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KEYWORDS: Cook Islands, Rarotonga, bird distribution, rats

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### **Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* found near Pureora**

On 21 April 1996, an adult Red-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon rubricauda*) of unknown sex was found by Mr R. Hepi (Department of Conservation), 9.7 km south of Pureora (38° 36' S, 175° 33' E), central North Island. It was on a vehicle track in native forest, and had been dead for 1-2 days. The specimen was submitted to the Museum of New Zealand, Wellington.

The species breeds only on the Kermadec Islands in the New Zealand region, and although the birds disperse widely from their breeding sites in winter, they normally remain over tropical and subtropical waters, well north of New Zealand (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Only seven have been found by Ornithological Society of New Zealand patrollers from 1943 to 1993 while searching more than 111 000 km of beach (Powlesland *et al.* 1992, 1993, Powlesland & Powlesland 1993). In addition, there are 18 other reports of Red-tailed Tropicbirds being found or seen about New Zealand during the period 1877-1988 (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Most of the birds have been seen just offshore or found on beaches. However, three have been found well inland, two near Taupo and one at Lake Okataina near Rotorua (Marchant & Higgins 1990). The recent Pureora bird was 80 km from the nearest coast. Presumably this Red-tailed Tropicbird had been blown inland, since the majority of tropicbirds on New Zealand beaches and inland have been found after northerly gales.

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## REVIEWS

*A Directory of Wetlands in New Zealand*, by P. Cromarty and D.A. Scott (eds.) 1995. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 395 pp. ISBN 0-478-01776-6. \$41.00 plus \$2.50 postage (paperback). Available from Department of Conservation, Science Publishing, P.O. Box 10-420, Wellington.

Published for the Department of Conservation, the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) and the Ramsar Convention Bureau, this work covers 73 wetlands in the North, South and Stewart Islands which have been identified by the Department of Conservation as being of international importance based on the criteria of Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention. The book was initiated as part of the Oceania Wetland Inventory in conjunction with IWRB, the Asian Wetland Bureau (now combined as Wetlands International), the Ramsar Bureau and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP).

The Introduction points out that the information is based on the best currently available, and other wetlands which exist in New Zealand may, on further investigation, fit the "international significance" criteria. Readers will no doubt question why particular wetlands have been excluded - Lake Ki Wainono in South Canterbury springs to this reader's mind.

Following the Introduction, Acknowledgements, a summary of wetlands and their conservation in New Zealand (including research, legislation and legal status, organisations and species of conservation concern) are the site accounts, broken into DoC conservancy groupings.

Each site description is based on standard wetland data sheets used in the Oceania Wetland Inventory, and is divided into subheadings - Title, Location, Area, Altitude, Overview, Physical features, Ecological features, Land tenure, Conservation