

WANDERING ALBATROSS ASHORE ON OTAGO PENINSULA

On 31 March 1970 I received information from local farmers in the Cape Saunders area of the Otago Peninsula that an albatross had been seen landing and taking off. I found that this bird had been observed by the McKay family on 26, 28, 30 and 31 March in the same area, and had remained on the ground on the SSE side of Papanui Cone among the sheep for between 30 and 90 minutes at a time. From Mr McKay's description the bird was a Wandering Albatross.

On 19 April the bird was sighted again by Mr McKay. The following day at noon he reported it back again and this time the bird was caught and banded (R-15135). It was taken and released in the Royal Albatross Colony at Taiaroa Head. The bird was again observed in the Cape Saunders area on 24 April 1970.

No further reports of this bird were received until 8 April 1972, when Mr Bob Dickson of Papanui Inlet, reported seeing a banded albatross in his hay paddock, at Papanui Cone. He had seen this bird a number of times since January but had not taken much notice of it until he had seen the metal band on the leg. I visited the area the same day and although the bird was not seen, droppings were found where it had been resting. Further visits were made to the area, and an albatross was observed heading out to sea in this area on 16 April.

At 2.30 p.m. on 20 April 1972, Mr Rod McKay rang to say that an albatross was on the road near his home and was walking up the road towards his place. Mr C. J. R. Robertson and I left for the area immediately and found the McKay family watching an albatross which was standing in the grass near the fence. It was recognised as a Wandering Albatross, and was wearing band R-15135. This bird had returned to the same area where it was found 2 years ago to the day. The bird was taken to Taiaroa Head and released after a red plastic band had been added above the metal band.

A brief description of the bird is as follows (after Gibson 1967): Back 4, Head 4, Inner wing 2 and tail 2. Plumage type E.

REFERENCE

- GIBSON, J. D. 1967. The Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*): results of banding and observations in New South Wales coastal waters and the Tasman Sea. *Notornis* 14 (2): 47-57, figs 1-3, pl. I.

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