

Gannet *Sula serrator*. One lifted off the water on being approached. It was a young bird, very brown on the upper surface. It circled the ship once and then flew off strongly on a course of about 260°, i.e. towards south-eastern Australia.

During the return passage to N.Z. "Karepo" crossed the above longitude at latitude 40° South on 30/3/71. The sea temperature remained constant throughout the day at 67° F. and very few birds were seen. I should like to thank Mr. R. B. Sibson, Mr. F. C. Kinsky and Dr. W. R. P. Bourne for reading this note and commenting upon some of the identifications made originally.

— JOHN JENKINS



LETTER

Sir,

Pacific sight-records of Great Shearwaters

I apologise for reverting to an increasingly stale issue, but I have only just noticed that Captain John Jenkins has repeated his claim to have recorded the Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* in the south-west Pacific. It may therefore be useful to state why these records would not be considered acceptable in the North Atlantic where they would be considerably less unusual. If the bird was as rare in North America as it is in New Zealand, the record would not be accepted there until a specimen had been collected. It might be accepted on the strength of a sight record in Europe, or at least in Britain and Ireland, if all details agreed with the species claimed and there was little possibility of any confusion with any other species; but the original description published by Captain Jenkins does not agree with that of the Great Shearwater in all respects. The tail of a Great Shearwater is not long for a member of that group, only averaging about 117 mm. in fact; and it is brown below, not whitish as reported by Captain Jenkins. The white band across the rump above certainly varies in conspicuousness, but it is exceptional for it to be absent, and it certainly would not be expected in several birds, the only ones seen in a new area; discussion at this end of the world usually concentrates on the fact that Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* may also have white on the rump, rather than that the Great Shearwater may have it dark. The Great Shearwater also has a more or less dark underwing, not a white one with a narrow dark line fore and aft as reported by Captain Jenkins, and while the dark patch on the belly of the Great Shearwater is remarkably seldom noticed, it is surprising that Captain Jenkins did not notice this distinctive feature if he was able to see the colour of the under tail and under wing coverts.

Personally, I am surprised that the Great Shearwater does not appear to have been recorded yet in Australasia, especially when other rather less likely species such as Cory's Shearwater and the Manx Shearwater *Puffinus p. puffinus* have occurred there; and I agree completely with Captain Jenkins that it might turn up on a beach there some day; but its occurrence there does not seem fully proven yet.

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— W. R. P. BOURNE