

I resolved to take advantage of this rare opportunity to study the White Heron further so I returned to the lagoon the following afternoon. Although I made a careful search, there was no sign of the bird but I found a set of clearly defined footprints in the mud close to the place where I had originally sighted it.

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#### DO MIGRATORY FLOCKS OF GODWITS AND KNOTS BRING OTHER WADERS TO NEW ZEALAND ?

Shortly after reading the remarkable note "A pigeon among the shags" (Jenkins & Sibson 1975, *Notornis* 22: 76-77), I came across a discussion by Guy Mountford of other instances of birds being "caught up" in flocks of unrelated species (Mountford 1962, *Portrait of a River*. London: 86). The examples cited concern a Crane with Pelicans, Jackdaw with Lapwings, and Tawny Pipit with Pied Flycatchers, the latter being a flock on migration.

These several examples prompt me to formulate a question which recently came to mind while I was watching the very small numbers of certain waders on the Manukau Harbour, e.g. Golden Plover and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, in the presence of the vast flocks of Godwit and Knot: is it possible that the shore birds which come to New Zealand as stragglers, or even as regular visitors in small numbers, do so as a result of being caught up in the massive migratory flocks of Godwit and Knot? Admittedly the waders in question are themselves migratory species, but is New Zealand their right destination or have these individuals perhaps "caught the wrong flight"?

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#### BROWN BOOBY IN WELLINGTON HARBOUR

On 24 April 1975, a Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster plotus*) was sighted by Mr H. Secker perched on a rock 25 m off-shore between Ngauranga and Petone. I saw what was presumably the same bird on 11 May as it flew along the western end of Petone foreshore. The pale belly, uniformly dark plumage and gannet-like dives were observed before the bird and its escort of Black-backed Gulls moved away. For the next month the bird was frequently observed in this part of the harbour. Fortunately for photographers, an old pile some 30 m off-shore at high tide became a favourite perch (Fig. 1). This also provided an opportunity for such diagnostic features as the sharp line of demarcation on the breast and the bluish colour of the bill to be observed (Stein 1955, *Notornis* 6: 157-9).

Mr J. L. Kendrick sighted the bird as far east in the harbour as Mahina Bay on 30 May. The bird returned to Petone foreshore

where it was observed regularly by Mr M. L. Falconer and others until 13 June. The next day Mr B. D. Bell sighted what was probably the same bird off Seatoun, and a week later on 20 June it was discovered dead at Worser Bay by Mrs J. McCredie.



FIGURE 1 — Brown Booby, Petone Beach, Wellington Harbour, May 1975.  
Photo: B. D. Bell

The bird has been deposited in the National Museum where Mr F. C. Kinsky confirmed its identity and stated that it was a first year bird in full moult into second year plumage (Fig. 2). This is the fourth specimen from New Zealand, the first being shot in Napier Harbour in 1884 (Hamilton 1888, *Trans Proc. N.Z. Inst.* 21: 128-34) and the others found dead at Otaki Beach and Cape Reinga. Reports in *Notornis* indicate that Brown Boobies have occurred fairly regularly in the Hauraki Gulf since 1952, usually associating with gannets. The most southerly sighting is from near Timaru (Pierce 1969, *Notornis* 16: 125).

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FIGURE 2 — Brown Booby, Petone Beach, Wellington Harbour, May 1975. Note sharp line of demarcation on breast and moult condition.

Photo: B. D. Bell