

BIRDS OF THE KERMADEC ISLANDS

By J. H. SORENSEN

In view of the proposal to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the O.S.N.Z. with an expedition to study the birds of the Kermadec Islands, I have prepared the following list of birds known or reported from this group. I give both verified and unverified reports and sightings, with brief notes culled from some of the sources to which I have had access, together with some of my own observations made in 1944. The classification follows the *Checklist of New Zealand Birds* 1953, excepting where the exact position of the species is unknown or the subspecific position requires determination.

WANDERING ALBATROSS *Diomedea exulans exulans*

The inclusion of this albatross in the Kermadec lists rests mainly on sight records at sea adjacent to the islands. Cheeseman (1888) reported sighting a few individuals during a voyage to and from the islands and was informed by Mr. Bell that it bred on the Chanter Islets to the north-east of Raoul Island. As is generally known, these albatrosses breed on circumpolar subantarctic islands. The birds mentioned as breeding on Chanter Islets would almost certainly be Blue-faced Boobies (*Sula dactylatra*). Iredale (1910) reported that the only record he had of a Wandering Albatross was of one which had been washed ashore at Denham Bay previous to his arrival on Raoul Island in 1908. Oliver (1955) lists the Wandering Albatross as a "straggler to Raoul Island." He was in the same party as Iredale but does not mention this species in his 1930 edition of *New Zealand Birds*, where he records *Diomedea epomophora* as occurring "from the Kermadec Islands southwards to Campbell Island."

I sighted Wandering Albatrosses at sea between Auckland and Raoul Island in 1944 in latitude 34° 36' S. and longitude 177° 50' E. in which year Warner (1948) found a carcass on a beach about fifteen miles south-east of Noumea. Hindwood and Cunningham (1950) reported the finding of a dead Wandering Albatross at Lord Howe Island in 1935.

ROYAL ALBATROSS *Diomedea epomophora*

From the foregoing notes it is doubtful if the Royal Albatross should be included in the Kermadec list. However, these birds are met with at sea off and to the north of Raoul Island. I sighted albatrosses between Auckland and Raoul Island in 1944 which I took to be Royals and not Wanderers; but I am not prepared to state which subspecies was present.

BLACK-BROWED MOLLYMAWK *Diomedea melanophrys*

This is another species sighted at sea on the way to the Kermadec Islands and in their vicinity. Oliver (1930 and 1955) says that localities where it has been sighted include the Kermadec Islands, but Cheeseman (1890) again erred when he reported it breeding on Curtis Island. I did not sight this mollymawk closer to Raoul Island than the position in which I saw the Wandering Albatross. In 1944 Warner (1948) reported the finding of a Black-browed Mollymawk at New Caledonia.

WHITE-CAPPED or SHY MOLLYMAWK *Diomedea cauta*

I include this species in the present list since I saw it farther north between Auckland and Raoul Island in 1944. In latitude

32° 36' S. and longitude 179° 15' E. one bird was seen but did not approach our vessel very closely.

LIGHT-MANTLED SOOTY ALBATROSS *Phoebastria palpebrata*

This is another albatross placed in the Kermadec list from sight records at sea. Cheeseman (1887 and 1890) states this species was noted at sea between Sunday (= Raoul) Island and Macauley Island. Oliver (1930 and 1955) says it has a range "from Kermadecs to Macquarie Island," and "sight records at the Kermadecs."

GIANT PETREL or **NELLY** *Macronectes giganteus*

I have been unable to find any recorded sighting of this bird in the Kermadec region. It is stated in the *Checklist of New Zealand Birds* (1953) as having a range "widely and abundantly in New Zealand seas and north rarely to 25° S." Hindwood and Cunningham (1950) recorded a Giant Petrel which was taken at Lord Howe Island in 1914. I did not sight the Giant Petrel in Kermadec waters in 1944, but its occurrence is probable.

CAPE PIGEON *Daption capensis*

Inclusion of the Cape Pigeon also rests on sightings at sea in the vicinity of the islands. Cheeseman (1887) reports this bird as plentiful at sea all around the group and, in 1890, as "plentiful at sea all around the group — in fact one of the commonest petrels at the time of my visit in August 1887." I did not see the Cape Pigeon north of Cuvier Island in 1944.

