

Zealand. (The first was killed by a cat in 1960, and so this is the first bird to be seen alive.)

SPINE-TAILED SWIFT *Hirundapus caudacutus*

Cuvier Island, 1 on 2/12/91 (S. Rowe *et al.*). The bird was seen many times between 1000 and 1600 flying out to sea and circling back to gain height on the updrafts off the cliffs.

FORK-TAILED SWIFT *Apus pacificus*

South East Island, Chathams, 1 on 2/1/91 (M. & D. Bell). Observed for over an hour flying over the canopy with many banks and turns, presumably hawking insects. The first record from the Chathams.

WHITE-BROWED WOODSWALLOW *Artamus superciliosus*

Limeworks, Miranda, 1 on 21/9/91 (S. Chambers). The bird appeared after a series of fronts from Australia. It was found in the pasture and tidal swamp and was quite tame. It is probably the seventh bird recorded in New Zealand (the last sighting of the previous birds was in 1973). This is the first record from the North Island.

R. GUEST, 79 Slacks Road, Palmerston North



An inland record of the Pied Shag

In New Zealand, the Pied Shag (*Phalacrocorax varius*) is not uncommon in coastal regions, although it is abundant only locally. It is restricted to the warmer parts of New Zealand and is "virtually absent from Hawkes Bay and the Wellington coast" (Falla *et al.* 1981, *The New Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*).

In February 1936, I saw a Pied Shag on a farm near Norsewood in southern Hawke's Bay. This locality is 400 m a.s.l. and, in a direct line, 45 km from the nearest seacoast, separated from it by coastal ranges running up to 750 m in height. By all the criteria the sighting of a Pied Shag there is suspect.

Unusual sightings, however, predicate unusual conditions, and on the day before the sighting a severe storm of tropical origin had swept down across the North Island. An indication of the severity of the conditions prevailing over the North Island on that day is that a Red-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon rubricauda*) was recorded from Lake Taupo (Oliver 1955, *New Zealand Birds*). Although Oliver's text does not relate the record to that storm, newspapers of the day included it as one of the notable events of the storm.

The farm dam where I saw the Pied Shag was kept under regular observation over a very long period. It was visited by the usual inland water birds, but I saw a Pied Shag only the once.

Referring to the Pied Shag, *The Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand* (Bull *et al.* 1985) states that "the few reports of this coastal species from far inland need confirmation because of possible confusion with the pied form of the Little Shag (*P. melanoleucos*)." As it happened, on this occasion the Pied Shag was accompanied by just such a bird, a pied form of the Little Shag, which gave me visual confirmation that I was seeing a Pied Shag. The Little Shag was an uncommon visitor to this farm dam, being seen only on rare occasions.

In this case, both birds looked somewhat storm battered and bewildered and stayed on the dam for two days before departing.

MALCOLM OLSEN, *11 Kennedy Drive, Levin*



REVIEW

World Birds, by Brian P. Martin. Guinness Books, Enfield. ISBN 0 85112 891 2. Price: 13 pounds. 1987.

World Birds is a compilation of information on avian records. The records are arranged in chapters that cover extinct birds, bird populations and distribution, anatomy, performance and endurance (flying, diving and longevity), breeding, feeding, and birds and man. Background information is included with most records, making the book enjoyable to read or to browse through. For example, the section on rare birds includes half a page on each of the Black Robin and the Kakapo, and two pages on the Californian Condor.

Many species of the New Zealand region are mentioned, with information on these species largely but not entirely accurate. For example, it is mentioned that the Kakapo has recently been rediscovered in north-west Nelson. The acknowledgments show that the author has consulted a wide range of professional ornithologists. The book does not contain references, and it is not possible to judge the accuracy of particular statements. Nonetheless, it may well be the best available source of information on the remarkable variety of birds and their capabilities. It is easy to read, is clear and includes an index of both species and subjects. The book is recommended for reference collections and for anyone interested in ornithology.

J.F. Cockrem