

FURTHER BREEDING COLONIES OF GREY-FACED PETRELS
IN TARANAKI

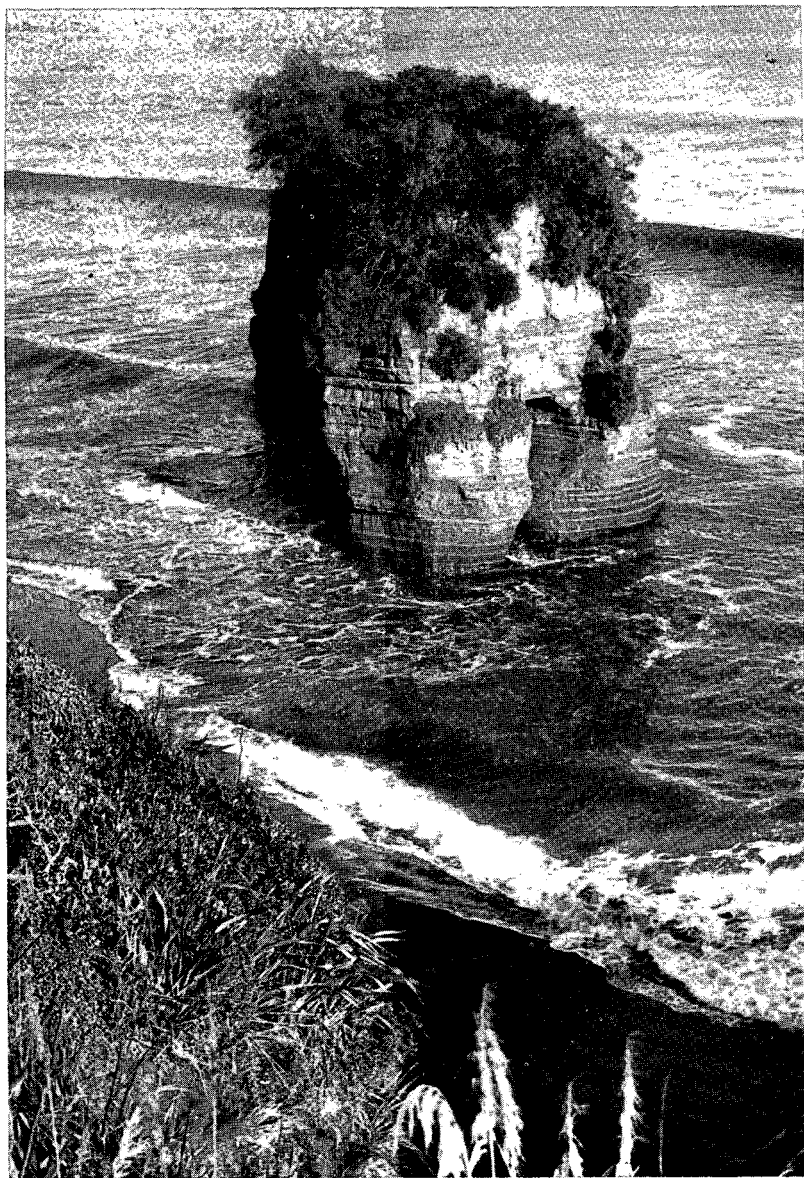


Plate XL — Small islet supporting one of recently-discovered breeding colonies of Grey-faced Petrels.

In Notornis 13, 1: 17 (1966) notice was given of a small breeding colony of Grey-faced Petrels (*Pterodroma macroptera*) on the coastal cliffs about thirty miles north of New Plymouth. Following a visit to that colony on 14/8/1966 members were informed of another group of burrows some 300 yards north of the known colony. However it was not possible to visit the new area until 18/6/1967 when a search revealed at least twenty burrows under vegetative cover similar to that of the original colony. The general appearance of the burrows, and occasional feathers in burrow entrances, indicated that this also was a Grey-faced Petrel breeding ground and on 6/8/1967 this was confirmed when an adult Grey-faced Petrel was temporarily removed from one of the burrows.

Meanwhile, on 8/7/1967 Mr. N. V. A. Banks found between 20 and 30 Grey-faced Petrel burrows under taupata vegetation on the summit of a small steep-sided islet near the mouth of the Tongaporutu River in North Taranaki. This islet, which lies only some twenty yards or less from the mainland cliffs, is completely surrounded by sea at high tide (see Plate XL).

There seems now to be little doubt that the coastal cliffs which extend for thirty odd miles from approximately Urenui to the mouth of the Mokau River will in time be found to support a substantial breeding population of Grey-faced Petrels. Much habitat suitable as breeding grounds for birds of this species occurs throughout their length (see Plate XLI). In the meantime the colonies so far found are of considerable interest, not only because their existence was unknown until quite recently, but also because they include the most southern known mainland breeding colonies of this species in New Zealand.

— D. G. MEDWAY

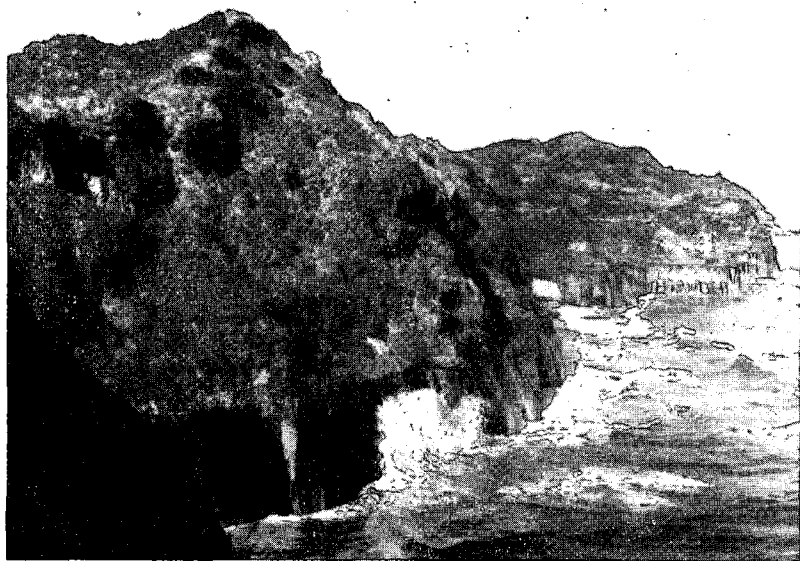


Plate XLI — Coastal cliffs in North Taranaki, showing suitable breeding habitat for Grey-faced Petrels on sandy taupata and flax covered slopes above vertical cliffs.