

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.)