PRION or **WHALEBIRD** *Pachyptila desolata*

According to Oliver (1912) the skin on which the record for the island is based "... was taken from a specimen found by R. Bell cast up by the sea on Denham Bay beach on 29th July 1910." Oliver makes no further reference to this bird (1930 and 1955).

NARROW-BILLED PRION *Pachyptila belcheri*

In July 1944 I found a single specimen of this species cast ashore on the beach at Denham Bay.

FAIRY PRION *Pachyptila turtur*

My only reason for including this bird in the Kermadec list is a statement by Oliver (1930) — "...specimens can be found washed up on almost any part of the coast and it has been recorded from the Kermadecs ...". The *Checklist* (1953) states the species ranges commonly throughout the New Zealand region and straggles north to New Guinea. I did not record this bird in 1944.

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus pacificus*

Known locally on Raoul Island as the Black Burrower, this large petrel breeds in large numbers on that island whence specimens were first forwarded to New Zealand by T. Bell in 1890. The birds arrive at Raoul Island in early October and burrowing commences almost at once, with egg-laying in early December.

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus tenuirostris*

The inclusion of this species in the Kermadec list is because of the statement by Oliver (1930) — "Specimens have been obtained at . . . Sunday Island," and in 1955 — "Specimens have been obtained at Raoul Island . . ." I have no further records and did not see or hear this petrel in 1944.

KERMADEC ALLIED SHEARWATER *Puffinus assimilis kermadecensis*

According to Cheeseman (1890) this species was collected at the Kermadec Islands first by McGillivray in 1854. Most subsequent visitors have found this petrel breeding on Meyer Island where it excavates short burrows from almost sea-level to high on the hillsides. I found this bird breeding on Meyer Island in August and September of 1944, the birds then having either well-incubated eggs or young chicks. Murphy (1927) described this subspecies from specimens taken from Herald Islets by R. H. Beck of the Whitney South Sea Expedition.



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Fig. 1 — Allied Shearwater, Meyer Island, 6/8/44.GREY-FACED PETREL *Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*

Iredale (1912) states — "A specimen washed up on the beach on 7th August 1908 proved sufficient for identification. Another bird, too much damaged for preservation, had been noted on 25th July. However, it had already been added to the Kermadec avifaunal list by Ogilvie-Grant, whose specimen, which I have examined, also proves to be a washed-up bird."

SUNDAY ISLAND PETREL *Pterodroma externa cervicalis*

This bird is also known as the Black-capped Petrel. It breeds at higher levels on Raoul Island, the first recorded specimen being procured from the Kermadec group and described by Salvin in 1891. Oliver (1930) stated this bird appeared to be decreasing in numbers through the ravages of cats, only a few scattered colonies then being known. He also states (1930 and 1955) that the birds arrive at Raoul Island in October, burrow during November, with fresh eggs having been taken from December 26th to January 2nd. The young become fully fledged during May and leave the island in June.

PHOENIX PETREL *Pterodroma alba*

The inclusion of the Phoenix Petrel in the Kermadec list rests on a specimen collected by W. S. Bell on Raoul Island in 1913 and later described by Mathews and Iredale as *Aestrelata oliveri*; also, Oliver (1930 and 1955) records that four birds were seen on the ground in the forest in 7th March 1913. He presumed that the species probably bred on the island.



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Fig. 2 — Kermadec Petrel, light phase, surface-breeding on Meyer Island, 6/8/44.

KERMADEC PETREL *Pterodroma neglecta*

The Kermadec Petrel was first collected by McGillivray, Naturalist to the "Herald," in 1854, but was not described until 1863. It is a common surface-breeding bird on both Raoul and Meyer Islands and, on account of the polymorphism exhibited and the varied breeding times, several names have been applied. On Raoul Island the birds appear in late August, fresh eggs being noted as early as 20th October and as late as 6th December. Most chicks are hatched by the end of January and the birds leave the island during May. On the other hand, on Meyer Island in August, 1944, I found fledglings ready to fly, downy chicks, and even one bird still incubating.

COOK'S PETREL *Pterodroma cookii*

According to Oliver (1930 and 1955) this petrel has a range of — "New Zealand seas, especially east of the main islands from the Kermadecs to the Bounty Islands." The *Checklist* (1953) gives a

somewhat similar range. I did not record this species in 1944 and can trace no definite records. It can be noted that Cheeseman (1890) recorded the next species (*P. hypoleuca nigripennis*) as Cook's Petrel.

