

On the third day a visit was made to Lake Pupuke to see the nesting Shags. Very close-up observation was possible of many Pied Shags (*P. varius*) and White-throated Shags (*P. melanoleucos brevirostris*), all nesting with young in various stages, and the colonies contained a few Little Black Shags (*P. sulcirostris*), not nesting. About equal numbers of the two forms of *melanoleucos* were observed, each form nesting separately, except for two mixed pairs seen at the nest, and some intermediate adult forms were also seen. Other parts of the lake produced several juvenal Large Black Shags (*P. carbo novaehollandiae*), many Black Swan, feral Mute Swan and numerous Grey Duck, including two only of a Grey-Mallard cross. Some Eastern Rosellas caused many of the party to interrupt their lunch. In the afternoon the party proceeded to the drainage ponding areas between Puketutu Island and the mainland. Interest was first concentrated on several Shoveler Duck amongst numbers of Mallard and Grey Duck on water which was previously completely depopulated by spraying operations carried out by the drainage authority. As the tide rose later in the afternoon, waders were in evidence in numbers. Bar-tailed Godwit (c. 2500) and South Island Pied Oystercatcher (c. 200) came in from the outer mud-banks, the latter including one Northern Oystercatcher. Also observed were 7 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, including a coloured juvenal, 7 Turnstones, 15 Wrybilled Plover, and a Little Stint. Of very special interest, even to the more hardened observers of the Auckland wading birds, was a Curlew Sandpiper in brilliant colouring.

Auckland has much to offer in migratory waders all round the year, and members attending the field study week-end were satisfied that they had been treated to a fair cross-section of all that the area can produce.

— A.B.



SHORT NOTES

NOTES ON SOME BONES COLLECTED BY DR. WATTERS AND MR. LINDSAY AT CHATHAM ISLANDS

The bones from this deposit were collected from Whenuatara, Pitt Island, on 2/2/57. They are embedded in or caked with a yellowish consolidated sand. The following have been identified:

Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*). The collection consists mainly of wing bones of several individuals, portion of a skull, tibiae, metatarsi, femora, and other bones. One or two of the bones are immature, but most of them are mature and have a size range not far short of the average of specimens available from Campbell Island. The breeding birds of the Sisters and Forty-fours Islets are to-day slightly smaller and darker winged than the breeding birds of Campbell Island, but there are not sufficient bones of the existing Chathams birds available to enable a useful comparison to be made with the sub-fossil bones.

Some of the dimensions of the latter are:

Tarso-metatarsi	123 mm.	124 mm.
Tibia	225	
Femur	97	
Radius	100	
Carpal	135	

Extinct woodhen (*Gallirallus minor*). There is one cranium and upper beak of this species, and one tibia and a metatarsus which are large enough to belong to the same bird or one like it. These have the normal ralline character of leg-bones, however, and are unlike existing *Gallirallus*.

Maxilla 38 mm.

Tibia 79 mm.

Small Rail (*Rallus dieffenbachi*). Much smaller than those described above, but the same shape, are a tibia and metatarsus which fall within the range accorded to *R. dieffenbachi*.

The remaining material consist of bones of smaller perching birds which have not yet been precisely identified.

R. A. FALLA



GRAY-FACED PETRELS OVER MT. MAUNGANUI PENINSULA

From time to time accounts of petrels flying over the mainland appear in *Notornis*, so I have thought that the following observations which concern Gray-faced Petrels (*Pterodroma macroptera*) near Mt. Maunganui, Tauranga, are worth recording.

For some days in September, 1959, I was staying near the open coast on the Mt. Maunganui peninsula, south-east of the Mount; and on every evening these petrels were noted over the land at dusk between 6 p.m. and 6.15 p.m. I first saw them at 6.13 p.m. on the evening of September 9th, when the main flock was about one mile south-east of Mt. Maunganui itself. They had evidently come from the east. The numbers were most impressive and I estimated that more than 3000 flew north-westwards over the peninsula, not calling but making a mighty rushing sound with the whirring of their powerful wings. No calls were heard.

On the next four days these petrels were watched about this same time a little closer to the Mount. The first to appear came in small, fairly compact groups of about ten birds. Then the flocks increased to about 200, before the main body swung seawards.

Oliver (1955) states that Mt. Maunganui (761 ft.) is a breeding place of the Gray-faced Petrel, but it is doubtful if many breed there successfully now. After two thorough searches, I could find no occupied burrows, although old burrows were numerous in suitable ground.

P. D. G. SKEGG



(The Gray-faced Petrel is the common 'muttonbird' of Maori tradition in the Bay of Plenty. It is still abundant on most of the uninhabited islands, though curiously scarce on Mavor, where pigs may be the cause of the decline. Small colonies are still said to survive on some mainland cliffs. A party of ornithologists who camped on the Alderman Islands from September 2-8 noted the first incoming Gray-faced Petrels every evening between 6.15 and 6.25. It might be expected that at this time (dusk) and season (early September) most breeding Gray-faced Petrels would be either incubating or heading for their burrows. It has therefore been suggested that the great numbers seen flying along the Mt. Maunganui peninsula in mid-September were immature non-breeders, not yet attached to a breeding site.—Ed.)