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SHORT NOTE

BLACK-WINGED PETRELS IN THE FAR NORTH

Several sightings have been made recently of Black-winged Petrels (*Pterodroma nigripennis*) flying around headlands in the Far North in broad daylight.

On 2 February 1978, Mrs Gillian Eller counted 13 of these birds flying around Hoopers Point, Spirits Bay, very early in the afternoon and she also saw 8 of them actually flying further inland over the camping ground. The birds were usually in pairs in tandem, wheeling and diving very low over the ground and then soaring high into the air and calling frequently.

Mr Vic Hensley had also noted similar behaviour of Black-winged Petrels around North Cape the previous summer.

On 27 January 1979, Miss Helen Boutell, Vic Hensley and I saw some of these petrels in the air continuously during an afternoon walk out to Cape Maria van Dieman. They were first sighted overhead while still well over a kilometre from the coast behind Twilight Beach. A most spectacular display occurred out at the Cape with several pairs of birds chasing each other up and down the steep slope of a sand dune to within a few feet of us.

Is this behaviour a simulation of courtship display by young adults? Is the same behaviour to be observed at the known breeding grounds at this time of the year or are these birds possibly seeking new breeding areas?

R. N. THOMAS, 25 Ravenwood Drive, Auckland 10.