BLACK-WINGED PETREL *Pterodroma hypoleuca nigripennis*

This petrel was recorded by Cheeseman from specimens collected by T. Bell. The birds were forwarded to Rothschild, who recognised its distinctness and described it in 1893. It is a breeding species and is described as more numerous on the outlying islands, especially Macauley and Curtis, than on Raoul. It is a summer breeder, being first heard in October, the eggs laid in December and early January, and the young birds leaving the islands towards the end of April.



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Fig. 3 — Red-tailed Tropic Bird, Raoul Island. Fledgling just out of nest, 2/5/44.

RED-TAILED TROPIC BIRD *Phaethon rubricauda roseotincta*

This bird is a regular summer visitor to the Kermadec Islands, its southern boundary for breeding purposes. It is occasionally seen during the winter months, but the main arrival at Raoul Island is during October. Eggs are laid between mid-December and mid-January, occasionally later, and most birds leave the islands during April and May. Nesting takes place on ledges and in shallow holes in coastal cliffs.

KERMADEC STORM PETREL *Pelagodroma marina albiclunis*

Oliver (1955) writes — "Cheeseman, who visited the Kermadecs in 1887, records the 'Storm Petrel' as common at sea all around the

Kermadec Islands, and stated that Mr. T. Bell, who resided at Raoul Island, informed him it bred on Meyer Island and other out-lying rocks. This is no doubt correct, though during ten months' residence on Raoul Island in 1908 only two drift specimens were found . . . in September." Murphy and Irving (1951) described the Kermadec subspecies which is characterised by having the rump and upper tail coverts white instead of grey. The specimens were collected off Raoul and Meyer Islands by the Whitney South Sea Expedition in November 1925. The breeding status of this storm petrel is unknown and, although I excavated numerous small and fresh burrows on Meyer Island in late September 1944, all were untenanted. Some burrows did have a little fresh nesting material at the ends. All burrows excavated were three to four feet in length, almost double the length of Allied Shearwater burrows.

AUSTRALIAN GANNET *Sula bassana serratior*

Cheeseman (1890) admitted this bird to his list of Kermadec birds on the authority of Mr. T. Bell, who stated it was identical with the New Zealand Gannet and not infrequently visited Raoul Island. Iredale (1912) considered this bird should be omitted from the Kermadecs list until skins were actually forthcoming from the group. I did not record the Gannet during 1944.

MASKED or BLUE-FACED BOOBY *Sula dactylatra personata*

This species breeds in the Kermadec area on outlying islands but not on Raoul Island itself. In 1944 Meyer Island was the only outlier on which I managed to land. On 24th September I found two birds with nests, one with one egg, the other with two, all eggs



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Fig. 4 — Masked or Blue-faced Booby, Meyer Island, 24/9/44.

being heavily incubated. Other sitting birds could be seen on less accessible parts of Meyer Island. Other visitors have recorded this Booby on both Macauley and Curtis Islands. Apparently eggs are found from late August to November.

BROWN BOOBY *Sula leucogaster plotus*

This species does straggle south and has occurred several times in New Zealand. Oliver (1930 and 1955) included this Booby among the Kermadec birds on information received from Roy Bell. I did not record it during 1944.

LITTLE BLACK SHAG *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

The inclusion of this species in a Kermadec list rests upon a personal communication from R. S. Bell to the late Dr. W. R. B. Oliver that — "... a small number once took up their abode on Raoul Island and remained for a few years." A sighting by R. Bell cannot be ignored, but no other resident or visitor has reported sightings at the Kermadecs.

FRIGATE BIRDS *Fregata* spp.

There are a number of sight records of Frigate Birds at Raoul Island but no reliable information exists as to whether *F. minor* or *F. ariel*, or both, visit the Kermadecs. Both have occurred in New Zealand proper as stragglers. Cheeseman (1888 and 1890) says that Mr. Bell informed him that Frigate Birds visited the island (Raoul) every spring and summer but were not permanent residents. I have one sight record in November 1944 which was undoubtedly of a Frigate Bird at Raoul Island.

