

### A SOUTHERN RECORD OF WRYBILLS

On 22 January 1972 at about 3.30 p.m., while making a general survey of the Wilkin and Makarora riverbeds in the company of Mr H. R. Tanfield, four wrybills were sighted at the mouth of the Makarora River. The birds were observed at a distance of about 30 yards with 8x binoculars. They were seen running swiftly over the sandy flats and feeding occasionally. After approximately five minutes the birds moved further up the riverbed. They were identified by the bill about one inch long and curving slightly to the right; they appeared slightly smaller than a Banded Dotterel but greyish-white in colour.

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### BIRDS SEEN ON A COOK STRAIT CROSSING APRIL 1972

The daily crossings of Cook Strait by the N.Z. Railways ferry vessels *Aramoana* and *Aranui* provide good opportunities for bird observations both across the Strait itself and within the confines of the Marlborough Sounds. A group of 12 Wellington members of the OSNZ spent Anzac Day (25 April) as one of the Wellington Branch's field trips aboard the *Aramoana* on its double crossing. The list of birds seen shows the variety of species found at this time of the year and may provide a basis for further notes from other travellers.

Despite ominous weather conditions at the outset, bright sunshine was enjoyed during the crossings and there was excellent visibility in the Strait with only a moderate swell. South-west to westerly gales during the preceding days may, to some degree, account for the large number of birds recorded: 23 species, listed below, were positively identified, with one or two more "possibilities."

Little Blue Penguin (3); Wandering Albatross (c.6); Black-browed Mollymawk (1); Giant Petrel (c.10); Fairy Prion (many hundreds); Flesh-footed Shearwater (c.20); Buller's Shearwater (c.10); Sooty Shearwater (1); Fluttering Shearwater (100+); Hutton's Shearwater (c.30); Diving Petrel (5); Gannet (3); Black Shag (4); Little Shag (3); Spotted Shag (5); Pied Shag (c.15); Arctic Skua (c.20, the majority in adult light-phase plumage); Southern Great Skua (1); Black-backed Gull; Red-billed Gull; Black-billed Gull; White-fronted Tern; Caspian Tern.

We are all grateful to Dr Falla and Mr Kinsky for their help with identifications during this interesting and enjoyable excursion.

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