranged in a rough saucer just as any ground-nesting Plover would do, using stones or shells. Apparently a violent storm had blown the first set of eggs away, but the birds were more successful with their second clutch; the chicks had been carried to the ground and the ones which I had seen.

It will be of interest to see if the birds will nest on the roof again next year, when they return from their winter wanderings.

— *R. Davies, Ashwood, Victoria. 3/3/1967.*

Flying errors in the Australian Alps. Unexplained markings of avian origin were noted in the firn (soft spring snow) in the Mount Hotham Alpine Reserve in 1964 (*Australian Bird Watcher*, 2 : 139). The markings suggested that a bird weighing several pounds had made a brief unintentional "touch down" whilst in full flight. M. C. Downes, in a personal communication, suggested that ducks might be responsible, and a subsequent isolated observation by the duty operator of the Pole-line Poma ski-lift, Mount Hotham, is reported.

Because rime and ice form overnight on the pulleys and cables of ski-lifts, and may jam the pulleys, an operator must walk up the whole length of the ski-tow about dawn each morning to inspect and clear the equipment before it may be operated. At 0815 hours E.S.T. Sept. 7, 1966, in dense fog, visibility less than 10 yards, wind S.S.W. 3-5 kts., temperature 24°F. or less, on the ski-run between the Pole-line Poma and the parallel pole-line, altitude approximately 5,900 ft., the inspecting operator found a duck apparently asleep on the snow. The smooth hard snow gave no shelter, and a more exposed and inhospitable place in the conditions prevailing at the time is difficult to imagine. The bird was "snugged down" i.e. squatting with general direction of body turned into the wind, head turned towards the tail and tucked into feathers. The bird was immediately disturbed at the approach of the operator and instantly flew off into the fog (cloud) heading into the Dargo Valley suggesting that it had not been injured by any prior collision with a tower or cable of the ski-lift. Neither did the hard-frozen snow show any markings to help decide whether the duck had landed directly onto the snow or undergone prior aerial collision. Species identification was not possible.

Further reports from observant ski-tourers on ducks, crows and other birds of this size above the snow-line are needed on this problem.

— *Alan Gilchrist, Heidelberg. 16/10/1966.*