

primaries, though frayed and worn, extended a little beyond the tail streamers of the resting bird.

Among the stones the bird rested uneasily, crouched as low as it could. The gale had clearly come at an inopportune time when the worn state of its primaries was diminishing its mobility and hampering the search for food, especially in competition with larger and fitter White-fronted Terns.

We concluded that it was an Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), probably an adult or subadult which had started the moult into winter plumage, since it had such an extensive dark cap. It could hardly have been a bird of the year which had just arrived from far-northern breeding grounds.

Records of Arctic Terns ashore in New Zealand during the southern spring are few. Presumably at this season some should be going south. Imber found one wrecked at Foxton Beach after westerly gales in mid-November 1963.

There are other Manukau records for autumn or winter, namely four at Huia on 22/3/61 and one dead at Ihumatao on 29/6/68. Similarly, two recent records from the Bay of Plenty belong to May and June. Nor should we overlook the possibility that subadult Arctic Terns may sometimes spend their first or even their second (southern) winter along the New Zealand coast, as many subadult northern waders do.

REFERENCES

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REEF HERON ON NELSON HAVEN

At the top of Nelson Haven on 21 October in the late afternoon I noticed an unfamiliar bird flying fairly high to the north. Its neck was fully extended and looked very long. It was having difficulty making headway against the strong northerly and was finally forced to land on the tidal flats near Sewerside Drive.

I then had a close-up view and saw that it was a Reef Heron (*Egretta sacra*). Two (resident?) White-faced Herons (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) immediately began swooping low over the Reef Heron which, after repeatedly ducking its head, flew several hundred metres down the Haven. The White-faced Herons followed and continued swooping but could not move the Reef Heron any further. They finally took up position a short distance away, and at dusk the three birds were still there.

This is only the second sighting of Reef Heron in Nelson Haven that I am aware of.

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