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BIOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE RENNICK GLACIER REGION, ANTARCTICA 1967 - 68

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The 1967-68 New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition carried out reconnaissance geology of 6,000 square miles of territory in Northern Victoria Land. The six man party with three motor toboggans and six sledges were landed south of Latitude 72°S between the Quartzite Ranges and then worked northeastwards to the Rennick Glacier and to Frolov Ridge. The expedition then detoured to the Morozumi Range in the west and there recorded a number of bird sightings and lichen localities.

Bird Sightings

Three species were observed, all early in the expedition. The birds were sighted from Latitude 70°45'S in the north, to Latitude 71°58'S in the south, and observation points varied from 500 to 7,000 feet above sea level. Skua (*Catharacta macormicki*) were observed on three occasions. Snow Petrels (*Pagodroma nivea*) four times and ? the Antarctic Tern (*Sterna vittata*) once.

The sighting of *Sterna vittata* can be regarded as only tentative because of the inexperience of the observers. The bird observed was of small size, with a black crown to the head, red bill and a distinct forked white tail. Only the Antarctic tern fits this description.

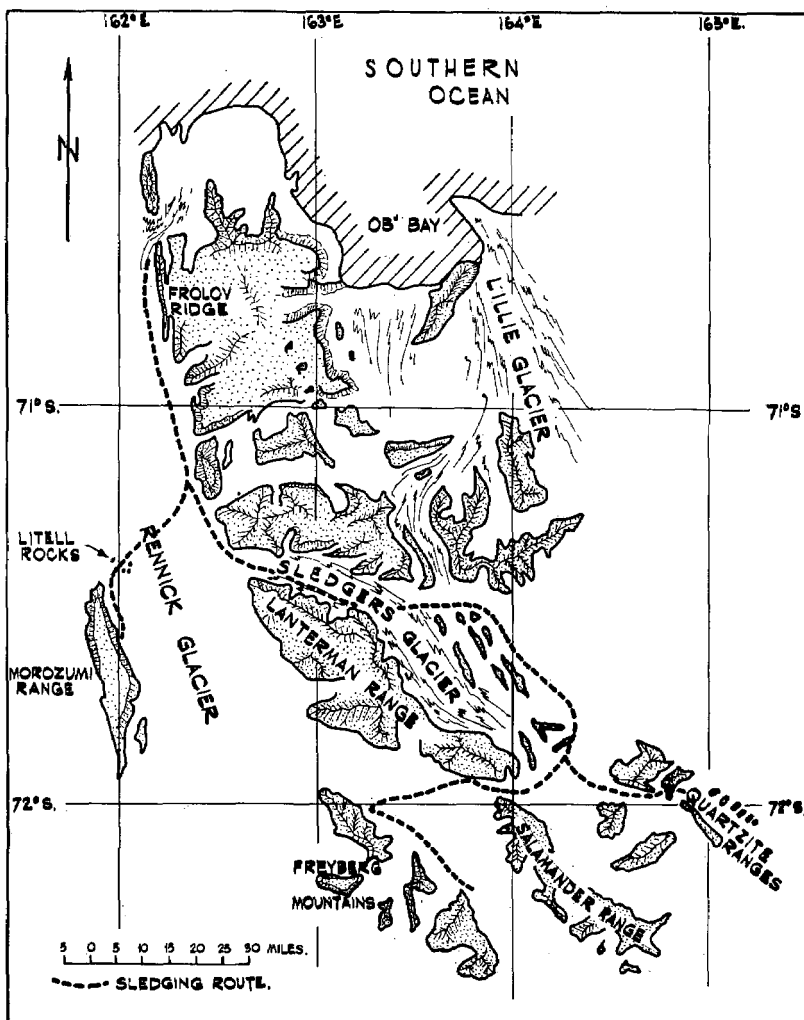
A large variety of lichen forms have been found throughout the area investigated. Mosses were found growing on weathered

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granite rock meal at Litell Rocks. Algae were also found growing there in melt pools. Such a flora developed on primitive soils in the centre of the Rennick Glacier, at about an altitude of 500 feet, is worth further investigation.

Minute arthropods were observed at Frolov Ridge and Mt. Soza but they eluded capture.



Details of sightings are as follows:—

| Date 1967 | N.Z. Standard Time Hrs. | Species | Locality | Details |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 16 Nov. | 1400 | <i>P. nivea</i> Single bird | 71°58'S 164°55'E East Quartzite Range | Heading south |
| 21 Nov. | Afternoon | <i>C. maccomicki</i> Single bird | 71°55'S 164°20'E West side of Letich Massif | |
| 2 Dec. | 1000 | <i>C. maccomicki</i> A pair | 71°12'S 162°24'E Rennick Glacier, west of Mt. Soza | As party was leaving camp, they circled around pecking at rubbish |
| 5 Dec. | 2230 | <i>C. maccomicki</i> Single bird | 70°45'S 162°05'E Rennick Glacier, west of Frolov Ridge | Circled after rubbish and then headed south |
| 8 Dec. | 1100 | <i>P. nivea</i> Single bird | 71°28'S 161°45'E North end of Morozumi Range | Circled party and then retired |
| 9 Dec. | 0015 | <i>Sterna vittata</i> ? Single bird | 71°26'S 161°50'E Camp east of north end of Morozumi Range | Heading south into strong katabatic wind |
| 9 Dec. | 1600 | <i>P. nivea</i> Single bird | 71°29'S 161°45'E El Pulgar, Morozumi Range | Circling at height |
| 9 Dec. | 1630 | <i>P. nivea</i> Four birds | As above | *These birds may well be nesting in the Morozumi Range |
| 13 Dec. | 1600 | <i>P. nivea</i> Single bird | 71°12'S 162°27'E West flank of Mt. Soza | Circled low, then climbed away to the south in spiral flight |

* Located 60 miles from the sea, the birds continually circled the party for over an hour, and were not observed flying away in any particular direction.