

Red-billed Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*), Black-billed Gulls (*L. bulleri*) Banded Dotterels (*Charadrius bicinctus*).

Whimbrels have been observed feeding in dry areas, picking lightly at surface prey and in wet areas probing like godwits, but this is the first whimbrel we have seen consistently catching and eating crabs, which it removes from the immediate site of capture then proceeds to crush, in the course of which the crab may be dropped two or three times before being swallowed. The bird has frequently taken half a dozen crabs in as many minutes, also marine worms and other prey too small to be identified.

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### BROWN BOOBIES IN NEW ZEALAND

While doing a beach patrol on a stretch of Muriwai Beach on the Auckland west coast with Jane Wells and Kathie Parkinson on 6 April 1980, I found a Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) which had been dead for about a week. Distinctive features when compared with an immature Australasian Gannet (*Sula bassana serrator*) were the smaller size, yellow feet, the smooth brown upper plumage, the underwing pattern of white with broad chocolate-brown margins, and the sharp line of demarcation between the brown breast and the brown-smudged white underparts. This colouring of the underparts showed the bird to be immature. Measurements were: culmen 103.2 mm, tarsus 52.5 mm, mid-toe and claw 92.3 mm, wing 440 mm.

Brown Boobies have been reported many times around New Zealand. One is known to have frequented the Hauraki Gulf for three consecutive seasons and to have roosted with Gannets on Horuhoru, and one visited Wellington Harbour in late summer 1975 (Sibson *et al.*, *A New Guide to the Birds of New Zealand* 1979). The most southerly record is just south of Timaru (Pierce 1969, *Notornis* 16: 125).

The first specimen collected was shot in Napier Harbour in July 1884 (Hamilton 1888, *Trans. Proc. NZ Inst.* 21: 128-134). A further two specimens were found more recently and deposited in the National Museum. Details are: NMNZ 8775, an immature bird found by M. Bull, Otaki Beach, 18 May 1957; NMNZ 18704, an immature in moult found by H. J. McCredie, Worsler Bay, Wellington, 20 June 1975 (J. A. Bartle, pers. comm.).

The first Brown Booby recorded in the OSNZ Beach Patrol scheme was found on Te Werahi Beach, near Cape Reinga, on 17 January 1971 (C. R. Veitch, *Notornis*, this issue) by T. R. Harty, and is now in the National Museum (NMNZ 16058). The bird we found is therefore the second recorded in the Beach Patrol Scheme and the fifth specimen obtained in New Zealand. It is now a skeleton in Auckland Museum (Av. 10).

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