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SHORT NOTES

NIGHT FLIGHT OF THE WHITE-FRONTED TERN

During 1968 I spent eight months running between Auckland and South Island ports, the complete voyage Auckland to Auckland being made each week. It was noticed early in the year that a regular feature of the voyage was a night flight of White-fronted Terns. This flight was then looked for, and seen, throughout the year.

There is a large and definite movement of these terns away from the coast in the evening, with a return flight at first light. As a rule the birds proceed at right angles to the coast, in a fairly high and direct flight. How far they fly out is not known but with the ship ten miles off the Wairarapa Coast, the terns fly over still intent on getting seaward. It is suggested that this could be a feeding flight since it must be safer for the birds to roost on small off-shore islets than to raft at night in the open sea. Another factor supporting the feeding flight hypothesis is that on a number of occasions both Pomarine and Arctic Skuas have been seen flying out with the terns. There is very little hawking by the skuas on these occasions; it seems rather that they are heading for the same point off-shore. The skuas have never been seen returning with the terns in the morning.

— JOHN JENKINS



CATTLE EGRETS IN WESTLAND

On 26/4/69 Mr. A. J. Ure, Westland National Park, reported sighting two Cattle Egrets (*Ardeola ibis*) on the Waiho Flats a few miles south of Franz Josef. This sighting was confirmed by Mr. P. Grant, Regional Organiser, O.S.N.Z., on 4 May when he observed the two birds feeding amongst cattle. On 25 May Mr. Ure could not find the birds.

On 8 June I saw two Cattle Egrets feeding with 7 White-faced Herons (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) near a mob of calves in farmland at Kowhitirangi, inland from Hokitika.

— C. R. VEITCH