

NOTES

Kermadec Petrel In The Eastern Caroline Islands

While traveling aboard the M/V *Ran Annim* between Namoluk and Losap Atolls southeast of Truk in the Eastern Caroline Islands on 27 May 1976, I saw a seabird astern of the ship. The most noticeable feature of the seabird was very distinct white patches on the underside of the wings near the tips. The wingspan was 0.9 to 1.2 m, the wings were quite broad and slightly blunted at the ends, and the bird appeared somewhat hawklike in shape and behavior. The beak was gull-like and the tail was fan-shaped. The bird was dark brown above and grey below, with the grey extending to the head and breast. Wingbeats were strong and purposeful, although this individual soared and glided briefly in our wake before flying past us and moving to the WNW. These observations were made well out of sight of land at approximately 1315 on a clear sunny day over a period of about five minutes.

According to Baker (1951) and King (1967), *Pterodroma solandri* (Solander Petrel) and *Pterodroma neglecta* (Kermadec Petrel) are the only two species that possess the striking white patch on the underwing. I am convinced that I saw *P. neglecta* rather than *P. solandri* for the following reasons: (1) the upperparts of the body and wings were dark brown rather than grayish brown; (2) the prominent white underwing patches were not set off by a narrow dark line; (3) descriptions of the flight pattern of *P. neglecta* in King (1967: 18) accord more closely with what I observed than the comparable descriptions for *P. solandri*; and (4) *P. neglecta* has been reported occasionally for the Marshall Islands and King (1967: 19) notes that this species "crosses the equator into the North Central Pacific not infrequently."

It may be of significance to point out that this sighting occurred in the wake of severe cyclonic storm activity in the Eastern Carolines. During the first week of May 1976, Tropical Storm Olga developed in the vicinity, and between 13 and 18 May, Typhoon Pamela wrought havoc on the islands of Truk District. It may be that this lone individual was carried into the area outside its normal range by high winds associated with these storms.

References Cited

- Baker, R. H. 1951. The avifauna of Micronesia, its origin, evolution and distribution. Univ. Kansas Pubs., Mus. Natur. Hist. 3 (1): 1-359.
- King, W. B. 1967. Seabirds of the tropical Pacific Ocean. Preliminary Smithsonian identification manual. Smithsonian Institution, Wash., D. C. 126 p.
- MAC MARSHALL, *Department of Anthropology, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.*