

## RECENT LITERATURE

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### Food studies

Impact of food abundance, diet and food quality on the breeding of the fruit pigeon, para *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae chathamensis*, on Chatham Island, New Zealand. R.G. Powlesland, P.J. Dilks, I.A. Flux, A.D. Grant, C.J. Tisdall. (*Sci.Res.Div., Dept. Conservation, P.O. Box 10-420, Wellington, New Zealand.*) *Ibis* 139: 353-365. 1997.

Pairs bred in all months, but predominantly June-November (Winter-Spring). Timing of the breeding season, proportion of pairs breeding and their success varied, e.g. 1992-93 and 1994-95 were productive seasons whereas 1993-94 was not. Heavy fruiting of matipo *Myrsine chathamica* and hoho *Pseudopanax chathamicus* (fruits rich in lipids and available carbohydrates) was responsible for the good seasons.

How can a pelagic seabird provision its chick when relying on a distant food resource? Cyclic attendance at the colony, foraging decision and body condition in sooty shearwaters. H. Weimerskirch. (*CEBC, CNRS, 79360 Beauvoir, France. E-mail: henri.w@cebc.cnrs.fr*) *Journal of animal ecology* 67: 99-109. 1998.

Long foraging trips (probably to 1550 km), averaging 11 days, absorb 84% of foraging time during chick-rearing. Interspersed short foraging trips, which double the chicks' energy intake, take only 16% of foraging time but are at the expense of adult body condition. Possibly there is a threshold body mass around 750 g at which individuals switch from short to long foraging trips. [During the latter they gain body condition.] There is a cyclicity of 14 days in the returns of distant-foraging parents. This system reduces near-colony competition, and may partly explain the huge populations of sooty and short-tailed shearwaters that rely on distant (Antarctic Polar Front) food resources.

### Palaeontology

A mid-Pleistocene rail from New Zealand. T.H. Worthy. (*Palaeofaunal Surveys, 43 The Ridgeway, Nelson, New Zealand.*) *Alcheringa* 21: 71-78. 1997.

A new genus and species; *Pleistorallus flemingi*, from a deposit in the Manawatu.

The identification of fossil *Eudyptes* and *Megadyptes* bones at Marfell's Beach, Marlborough, South Island. T.H. Worthy. (*Palaeofaunal Surveys, 43 The Ridgeway, Nelson, New Zealand.*) *New Zealand natural sciences* 23: 71-85. 1997.

Only *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* and *Megadyptes antipodes* bones present at the site. The latter were significantly smaller than those of extant southern populations (a similar trend to that shown in *Eudyptula minor*). Present range of *M. antipodes* is relict; its decline evidently caused by human disturbance.

### Distribution

Spatial distribution of seabirds in coastal waters off Otago, New Zealand. R.L. O'Driscoll, M. Renner, F.J. Austin, H.G. Spencer. (*Dept. Marine Science, Univ. Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.*) *New Zealand journal of marine & freshwater research* 32. 203-213. 1998.

Sooty shearwaters, and red-billed, black-billed and black-backed gulls were most numerous species among the 20 recorded. Strongest associations were among the 3 gull species. Counts were highly positively skewed. This, plus variability in the distribution of flocks, would make abundance estimation at sea difficult.

### Identification

Identification of juvenile long-tailed skua in active flight. J.A. Leclercq. (*rue de la Solidarite 88/4, B-7700 Mouscron, Belgium.*) *Ornithos* 3: 118-129. 1996.

Colour illustrations. In French, with English summary.