

(AC). Motukarara, c.100 on 20/8. Greenpark, c.100 on 30/7 (PAL). Embankment Rd, Ellesmere, 60 in paddock on 27/3, 100+ on 16/12. Springs Rd, Ellesmere, 30 in gum trees on 7/8, 50+ nesting on 23/8 (AC, KCH, SP). Clydevale, Clutha R, c.30 on 19/11 (KCG, DJO).



OBITUARY

CAPTAIN J.A.F. JENKINS 1928 – 1989



Born at Griffithstown, John Jenkins attended West Monmouth Grammar School and began his sea-training at the Cardiff Navigation School. As a junior officer he served with the Deane Shipping Company and the Blue Star Line, making many voyages, especially to South America. Later in life he was wont to regret the opportunities he missed because in his early days at sea he had not developed what was to become an absorbing interest in marine ornithology.

In 1956, in response to an appeal for officers, John came to New Zealand to join the Union Steam Shipping Company. He settled in Auckland, where he made his home and gained his Master's ticket. Over the next 30 years he became familiar with the ports and shipping routes of Australasia and the South-West Pacific and acquired an unrivalled knowledge of the birds which were to be seen over great stretches of ocean from the tropics to 50° S.

John first became acquainted with the seabirds of Polynesia from the decks of the historic *Tofua* and *Matua*. When containerisation revolutionised shipping he was master of the *Union South Pacific* and upon him fell the task of learning how to manoeuvre a big ship in little ports and handle harbour facilities that sometimes verged on the primitive. Every voyage added to his store of careful observations. He was quick to realise how difficult it is to identify correctly birds seen far from land; and how little was known about the distribution and migrations of many oceanic birds. His first short notes appeared in *Notornis* in 1962. Land-birds which came on board or occurred far out at sea were duly logged and, if necessary, petted with titbits with the ready help of his fellow mariners. John was largely responsible with the co-operation of his friend Neil Cheshire, now master of the C.S.I.R.O. research vessel, for the now-accepted grid used for the plotting of bird sightings in Australasian waters. The results of years of meticulous loggings of Wedge-tailed and Buller's Shearwaters have been published in *Notornis* and are models of how such studies should be done.

Such was the confidence of John's superiors in his skill, leadership and tact that he was twice chosen to go to Europe to bring new ships to New Zealand, first the *Union Lyttelton* on its maiden voyage from a snow-bound shipyard in Norway; and later the German-built and refurbished research vessel, *Rapuhia*, from Hamburg. He would happily tell how after *Rapuhia* cleared the Panama Canal and reached the open ocean, one of the first large petrels to cross their route was a bird he knew well over its native waters *Procellaria parkinsoni*. He then commanded this vessel on its first cruises off the New Zealand coast.

Demands on his skill as a mariner often bit into John's official leaves, e.g. in 1976-77 when he sailed with Alex Black in RV *Acheron* to survey and report on undersea volcanic activity in the tropical Pacific. On one of his voyages he himself had to cope with an alarming manifestation of this phenomenon. In 1980, when the Campbell Island Flightless Teal was rediscovered at Dent Island, John was again at the helm of the *Acheron*. Because he was such a willing and reliable workhorse, he was likely to be called upon at short notice to take the place of fellow officers who had fallen sick or had been unable to report for duty.

More recently with the development of the Cook Strait and Taranaki oil and gas fields, he was often in command of coastal tankers between New Plymouth, Whangarei and other ports of New Zealand. On these local voyages, which he enjoyed at all seasons, he was able to add greatly to our knowledge of the distribution of albatrosses and petrels a few miles offshore. The highlights of every trip were eagerly awaited by his Auckland friends. What pleasure he took in recollecting 19 Light-mantled Sooties or the behaviour and diagnostic features of Blue Petrels on a voyage down the East

Coast. Off our northern coast he had come to regard Yellow-nosed Mollymawks as familiar friends. As a change from seabirds, when he was on leave, he was happy to walk long muddy miles in search of the waders of the Auckland Isthmus.

Like many mariners, John was a keen gardener, with a special love of roses and fuchsias. In essence he was a man of action. For some years he had been collecting data on the discovery and early literature of the birds of the Pacific Islands. His published findings have already proved their worth. Also much appreciated were the indices which he compiled as labours of love for *Sea-Swallow* and the Australasian Sea-Bird Group.

John was a professional seaman with wide ranging interests. He co-operated with the R.N.Z.N. in hydrographic surveys; he made observations on whales and dolphins; with Keith Wise of the Auckland Museum he devised and successfully used equipment for trapping and preserving insects on long voyages. His knowledge and enthusiasm will be missed by many among whom he found a ready audience after every voyage.

In 1957 he married Patricia Walter. Since then many have enjoyed the hospitality of their home. The Ornithological Society offers its sympathy and affection to John's wife, Pat, and to their daughters, Jane and Sally.

Lists of John's writings have been deposited in the Auckland and National Museums.

R.B. SIBSON



ERRATA

In B. J. Gill & C. R Veitch, 1990 Measurements of bush birds on Little Barrier Island, New Zealand (*Notornis* 37: 141-145) please note the following important corrections:

1. On page 142, Tables 1 and 2 have been transposed in error against their captions.
2. On page 143, line 10 should read: The *maximum* female weight can now be defined as 15.9 g and the minimum male weight as 16.1 g.

We apologise for these errors, which occurred after the proof stage.