

## NOTES

### A MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, BREEDING SITE FOR ASHY PETRELS

On 3 July 1972 an Ashy Petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) was found incubating an egg in a rock crevice on Bird Rock, Tomales Point, Marin County, California. In addition, a petrel egg, the size, color and shape of an Ashy Petrel's, was found cracked and deserted in a second crevice. This was donated to the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco. These discoveries suggest the probable identity of a downy petrel chick found in a rock crevice on Bird Rock on 23 August 1969. At that time it was not possible to determine the chick's identity since two to three week old downy chicks of the probable candidates, Fork-tailed Petrel (*O. furcata*), Leach's Petrel (*O. leucorhoa*), and Ashy Petrel, are indistinguishable without the parent present. Based on the number of likely-looking crevices on Bird Rock, and our experience in trying to estimate petrel numbers elsewhere, we estimate the maximum possible breeding population to be 10-12 pairs. The rock is covered by a layer of guano but there was no indication that the petrels excavated burrows into it. The only burrows present were occupied by Pigeon Guillemots (*Cepphus columba*). Thus, similarly to the Farallon Island population, Ashy Petrels on Bird Rock nest only in natural rock crevices.

The AOU Check-list (p. 23, 1957) reports that Ashy Petrels range north to Point Reyes, Marin County, 27 km south of Bird Rock; and that they breed on four offshore California islands, the closest to Bird Rock being Southeast Farallon Island which is 60 km south. The discovery reported here thus updates that account by extending the range slightly north, by extending the breeding range slightly north, and by bringing to five the number of known breeding localities. The other known breeding islands are much farther from the coast than is Bird Rock, which is about 500 m from the cliffs of Tomales Point. However the rock is well isolated since the channel between it and the mainland is very treacherous and the normal surf conditions make landing on the rock difficult. In the two other accounts of bird life on Bird Rock, Ashy Petrels are not mentioned (Skirm, Ornithol. and Ool. 9: 131-132, 1884; Osborne and Reynolds, Calif. Dept. Fish and Game, Wildl. Manage. Branch Admin. Rep. No. 71-3, 1971).

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