

on the western massif, suggested the presence of nests higher up the slope.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* Not observed at Mount Biscoe during either visit. However, many were recorded from MV Nella Dan whilst beset in the pack ice to the north of Mount Biscoe, flying towards the massifs from 25 November 1985 onwards. Suitable breeding habitat exists at Mount Biscoe.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* One was seen during the first visit near the eastern massif. Several were observed on the beach and flying above the lower slopes of the western massif on the second visit. The species may possibly breed at Mount Biscoe.

### Conclusions

Visits later in the breeding season are needed to obtain accurate data on the sizes of the breeding populations present. Counts made in late November when male Adélie Penguins were incubating and in January, immediately following the cessation of egg laying by Antarctic Petrels, would provide the required data.

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## A Peculiar Observation of Nesting Behaviour in the Southern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

JOHN P.Y. ARNOULD<sup>1</sup>

Department of Zoology, Monash University Clayton, Vic. 3168

<sup>1</sup> Present address: Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 0W0, Canada

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Interspecific brood-parasitism is well documented in many avian species (see Yom-Tov 1980 for review) and usually entails the parasite laying one or more eggs in the host's nest. Accidental, or non-parasitic forms of interspecific parental care, however, have rarely been documented in birds.

While conducting a study of Southern Fulmars *Fulmarus*

*glacialis* and Antarctic Petrels *Thalassoica antarctica* in the Rauer Islands (68°35'S, 77°58'E), East Antarctica, in the austral summer of 1987/88, an example of non-parasitic interspecific parental care was observed. Both species breed sympatrically on these islands (Green & Johnstone 1986) and occasionally nests of one species were found within discrete colonies of the other. Hence, it was not surprising to find a nest occupied by Southern

Fulmars within an Antarctic Petrel colony. However, soon after the synchronous hatching (15-18 January, 98% of nests) of the Antarctic Petrels it became apparent that the Southern Fulmar nest contained an Antarctic Petrel chick. The Southern Fulmar chicks on the island hatched considerably later (24 January-2 February, 95% of nests) and are easily distinguishable from the Antarctic Petrels.

Both Southern Fulmar adults were observed brooding and feeding the Antarctic Petrel chick in shifts. On one occasion when both adults were present, one was observed preening the chick while the other fed it.

The post-brooding stage, defined here as the time when both adults leave the nest to feed at sea returning only briefly to feed the chick, commenced on 22 January (80% of nests by 25 January) in the Antarctic Petrels. However, the Southern Fulmar adults continued to brood the Antarctic Petrel chick until 3 February. Thereafter an adult was continuously present at the nest from 6-8 and 11-13 February, and the chick appeared healthy and of comparatively normal size. While being considerably later than for the Antarctic Petrels, the post-brooding stage observed at this nest was still much earlier than is usual for the species. By the time observations ceased on 13 February, the Southern Fulmar chicks in the nearby colonies were still continuously guarded.

Possible explanations for this unusual nesting behaviour by the Southern Fulmars are that the adults evicted an

incubating Antarctic Petrel adult or occupied a deserted nest still containing a fertile egg. Antarctic Petrels lay earlier (late November to early December) than Southern Fulmars (late November to mid December) (Falla 1937; Watson 1975) and hence the Southern Fulmar adults may have incubated the Antarctic Petrel egg along with their own. A Southern Fulmar egg was found just outside the nest and it may be that this egg was ejected, purposefully or accidentally, from the nest once the Antarctic Petrel chick hatched. Having hatched, the Southern Fulmars would have responded to the demands for food by the chick. This is of interest in view of the considerably different behaviour and recognition calls of the two species.

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