

appearance in non-breeding plumage. Interested spectators included a Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), two very grey stints which we suspect may have been Semi-palmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*) and, for a short time, a New Zealand Dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus*).

The Mongolian Dotterel, drawing itself up to full height, ran to the Banded Dotterels and, standing with upstretched neck before them, trilled a soft *tirrit-tirrit-tirrit* and once or twice *tirr-ir-it*, whereupon all flew up to circle, perhaps three times, calling repeatedly. They alighted and the same display was repeated twice more. Since they seemed oblivious to our presence, we tried carefully to get the sun behind us, better to observe this unique interaction between these two dotterels. The attempt failed, for all flew right away.

The Mongolian Dotterel had a rich reddish-brown half collar. Chin, throat, breast and belly were white, as were forehead and superciliary. Upper surfaces were brownish grey. We were not able to note further details but my impression was that there was less white and more definite brown on the head than had been seen on previous occasions. On 13 November 1977, when the bird was first seen, the upperparts had been noted as light brownish grey and hind-neck rufous. Much white showed on face and forehead, viewed from the front. There had been a complete, narrow grey band across the upper breast, a dark patch behind the eye and the bill was short and thick. Legs were greyish.

A return next day with sound-recording equipment was fruitless. The bird could not be found, nor was it seen again.

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#### ANTARCTIC PETRELS AROUND FOVEAUX STRAIT

In normal years Antarctic Petrels (*Thalassoica antarctica*) are rarely seen, but towards the end of winter 1978 there were unusual numbers from Preservation Inlet to Stewart Island.

Roy Milford, who fishes these waters, passed on these comments to me. "Three or four have been round every fishing boat; and altogether there must have been some hundreds. It is nice to have a new bird around. They are very tame, the tamest seabird of all. In fact, you can reach down and pick them off the water. They seem completely fearless. Near the boats they sit alongside the Cape Pigeons (*Daption capense*), eating scraps, and the Cape Pigeons bully them. The Antarctic Petrels appeared in such numbers at the beginning of September. Coinciding with their arrival was an unusual abundance of octopus."

Roy Milford, with 70 pots, added that normally he would get three or four octopus per daily round, but that in 1978 he was getting 20 per day, and other crayfishermen were reporting similar numbers.

Any connection?

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