REEF HERON *Egretta sacra sacra*

Cheeseman (1890) admitted this species on the authority of Mr. Bell, who informed him it was seen occasionally in the group. No other sightings seem to have been made and it is therefore very indefinite as to whether Reef Herons have occurred or, if they have, which species they were. In October 1944 I was informed of two birds seen in flight from Low Flat on Raoul Island, my informant calling them "Blue Cranes." I saw no sign of these birds on subsequent searches.

GREY DUCK *Anas superciliosa superciliosa*

The Grey Duck, too, was admitted to the Kermadec list by Cheeseman on the information of Mr. Bell. Cheeseman did not see this duck but later observers have. Oliver (1912) states nests were found in the crater of Raoul Island in October 1910, one containing six eggs, the other seven. In 1944, apart from odd sightings of single birds elsewhere on Raoul Island, I found Green Lake in the crater mainly used by Grey Duck, 31 being sighted there on 7th May. On 5th September 12 were seen on Blue Lake.

HARRIER HAWK *Circus approximans*

Almost all visitors to the Kermadec Islands have reported sighting Harrier Hawks but I have no record of a specimen having been taken. Thus the exact subspecific status of the birds which occur there remains in doubt. According to Bell, as reported by Cheeseman (1890), the Harrier is not a permanent resident but disappears each year in September; returning the following January. According to Bell the hawk is driven from the islands by the Sooty Terns and he was confident that they migrated to New Zealand. If this is the case then the

subspecies will be *gouldi*; otherwise, and this is possible, the birds will be Fiji Harriers (*C. a. approximans*). I saw hawks on Raoul Island as late as 26th October 1944 and left the island shortly afterwards.

MOUND BIRD *Megapodius* spp.

The inclusion of a species of *Megapodius* in a Kermadec list rests entirely on hearsay evidence. Cheeseman (1890) says — "The same Mr. Johnson states that when he lived on Sunday Island, which was prior to the eruption of 1876, a bird inhabited the floor of the large crater which made mounds of sand and decayed leaves 2ft. to 3ft. high, laying its eggs in the mound. He was in the habit of visiting the mounds for the sake of the eggs and young birds and has frequently taken four or six from the same nest at one time. The eruption of 1876 covered the floor of the crater with a deposit of mud very similar to that thrown out by the eruption of Tarawera and apparently killed out the species for it has not been seen since." If, indeed, a Megapode did inhabit Raoul Island, it is long extinct there.

BANDED RAIL *Rallus philippensis*

Cheeseman (1890) wrote — "Striped Rail (*Rallus philippensis* L.) Sunday Island, vicinity of lagoon in Denham Bay, but by no means common." Iredale (1912) writes — "Cheeseman notes it as 'by no means common' at Denham Bay lagoon. Although we camped at this spot for ten months, it was neither heard nor seen. It is possible that stragglers may occur, and it would be delightfully interesting to know which subspecies straggles to this out of the way place." Mayr (1949), in his "Notes on the Birds of Northern Melanesia," has this to say of *Rallus philippensis* — "The Banded Rail is one of the most successful colonists of the islands of the Pacific. The range extends from Cocos Keeling and the Philippines in the west to Tasmania and New Zealand in the south and Samoa in the east . . ." No other resident or visitor to the Kermadecs has listed the Banded Rail and I saw no sign of it in 1944.

SPOTLESS CRAKE *Porzana tabuensis plumbea*

Whereas the position in respect of the Banded Rail must remain doubtful there is no doubt that the Spotless Crake can be included in the Kermadecs list. It was found breeding at Denham Bay by R. S. Bell in 1909 and this was recorded by Oliver (1912). I failed to find this bird in 1944 but one doubtful sighting was made on Meyer Island that year. Lindsay (1929) recorded seeing one bird on Meyer Island.

PUKEKO or SWAMP HEN *Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*

The presence of one or more Pukeko on Raoul Island has been recorded by observers from 1887 to the present day although I did not see one in 1944. One was shot by King Bell in 1909 and Oliver (1912) records that the skin is in the Auckland Museum. However the subspecific status of the Kermadec birds seems not to have been resolved.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius dominicus fulvus*

Almost all visitors to Raoul Island have recorded this Plover, which appears from September to December annually. Iredale (1912) reported a flock of 13 on Macauley Island in November. The biggest flock I sighted on Raoul Island was 15 on 2nd November 1944.

