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SHORT NOTE

A beach-wrecked White-naped Petrel

On 27 January 1986 at Karikari Bay, Northland, with Geoff Arnold and Julie Macefield, I found the remains of a large grey and white gadfly petrel which I subsequently identified as a White-naped Petrel (*Pterodroma cervicalis*). The bird was incomplete, with one wing largely missing and the other damaged. Some tail feathers and part of the forehead and facial plumage were also missing. The bird had begun to dry and there was probably some shrinkage of soft parts.

Description: Upper wing and crown predominantly dark grey to black. Mantle, back and scapular feathers white at the base, distally frosty-grey, with a few of the scapulars narrowly tipped with white. There was a partial collar of grey-tipped feathers. Remaining (outer) rectrices were white, some tipped and flecked with grey. Nape and underparts white. Primaries had black shafts, black outer webs and grey and off-white inner webs. The bill was dull black. The feet were largely white to pale flesh with the distal parts of the toes and webs grey-black.

Measurements (mm)

Body: Length	c. 420	Foot: Tarsus	40
Wingspan	c. 990	Mid-toe and claw	53
Wing	305	Bill: Length	36
Tail (incomplete)	123	Depth	16
		Width	17

The White-naped Petrel closely resembles the Juan Fernandez Petrel (*P. externa*). Until recently the two were considered races of the same species but are now believed to be distinct (Imber 1985). Specific identification of incomplete specimens may be difficult, but *P. cervicalis* is usually slightly smaller in all dimensions. Falla (1976) gave a comprehensive list of features by which the two can be distinguished (but note the error in the culmen mean for *externa*).

Discussion: The White-naped Petrel is known to breed only on Macauley Island in the Kermadec Group. Eggs hatch in late February and this bird was therefore at least 11 months old. The white-tipped scapulars, however, suggest an immature bird (Oliver 1955). Birds winter in the north-west Pacific Ocean (Tanaka & Inaba 1981) and only rarely straggle to the New Zealand mainland. This record is the third, the others being of a bird near Rotorua in April 1968 (Kinsky 1971) and a juvenile found north of Gisborne in 1977 (Blackburn 1977).

The beach patrol on 27 January 1986 also yielded a White-capped Noddy (*Anous minutus*). Other patrols in the Far North at the same time yielded other tropical seabirds – two White-tailed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon lepturus*) and a Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) (L. Howell, pers. comm.). The weather pattern in January seems to account for their presence near northern New Zealand. From 15 to 25 January a blocked anticyclone lay to the east of New Zealand. In the Far North, the associated north-easterly winds varied between 10 and 20 knots throughout this period, rising to 50-55 knots on 25 January. This was unusually protracted for such a weather pattern; in the Auckland region winds were from the north-east for 73% of the time during January, the highest figure ever recorded for that month (January average = 30%).

This record has been accepted by the Rare Birds Committee of OSNZ and the bird has been deposited in the Auckland Institute and Museum collection (B 1340). I am grateful to Jim Hessel, Chief Meteorologist, Auckland Weather Centre, for weather information, to Brian Gill, Auckland Institute and Museum, for access to specimens and to Mike Imber for improvements to this note.

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