

Black-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma nigripennis*)

Description

Small black and white petrel to 30cm, easily recognised by bold black markings under its wings and loud high-pitched calls.

Conservation Status

Listed as Vulnerable under the NSW TSC Act 1995.

Distribution

Wide oceanic range in the Tasman Sea and sub tropical and tropical regions of the Central Pacific Ocean. Breeds on a number of island groups. Range thought to be expanding.

This species is likely to be a colonist of Lord Howe Island since 1940. Nests at numerous locations on Lord Howe Island including North Head, New Gulch, Dawson's Ridge, Malabar, Ned's Beach, Jim's Point, Hells Gates, Transit Hill, adjacent to Muttonbird Point, Red Point and Ball's Pyramid.

Ecology

Breeding: Summer breeding seabird (November to May). Adults share nest building, incubation and care of young. Incubation 45 days, fledging at 85 days. Lays one white egg.

Nest: An almost bare chamber at the end of a short burrow.

Diet: Squid, fish, shrimps and cuttlefish.

Foraging Behaviour: Surface-seizing and dipping considered equally important, pattering less so (Marchant & Higgins 1990).

Population Data/Health

Lord Howe Island and Ball's Pyramid population 100-1000 pairs (Fullagher & Disney 1975). No recent population estimates available.

Habitat

Migratory. Highly pelagic, mainly solitary. Participate in high speed spectacular courtship flights over sea or breeding areas, October-February (Hutton 1991). Nest colonies are often among low bushes on high ground along cliff faces.

Threats

Cats and feral pigs predated on the Lord Howe Island population until the eradication of these introduced species in 1980. Introduced Masked Owls *Tyto novaehollandiae* continue to predate on the Black-winged Petrel population.

Impacts Upon Other Species

Not known.

References

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Photos: Ian Hutton