BANDED DOTTEREL *Charadrius bicinctus*

Oliver (1930) records this species as "accidental at Sunday Island" and, (1955), as "accidental at Raoul Island, one occurrence, September 1913, male." The *Checklist* (1953) lists this species as "partially migratory . . . considerable numbers reach Australia; occasional at Norfolk, Lord Howe, and New Hebrides Islands." It is therefore a migrant wader one would expect to see occasionally at the Kermadec Islands. None was seen in 1944.

ORIENTAL DOTTEREL *Charadrius asiaticus veredus*

The admission of this bird to the Kermadec list exists because one specimen was taken by Oliver on 22nd April 1908 at Denham Bay, Raoul Island. It does not seem to have been recorded since.

ASIATIC WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus variegatus*

This is another Kermadec record made by Oliver in 1908 when one of a pair sighted on 26th September was obtained. A few days later three similar birds were seen. It has not been recorded since.

EASTERN BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica baueri*

This Godwit seems to be a fairly common visitor to Raoul Island as a passage migrant, although Iredale (1912) states the bird was not met with during the stay of his party in 1908. Most other visitors to Raoul Island have recorded the Godwit usually for the months of October and November. Three birds was the greatest number I noted at any one time in November 1944. It was much commoner on grassy flats than along the coastline.

WANDERING TATTLER *Heteroscelus incanus incanus*

The Kermadec record for this species is a specimen in summer plumage shot on Raoul Island by W. S. Bell in 1913 and recorded by Oliver (1930 and 1955). I can trace no further records.

KNOT *Calidris canutus rogersi*

Oliver (1912) recorded a specimen taken at Denham Bay on 29th July 1910. Iredale (1912) recounts his efforts to obtain a bird thought to be this species and associated with a small flock of Golden Plover in the same locality in September 1908. I have not traced other records.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata*

Oliver (1912) first recorded this species with a bird he obtained in 1908 at Raoul Island. A further skin was obtained from a bird shot by R. Bell on 29th October 1910, and is stated to be in the Auckland Museum. I have no other records.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Oliver (1930 and 1955) gives the Kermadec Islands as one of the places from which this bird has been recorded. I cannot trace any definite recordings or sightings and did not see it in 1944.

SOUTHERN BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus dominicanus*

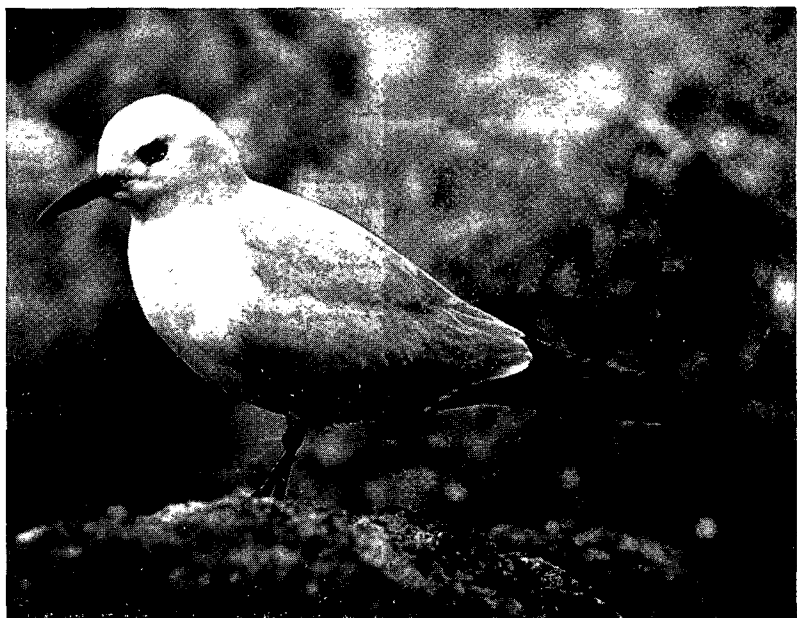
Oliver (1930 and 1955) includes "Kermadec Islands, accidental" in his distribution of this species. I know of no undoubted record of its occurrence at the Kermadec Islands. Hindwood and Cunningham (1950) record a solitary bird at Lord Howe Island on 21st August 1949 and record a further bird which frequented Botany Bay near Sydney in early 1943.

