

ing periwinkles on a rock on the seashore and, having broken the shells, eating the flesh. Meanwhile, no doubt, other song thrushes inland were searching in vain for snails — their normal diet — under hard-frozen snow." The periwinkles to which Dr Radford refers are almost certainly the common or edible periwinkle, *Littorina littorea* Linnaeus, which looks very similar to *M. aethiops*. These two species are both prosobranch molluscs and not closely related to the two pulmonates *Amphibola crenata* and *Helix aspera*, the garden snail.

Although these reports are more meagre than I had hoped for, the evidence which spans a long time and widely separated places, suggests that individual thrushes may try various snail-like objects for food when they are available and thrushes living by the coast will have ample opportunity to explore the shore and sample marine snails. Presumably, if the thrush succeeds in opening a snail and the flesh is good then the habit may be repeated and copied by other thrushes which observe the local pioneers. On three occasions I found intact shells of the scavenger whelk, *Cominella glandiformis* Reeve, besides thrushes' anvils at Papanui Inlet, which further supports the idea that thrushes will attempt to exploit a variety of snails, a behaviour which will certainly help them to survive when their usual food is in short supply.

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FIRST RECORD OF THE ANTARCTIC PETREL IN NEW ZEALAND

During a beach patrol of the Dargaville West Coast on 22 September 1973 by Northland members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, one specimen of Antarctic Petrel (*Thalassoica antarctica*) was recovered.

I recognised the specimen from amongst an assemblage of Procellariiformes which included a strong southern element, consisting of Cape Pigeon (*Daption capensis*), Antarctic Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialisoides*), Kerguelen Petrel (*Pterodroma brevirostris*), White-headed Petrel (*Pterodroma lessoni*), Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*), Antarctic Prion (*Pachyptila desolata*), Grey Petrel (*Procellaria cinerea*), and Southern Skua (*Stercorarius skua lonnbergi*). The partially decayed specimen was found on the section between Maunganui Bluff and Baylys Beach by Alan Poulton and Pen Smith, both of Whangarei.

The *Annotated Checklist* (OSNZ 1970: 21) states that the Antarctic Petrel is found breeding on the Antarctic Coast and outlying islands, probably also further inland. Common in the Ross Sea, although breeding has not yet been proved in the Ross Dependency, this species moves north with the pack ice in winter; but rarely ranging

north of 60°S. The *Field Guide to Australian Birds* (Slater 1970: 151-2) records the Antarctic Petrel as far north as Macquarie Island in 1965.

Its occurrence at Dargaville and Oreti Beach, Southland, on 13 October 1973 (Barlow 1974, *Notornis* 21: 183-4) is unusual, especially the Dargaville example which came ashore in relatively settled weather. Normally the "wrecking" of petrels is associated with prolonged strong south to west winds.

When collected, the specimen was in an advanced state of decay. However, when forwarded to Mr F. C. Kinsky at the National Museum, Wellington, for confirmation of identification, one outstretched wing and a skeleton were prepared from the remains.

The Dargaville specimen agreed perfectly with the description given in the *Handbook of Australian Sea-birds* (Serventy *et al.*, 1971: 88-9) and the measurements (Culmen 38.5 mm, Tarsus 47 mm, Mid-toe and claw 57.2 mm, Wing 314 mm, Tail 113 mm) fall within the range listed.

My thanks to Mr F. C. Kinsky for his confirmation of identification and measurements.

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BLACKBIRD'S NEST USED THREE TIMES

About mid-September 1974, a Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) was observed building a nest in a secluded part of our garden in Havelock North. The nest was about one and a half metres above ground level on a eucalyptus stump from which a vigorous growth of young branches had sprouted. Within a few days three eggs had been laid and incubation commenced. Two of the eggs hatched, and eventually the two fledglings left the nest about 17 October and were observed perching in nearby trees with both parents in attendance.

One week later, it was noticed that the nest was again occupied, presumably by the same mother bird. This time four eggs were laid. In due course two of the eggs hatched, the young birds were diligently cared for by both parents and left the nest on 21 November. Again they were observed being fed in nearby trees.

Exactly a week later the same nest, now becoming rather threadbare, was observed to be again in use, and again presumably by the same pair. A small amount of restoration work seemed to have been done around the outside of the nest. On this occasion four eggs were laid, three were hatched, and all three left the nest on 26 December. On that day all three were seen in nearby trees with both parents in close attendance.

The essence of this report is that three clutches of Blackbirds were raised in one nest in one season. It is almost certain that all