

## SHORT NOTE

### The most southern record of a Red-tailed Tropicbird

All New Zealand records of Red-tailed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon rubricauda*) published in the ornithological literature have been of birds seen, or picked up as wrecks along the shores of the North Island, near the Three Kings, at the Kermadecs, or at sea in lower latitudes (Marchant & Higgins 1990, Powlesland *et al.* 1992). However, there is a record in the non-ornithological literature of this bird (easily identified by its "19 inch long" red tail feathers) found wedged in the palings of the balcony of the Akaroa Lighthouse, after a particularly violent easterly (Clark 1963). This is the first and only South Island record for this species and at 44 degrees south is the most southern record in the world.

The southernmost record from Australia is from 43 degrees south at South Arm near Hobart (Hall 1917). This was an adult female found in February 1917. South Africa has 12 records, and the most southern are from near Port Elizabeth at 34 degrees south (Batchelor 1979). One of these records was of a tail feather found before 1884 and the other was of a specimen collected on 22 September 1961. In the Pacific Ocean the distribution becomes more confined to the tropics towards the east. In the southeast the most southerly record is from Easter Island (Johnston *et al.* 1970), which is only 27 degrees south.

The specimen from Akaroa was found at some time between 1 April 1955 and June 1958, and the existence of this record was brought to my attention by Philip Battley.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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