RED-BILLED GULL *Larus novaehollandiae*

My reason for including this species in the present list is because of one or more gulls in the Otago Museum collections bearing a label "Kermadec Islands," the specimens being named *Bruchigavia jamesonii*. Mr. L. Gurr, who drew my attention to the skins in a personal communication, says that both measurements and wing pattern suggest the birds are *Larus gunni* of Tasmania. No other information is available at the moment and I include these skins under the above name very tentatively.

GREY TERNLET *Procelsterna cerulea albirostris*

This bird breeds on all islands of the Kermadec Group, laying its single egg on cliff ledges in late September or early October. The birds are exceptionally tame and allow approach to within a few feet. Breeding takes place on Meyer Island but they are less commonly met with ashore on Raoul Island. They have bred sparingly at each end of Denham Bay.



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Fig. 5 — Grey Ternlet, Meyer Island, 24/9/44.

CASPIAN TERN *Hydroprogne caspia*

Cheeseman (1890) placed this species on the Kermadecs list on the authority of Mr. Bell, stating that he, personally, had seen no specimens from the group. The record is therefore of doubtful validity and no subsequent record has been made.

CRESTED TERN *Sterna bergii cristata*

The inclusion of this species in this list is because of a young male bird shot by K. Bell on 1st April 1910, the bird having been

noted first in Denham Bay the previous day. This skin is in the Auckland Museum collection. No further sightings seem to have been made.

SOOTY TERN or **WIDEAWAKE** *Sterna fuscata*

All visitors to Raoul Island have recorded this tern, which visits the island annually to breed, principally on the back beach at Denham Bay. The birds arrive in late August and laying starts in early November. By February some of the chicks are able to fly and nearly all birds leave the Island in April.

WHITE-CAPPED NODDY *Anous tenuirostris minutus*

This species breeds on Meyer Island but not, so far as is known, on Raoul Island itself. Nests are constructed in trees and the single egg laid in October. In September of 1944 the birds were present when I visited Meyer Island but nesting had not started.

WHITE TERN *Gygis alba royana*

This is another tree-nesting species at the Kermadec Islands, *Metrosideros villosa* being mainly if not solely used. The birds arrive in September and the laying season is an extended one, eggs appearing from October to early January. In 1944 I located many pairs in the forest at the back of Denham Bay late in October.

NEW ZEALAND PIGEON *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*

The only reason for including this species in a Kermadec list is because of early information that a large fruit-pigeon was found by early settlers on Raoul Island, but its numbers were thinned out and finally it was exterminated. The position of this pigeon is therefore of doubtful validity.

KERMADEC PARAKEET *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae cyanurus*

The presence of 'paroquets' was noted at the Kermadec Islands as far back as 1788 when the first islands, Curtis and Macauley, were discovered. It was later claimed by Mr. T. Bell that the species formerly bred on Raoul Island but was exterminated by wild cats. To-day parakeets are present on Meyer Island, where I saw very tame birds in 1944.

SHINING CUCKOO *Chalcites lucidus lucidus*

The presence of the Shining Cuckoo on the Kermadecs list is because of statements made to Cheeseman (1887 and 1890) by Mr. T. Bell. Iredale (1912) did not list it as seen by his 1908 party, and stated the record by Cheeseman needed verification if only to determine its subspecific status. It follows that, since the bird seems not to be reported since, the statements by Oliver (1930 and 1955) and in the *Checklist of New Zealand Birds* (1953) as "straggling to the Kermadecs" also need verification.

LONG-TAILED CUCKOO *Eudynamis taitensis*

Initially this species was recorded for the Kermadecs on information given to Cheeseman by Bell, but this was later supported by the production of the tail of one bird. According to Bell the cuckoo was a permanent resident, although by no means common. Iredale (1912) records that the bird was more commonly heard than seen, but was noted in every month his party was on the island, being most plentiful in October. In 1944 I sighted this cuckoo in most of the winter months and obtained specimens in June.

