The Black-winged Petrel: an Australian specimen record.

Several of the smaller petrels of the genus Pterodroma are superficially so much alike that their status has been a matter of discussion in recent years. In this group are three forms, all with pink or flesh-coloured feet, listed under the specific name of hypoleuca (Falla 1942).

The typical subspecies, hypoleuca (the Bonin Petrel) breeds on the Bonin and Hawaiian Islands in the north-west Pacific; axillaris (the Chatham Island Petrel) breeds on the Chatham Islands, and nigripennis (the Black-winged Petrel) nests on the Kermadecs, the Three Kings and the Austral Islands. The four known occurrences of nigripennis on Lord Howe Island (450 miles north-east of Sydney) have been listed by McKeen and Hindwood (1964). Presumably these birds are stragglers; there is no evidence to indicate breeding on that island, though the Checklist of New Zealand Birds (1953) states that such is the case.

I am now able to record an example of nigripennis from mainland Australia. On February 2, 1964, Peter Drummond found the decomposed remains of a petrel on Cronulla Beach, near Sydney. The head of this bird was collected and comparison with material in the Australian Museum, Sydney, indicated that it was referable to nigripennis, the Black-winged Petrel. Confirmation was sought from Dr. R. A. Falla, Dominion Museum, Wellington, New Zealand. In reply to the enquiry Dr. Falla stated “... there is no doubt that it is nigripennis, matching one or two we have here” (in litt. 24.4.1964).

Two living examples of Pterodroma hypoleuca (?) subspecies were found on Heron Island, Queensland, on January 7, 1962. This interesting record is discussed by A. J. Reid in this issue of The Emu.

The head of nigripennis from Cronulla Beach has been placed in the Australian Museum collections (specimen no. 0.30847).—K. A. HINDWOOD. 105 Middle Harbour Road, Lindfield, N.S.W.