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SHORT NOTE

SIGHTINGS OF KERMADEC PETRELS AT SEA

In 1963 and 1966 I was in vessels trading between Auckland and Island Ports and during this time made 30 passages between Fiji and Auckland.

On this run it is normal to pass Raoul Island at distances of between 300 and 330 miles depending on the port of destination, i.e. Suva or Lautoka. On 29 passages Kermadec Petrels (*P. neglecta*) were seen on only one occasion, this being in April, 1966, when about 25 birds were seen feeding with Sooty Terns over a shoal of fish.

In December, 1966, the vessel sailed from Suva to Lyttelton and on this passage passed Raoul Island at a distance of 180 miles. The actual distances from the island on 11th December being:

0800 hrs.	226 miles
1200 hrs.	197 miles
1800 hrs.	184 miles

Kermadec Petrels were in sight throughout this day from dawn to dusk, never in large numbers, but four or five birds were in sight at all times.

From the above it would seem that the Kermadec Petrel does not normally range much more than 250 miles to the westward of its breeding area. This area between Fiji and the north of New Zealand is very sparsely populated by sea birds of any kind, as has been noted by numbers of observers who have passed through it.

The low population of this area, though it is surrounded by islands with large petrel populations, would seem to indicate that the area is poor feeding ground and is avoided. This in turn could account for the very few records in New Zealand of sea birds from the islands to the north of this country, though the distances to these islands are not great.

— JOHN JENKINS