

REFERENCES.

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RINGED GIANT PETRELS.—In the summer of 1947-48, the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition set up research stations at Heard Island (lat 53° S., long. 73½° E.) and at Macquarie Island (lat 54½° S., long. 159° E.) which have been maintained continuously up till the present time. Among other duties the biologists have been ringing giant petrels (*Macronectes giganteus*), southern skuas (*Stercorarius skua lonnbergi*) and other birds. Already many of these birds have been recovered from various parts of the Southern Hemisphere, including a giant petrel in New Zealand between Raglan and Hamilton, in the North Island, this bird having flown over 4000 miles. During a recent visit to New Zealand over one hundred giant petrels were seen by the writer congregated about an outlet pipe leading into Wellington Harbour from a meat works. Others were seen swimming alongside ships tied up to the wharves. Excellent opportunities are presented here to obtain sight records of ringed birds since the rings are sufficiently big to be seen on the tarsus when the bird is undisturbed. Both plastic and aluminium rings were used, the former being red, black, white or brown with no inscription. Many of the birds ringed were nestlings and evidently only these come to Australia and New Zealand. It would be interesting if some sight records could be obtained to determine, by noting the amount of fading of face and body plumage, the age at which these birds will come into northern waters.—M. C. Downes.

RELATIONS OF REDPOLL (*Carduelis flammea*) WITH OTHER ANIMALS.—At Wellington this species competes with the goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) for cassinia seed, the staple food of the area. House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) also eat this seed when ranging through the countryside in autumn from nearby built-up areas. However, seed supplies seem adequate for all three species, and they feed together amicably in autumn in the same clumps of seeding bushes. The redpoll has at no time been seen to attack the swamp harrier (*Circus approximans*), which does not prey on passerine birds, though magpies (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) and starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) attack it, so that it was a matter of surprise to see a large flock of redpolls in early winter attack a bush hawk (*Falco novaeseelandiae*). This hawk is a predator of small birds. During the early part of the nesting season redpolls exhibit threatening postures in flight at starlings, yellowhammers (*Emberiza citrinella*) and hedge sparrows (*Prunella modularis*) and also at man. Surprisingly, birds still defending the immediate area around suitable nesting sites in January were not seen to attack vagrant family parties of goldfinches passing nearby.—H. L. Secker, Wellington.

SHINING CUCKOO RECORDS.—Last year, Mr J. M. Cunningham, 39, Renall Street, Masterton, carried out a pilot study of the dates of arrival of the shining cuckoo in New Zealand, and the results and an indication of the methods adopted are given elsewhere in this issue. The study is being repeated with modifications this year, and members are invited to inform him of their 1953 records. Not only the first date is required, but also that at which the birds became common and resident in the district.