

More critical examination of northern skuas has shown in recent years that *pomarinus* is not nearly as scarce in New Zealand waters as was formerly supposed. But without its long tail *longicaudus* is very difficult to distinguish from *parasiticus*, or in the words of Wynne-Edwards, "Immature birds, lacking the long tail at all times, are very seldom positively identifiable from a ship at sea." However, any small, graceful skua which tends to fly high and soar with a floating and tern-like action, is worth more than a passing glance.

My thanks are due to Mr. E. G. Turbott, director, and to Mrs. Lois Wagener, assistant zoologist, for the help which they have given in making available for study the collection of skuas in the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

REFERENCES

1. 1936 R. C. MURPHY: Oceanic Birds of South America, Vol. II, 1038-1040.
2. 1941 WITHERBY, et al.: Handbook of British Birds, Vol. V, 137-141.
3. 1951 DEMENTIEV & GLADKOV: Birds of U.S.S.R., Vol. III, p. 402.
4. 1958 HINDWOOD & MCGILL: Birds of Sydney, 109.
5. 1963 BANNERMAN & LODGE: Birds of British Isles, Vol. 12, 47-68.
6. 1965 A. W. JOHNSON: Birds of Chile, 377-378.
7. 1966 M. J. CARTER: Emu, Vol. 66, 69-70.



SHORT NOTES

SOOTY SHEARWATER AND GREY-FACED PETREL USE COMMON NESTING BURROW

Where both summer and winter-breeding Procellariidae use the same breeding grounds, it seems feasible that the same nesting burrows may, to some extent, be utilised by both populations. However, there appears to be little evidence either to prove or disprove this theory. While on the Poor Knights Islands from 29th October to 3rd November, 1965, I made the following observation, which although inconclusive, is nevertheless of interest.

On the afternoon of 29/10/65 I found a half-grown, downy Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*) chick in a burrow four feet long, under a boulder, at the edge of a small man-made terrace, which was above the Shag Bay landing, on Tawhiti Rahi Is. We had sited our camp on this terrace. Fortunately the burrow was more or less straight, so that by shining a torch into it, I could see all parts of the nest chamber. Although watched for, the parent birds were not seen during our stay. Grey-faced Petrels have seldom been recorded breeding on the Poor Knights Islands (v. Notornis 8, 132-141) nor are many Sooty Shearwaters known to breed there.

At 10 p.m. the burrow was again inspected, when it was found to contain not only a young petrel, but an adult Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*), which was duly banded. On the following night two Sooty Shearwaters were present in the burrow, where they remained throughout the following day. One was identified by its band number as the bird present on the previous night. The other bird was caught and banded.

While under observation in the confined space of the nesting chamber, neither species was seen to display hostility towards the other, although they invariably kept to opposite sides and at a maximum distance of about sixteen inches apart.

During the following two nights we were absent from this camp so observations ceased. However, on the night of 2nd November, both banded Sooty Shearwaters were again present in this burrow, but they did not remain during the following day. Unfortunately no follow-up observations could be arranged, so that the outcome is not known. It would seem that the summer breeding shearwaters intended using this burrow although it had not yet been vacated by winter breeding petrels.

It appears inevitable that if such sharing of burrows by these or related species does take place regularly at this time of year some considerable overlap of tenancy must occur. Most young Grey-faced Petrels leave their breeding grounds in December or early January, while Sooty Shearwaters lay in late November or early December.

— D. V. MERTON

[The burrow in which these Sooty Shearwaters were found in 1965 appears to be the same as held a breeding pair in December, 1958, where they were banded. It is likely that the rather soft bands in use at that time would have worn thin and fallen off, though a Pycroft's Petrel banded on Hen Island in 1954 was still carrying its ring, albeit worn paper thin, exactly seven years later.—Ed.]



BROAD-BILLED ROLLER IN SOUTHLAND

On 29/3/67 Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Lobb, of the Gorge Road Aviaries, had a report of a strange bird from the Ruddenklau family, who farm near Fortrose, about 25 miles east of Invercargill. Mr. and Mrs. Lobb went out that evening and found the bird in the same locality. They took detailed notes, and on their return home provisionally identified the bird as a Broad-billed Roller (*Eurystomus pacificus*).

On the following day Mrs. Lobb, Messrs. R. R. Sutton, R. M. Royds and the writer had prolonged views of the bird in varying light. It was stocky, about the size of a Little Owl (*Athene noctua*), its large head flattened at the crown. The flight also was owl-like, with silent, steady wing-beats as the bird flew to catch insects on the wing. It appeared to work a regular beat, returning after each sortie to its perch. At different times it used posts, a wire fence, telegraph wires, a tin fence about 20 yards from the house, and dry branches of a fallen tree as its vantage point. The iridescent silvery-green patch extending back from the leading edge of the wing, from which the common name "Dollar-bird" originates, was very apparent in flight, and could also be seen on the primaries of the folded wing. The shining sea-green underparts, the bright blue uneven horizontal line at the throat, the silver "dollars," and the large bright yellow gape as the bird snapped at insects were brilliant in the sunshine.

The dark bill and pinkish-brown legs indicated that this was a juvenile, as did the blotchy brownish patches on breast, hind-neck and back.

This bird looked altogether improbable on the New Zealand scene, and one can well understand why the Ruddenklau's first thought was that it had escaped from an aviary.

The Broad-billed Roller was last recorded in New Zealand in 1956, and the previous most southerly record was from Ross on the West Coast.