

The Red-billed Gull is, therefore, obviously well adjusted to European settlement in New Zealand, is numerous and apparently is increasing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge their gratitude to all who have responded to their request for information (they are named beside their contributions in the list) and to Dr. R. A. Falla for helpful discussion and comments.

GENERAL REFERENCES

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SHORT NOTE

WHITE-CAPPED NODDY AT SPIRITS BAY

On the afternoon of 10/1/65 I was able to watch a White-capped Noddy (*Anous minutus*) for about two hours at Spirits Bay.

The bird was first noticed on the edge of a group of c.100 White-fronted Terns (*S. striata*) which were resting on the beach at the eastern end of the bay. My first impression was of a bird about the size and shape of a White-fronted Tern but with the colours reversed. It was uniformly coloured a dark greyish brown except for the crown and nape, which were white shading to greyish white at the back of the head. Prominent features were a white line under and extending back slightly from the eye, and a jet black line running forward from the eye over the lower forehead. There was also a small area of jet black directly behind the eye. The bill and legs were black and the feet large and webbed.

When the flock was disturbed, the noddy separated from the terns and flew over the brackish pool formed by the Kapowairua Stream just behind the beach. Here it hovered for some time just above the water apparently feeding. Eventually it settled down near the far bank almost up to its thighs in the water; and, in the company of five Red-billed Gulls (*L. scopulinus*), which dwarfed it, it proceeded to preen itself for some time. At this point, the stream is about a chain wide, and the noddy was not at all disturbed at my moving about on the opposite bank photographing it, using a 135mm. telephoto lens.

The bird flew off once again, but I located it back on the beach, on the edge of the group of terns. Here I attempted a careful approach and although the terns moved gradually further away, the noddy stood its ground, and, to my surprise, I came as close as only five yards from it before it flew off again. With the terns, it moved a considerable distance along the beach. The weather at the time was fine and sunny, but the preceding few days had been dull and unsettled in the Kaitia area.

The photographs confirm the identification of the bird as a White-capped Noddy. Also, shortly after observing the bird, I was able, by the courtesy of Mr. G. Turbott, to examine the specimens held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

— M. G. MACDONALD