KINGFISHER *Halcyon sancta*

This is a common resident breeding species on Raoul Island, rarely if ever seen near water, and has been noted by all who have visited the Island. The systematic position, however, requires attention, it being my opinion that the Kermadec bird is more closely allied with Pacific forms than with the New Zealand bird.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

This lark is a new record for the Kermadec group and based on a bird I collected on Raoul Island in June 1944. It was one of two birds seen together. I saw two more on 28th July.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus ericetorum*

Oliver first recorded the Song Thrush from the Kermadec Group in his 1930 edition of *New Zealand Birds*. In a personal communication to me at a later date he stated he found this bird nesting on Raoul Island in September 1908. Iredale (1910), writing of the birds of the Kermadecs, says — "It is interesting to record that the birds acclimatized in New Zealand have reached the island and firmly established themselves. These are the European Song Thrush, Blackbird, and Starling . . ." I found thrushes moderately plentiful on Raoul Island in 1944. This species has also been noted on Curtis Island.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

The position with the Blackbird at Raoul Island is almost exactly comparable with the Song Thrush but it is more commonly met with. I noted this species on both Raoul and Meyer Islands in 1944 and it has been recorded from Curtis Island.

PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

The Pipit was recorded by Cheeseman (1888) thus — "... Two or three specimens noted on Macauley Island." Cheeseman (1890) reported not seeing the Pipit on Raoul Island, but that he was informed by Mr. Bell it was occasionally seen, usually in pairs. Lindsay (1929) records observing Pipits on Curtis Island that year, whilst Oliver, in a personal communication, informed me that three Pipits were seen at Low Flat, Raoul Island, in August 1908, a further bird being seen in the crater on 2nd October. In 1944 I recorded the Pipit only once, on 8th June, at Wilson Point, Raoul Island.

TUI *Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*

The Tui was early reported as plentiful and breeding at Raoul Island. A most remarkable statement, however, was made by Iredale (1912) that this bird had lost its voice. This observation is quite contrary to fact and the first bird I heard in song when I landed on Raoul Island in 1944 was a Tui. Despite the ravages of wild cats the Tui is still common on Raoul Island. Nesting starts in September with fully fledged young being noted in early November.

WHITE-EYE or SILVER-EYE *Zosterops lateralis*

This bird was recorded by Cheeseman (1888 and 1890) who saw the White-eyes on several occasions in the forest on Raoul Island and on Macauley Island. Mr. Bell told Cheeseman that it was only an occasional visitor and that he had never known it to breed on the island. No later visitor seems to have noted the White-eye and I did not see it in 1944.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis britannica*

This species was recorded by S. Percy Smith in 1887 and occasional sight records have been made since that time. The late Dr. Oliver, in a personal communication, told me that one was shot on 17th May 1909 by R. S. Bell on Raoul Island. Three birds were reported in 1940 but I saw none in 1944.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea cabaret*

Small finches were apparently common on Raoul Island in 1909 and Roy Bell made sightings which were undoubtedly of Redpolls. His diary entry for 4th May 1910 says — "King shot another finch, a little fellow like a goldfinch but with a pink breast." On 29th May 1944 I saw a flock of small finches on a grassy flat in the crater on Raoul Island. This flock seemed to be entirely composed of Redpolls.

YELLOW HAMMER *Emberiza citrinella citrinella*

This bird is a new record for Raoul Island I made in 1944, when several specimens were obtained. This species was moderately plentiful and seen regularly between May and November. No nesting was noted.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

As with the Blackbird and Song Thrush, this species apparently reached Raoul Island just prior to 1908. In 1944 I found Starlings particularly common in the vicinity of the Hostel on Raoul Island, common all around that island, and on Meyer Island. In early October mating was noted and pairs seen at nesting holes along coastal cliffs and roadside cuttings. Young birds were seen in numbers in mid-November.

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SHORT NOTE

GULL AND OCTOPUS

On 13/1/64 at Half-moon Bay, Stewart Island, I saw a flock of Red-billed Gulls apparently mobbing another gull. But they all flew up, leaving the victim struggling in the water and apparently diving deliberately half under. I then noticed a disturbance beyond it and, moving along the embankment, saw that an octopus was holding the gull with about two-foot arms. The gull, which was apparently diving under at the octopus, after half a dozen dives rose free suddenly and flew away. The octopus then sneaked away quietly.

— W. T. POPPELWELL