

LITERATURE CITED

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BLACK FANTAIL IN NORTH ISLAND

The appearance of a Black Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) in my garden in Masterton in three successive years is rather unusual. The first one seen in the district since 1948, it was recorded on 20 January 1971. The following year another Black Fantail, or the same one, was seen in the garden on 17 February. Then, on 20 February 1973 (note dates) one had a bathe under the spray from a hose and two days later, presumably the same bird, was seen again but not since then.

It is possible that these records concern the same bird though I have regarded each year's observations as another record. It may be pertinent to add that in Wellington Provincial observations extending over fifty years from 1921 to date I have seen 10 Black Fantails and in that period I have notes of 1352 Pied Fantails as having been actually seen. I have ignored all records of birds heard and not seen. The area covered in these observations, the southern portion of the Wellington Provincial District, extends from the Hawke's Bay boundary in the east to the mouth of the Rangitikei River in the west and includes Kapiti Island, where I saw a Black Fantail consorting with a Pied on 22 February 1927. An additional record for the Wairarapa to those already published is one for 18 May 1924 in the Waingawa River Gorge.

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FIRST RECORD OF WHITE-TAILED TROPIC BIRD
IN NEW ZEALAND

On 27 January 1973 I patrolled approximately two miles of beach to the west of the Whakatane River mouth. The remains of 12 specimens of 8 species of sea birds were found, but one complete skull could not be identified. It was peculiar in shape, the bill was like that of a tern, but malformed, the upper mandible being crossed over the lower mandible.

I was unsure of the identification of the bird so I sent it to Mr F. C. Kinsky at the National Museum, Wellington. He identified it as a juvenile White-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaethon lepturus*). This is the first positive identification of this species in the New Zealand region.

Because of the malformed bill it is possible that the bird had difficulty feeding and died through starvation. The malformity of the bill had probably occurred at birth, or at a very early stage in the bird's life.

This species occurs in the centre of the tropical oceans, mainly on the Ascension and Galapagos Is, where it breeds amongst the larger Red-billed Tropic Birds (*P. aethereus*). It also appears around the Tongan Is, where it is more common than the Red-tailed Tropic Bird (*P. rubricauda*).

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ANTARCTIC SKUAS AT VANDA STATION, ANTARCTICA

Vanda Station is a small permanent New Zealand field station sited at the East end of Lake Vanda in the Wright Valley at 77°31'S, 161°40'E. Its main function since its establishment in 1967 has been as a meteorological station and as a service centre for field parties studying geology, glaciology, hydrology, etc., in the Dry Valleys. The coast lies some 30 miles to the east where, at Marble Point, the nearest colony of Antarctic Skuas (*Stercorarius skua maccormicki*) breeds. Each summer since the opening of Vanda Station skuas have visited the Station (unpublished Vanda Leader's Reports to the Ross Dependency Research Committee). The largest number seen together is recorded as three, and the earliest arrival at the Station on 9 November, in 1971.

During the summer season 1972-73 I was appointed Leader, Vanda Station, by the Antarctic Division of the DSIR, and noted on 6 November the arrival of the first skua, which carried a plain, un-numbered band. Presentation of high quality food scraps attracted the individual for several days until it was joined by another and, a little later, a third. Although, at this stage, no more than three birds were seen together, it was clear from plumage variations and recognisable individual behaviour that more birds were involved. In an attempt to assess the size of the visiting population I commenced a trapping programme in which four birds were trapped and banded. Subsequently three un-banded birds were seen feeding together, bringing the total number of confirmed visitors to seven. On 15 January seven birds were seen together in flight and it is probable that the actual total number of visitors during the season exceeded ten — far more than has hitherto been suspected. Two birds (one of which was the first visitor of the season) were present when the Station was closed for the winter on February 8.