

SHORT NOTES

WOOD DUCK IN MARLBOROUGH

During the second weekend of the duck-shooting season in April 1980, Wayne Johnston of Blenheim was shooting with his father, Max, at the edge of the Wairau River near the mouth of the Waikakaho. There, some Catchment Board stop banks between the Tua Marina Track and the main river form ponds surrounded by willows. Decoys had been set out on the pond about 9 to 10 a.m. on this sunny morning, when a duck came in against the light towards Wayne. Max was better sighted across the prevailing light and was impressed by the speed of the wing beat, but Wayne's quick shot was fatal. The duck was so unusual that they handed it to the local Acclimatisation Society Ranger. Since then the Ranger has heard reports of a strange light-coloured duck seen in the Spring Creek area before the shooting season. The two areas are only about 4 miles apart. The duck has been identified by Brian Bell as a male Australian Wood Duck or Maned Goose (*Chenonetta jubata*), a small goose-like duck. The *Annotated Checklist* mentions only two records of stragglers from Glendhu, Wanaka (1910) and Orawia, Southland (1944), while the *New guide to the birds of New Zealand* gives a further two records, both in 1944, from Linwood and Wairaki in Southland.

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GANNETS FEEDING BEHIND TRAWLER

During the 1981 winter, while we were trawling in Tasman Bay, there were up to 100 Australasian Gannets (*Sula bassana serrator*) within sight of the boat at any one time. As usual they were taking no notice of the boat but sitting on the water or feeding.

As we were picking up a morning trawl on 6 June, two adult Gannets joined the Shy Mollymawks (*Diomedea cauta*), Cape Pigeons (*Daption capense*) and Black-backed Gulls (*Larus dominicanus*) that were feeding on the offal and small moribund fish which fall out of the cod end as it comes on board.

The Gannets were diving for both the offal and small fish, spitting out the offal and swallowing the fish.

We noticed this behaviour several times during the trip and each time there were only one or two Gannets.

This is the only time in several years that we have seen or heard of Gannets feeding in this manner. Usually they cast an eye at the boat and the accompanying birds and then continue on their way.

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