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

three clutches were offspring of the same parents, a supposition which is strengthened by the consistency in their appearance and behaviour and their increasing tolerance of interested humans. After the third hatching the parent birds would feed the young without any sign of nervousness while two observers had tea in deck chairs at a distance of 4 - 5 m.

After its third use, the nest was still sound but it had become rather shallow and the grass lining was practically worn away from the mud-plaster walls.

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## SOUTHERN BLACK-BACKED GULL *(Larus dominicanus)* AT CAPE HALLETT, ANTARCTICA

The Southern Black-backed Gull *(Larus dominicanus)* has been reported at only four localities on the continent of Antarctica, excluding the Palmer Peninsula (Ingham 1962, *Emu* 62: 126-8; Watson *et al.* 1971, Birds of the Antarctic and Subantarctic, Am. Geogr. Soc., Antarct. Map Folio Ser.). Watson *et al.* summarised the locations of all known breeding colonies and sightings of this species. No observations of the Southern Black-backed Gull have been reported for Cape Hallett (72°19'S., 170°13'E.) or the coast of Victoria Land. The southern record for this species is Ross Island (77°S.) (Watson *et al.* 1971).

On 4 November 1971 at 2030 G.M.T., I observed an adult Southern Black-backed Gull in flight over the north beach of the Cape Hallett Adelie Penguin rookery. The bird flew the length (450 m) of the penguin colonies on the beach ridge at a height of about 20 m before leaving to the northeast and the frozen Ross Sea. The duration of the observation was about five minutes.

The nearest known breeding colony of Southern Black-backed Gulls is Macquarie Island (54°S.) (Watson *et al.* 1971), about 1000 nautical miles from Cape Hallett. Two explanations for the presence of this species at Cape Hallett are: (1) that the individual was blown off course by a storm, or (2) that it was searching for food in the penguin colonies. I noted complete cloud cover and high winds (12-25 knots) at Cape Hallett on the day of observation. However, the weather for the preceding week was calm and clear in the Cape Hallett area. Although Southern Black-backed Gulls consume some birds and bird eggs as a part of their normal diet (Fordham 1964), this individual showed little interest in the incubating Adelie Penguins *(Pygoscelis adeliae)*. There are no reports of Southern Black-backed Gulls utilizing Adelie Penguin rookeries as a source of food, although they do take eggs and chicks of other Sphenisciformes (Bagshawe 1938, *Trans. Zool Soc. Lond.* 24: 185-306). Sladen (1958, *Scient. Rep. Falkld. Isl. Depend. Surv.* 17) found Southern Black-backed Gulls nesting within one-half mile of Adelie and Gentoo Penguin *(Pygoscelis papua)*