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Address. D. C. Oren and F. C. Novaes, Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Caixa Postal 399, 66.000 Belém, Pará, Brazil.

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Soft-plumaged Petrels *Pterodroma mollis* at Great Salvage Island

by Paul C. James and Hugh A. Robertson

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The present status of the endangered North Atlantic races of the Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* is of great concern (King 1981, Bourne 1983). It has recently been proposed that they be recognised as good species (Bourne 1983), with *P. feae* nesting on Bugio (Desertas) and the Cape Verde Islands, and *P. madeira* nesting on Madeira. We report here the occurrence of one of these forms, probably *P. feae*, at Great Salvage Island (30°9'N, 15°52'W), 300 km south of the Madeiran group, on the nights of 19 and 20 June 1983.

On both occasions, birds were heard calling in flight for several minutes at about 01.00 local time at the southwestern end of the island just below the plateau. They flew away from us towards the centre of the island where their calls were lost in the background noise. The calls were quite unlike those of the resident seabird species, but virtually identical to those recorded of *P. mollis* by M. K. Swales at Gough Island (BBC disc 25008), a copy of which we had with us at the time. A sonagram of Swale's recording is reproduced in Cramp & Simmons (1977).

Despite the fact that the calls resembled those of *P. mollis*, it is more likely that we heard either *P. madeira* or *P. feae*, given the proximity of their respective breeding places. It should be noted that even the calls of the form found in New Zealand resemble those of *P. mollis* on Gough (Warham 1979). Not surprisingly, the phonetic descriptions of the calls of *P. feae* and *P. madeira* are variable (Bourne 1955, Jouanin *et al.* 1969, van den Berg & de Wijs 1980), although that of Jouanin *et al.* (1969), describing *P. feae*'s as a long wail, fits what we heard exactly. From this, and the larger numbers and range of *P. feae* over *P. madeira*, it is more likely that the birds we heard were *P. feae*.

If the birds were *P. feae*, the timing of their appearance at Great Salvage Island coincided with their pre-laying period on Bugio, some 250 km to the north (Jouanin *et al.* 1969). As the presence of these birds on Great Salvage Island has not been reported before, it is possible that they were prospecting individuals

passing through the area. However, the likelihood that a small breeding population exists should not be entirely dismissed. The recent discovery of a prospecting Swinhoe's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis* on the same island (James & Robertson, in press) demonstrates how easily these species are overlooked.

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Address. Edward Grey Institute, Zoology Department, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PS. Present address of H. A. R.: Ecology Division, DSIR, Lower Huth, New Zealand

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Notes on Philippine Birds, 6. The status of *Cuculus canorus* in the Philippines

by E. C. Dickinson

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According to duPont (1971) *Cuculus canorus* "winters in the Philippines from northeast Asia", following Delacour & Mayr (1946). However, Mees (1979) considered that "with a single exception, all records from south and east of the main islands of Japan, continental China and Thailand are erroneous, due to confusion with *C. saturatus horsfieldi*". His one exception was from Hoorn, an islet off West Java.

Mees went on to examine the Philippine records from Basilan, Batan, Calayan, Leyte, Luzon (in part), Negros, Palawan and Siquijor. However he omitted 2 records in the literature, one from Luzon by Zimmer (1918) and one from Samar by Potter (1953). It has now been possible to locate the skins of both these as well as to investigate the status of the Palawan record.

It now therefore seems desirable to review by islands the status of all Philippine records of *Cuculus canorus*.

BASILAN. McGregor (1907a) reported a male taken on 27 Dec 1906 by collectors from the Bureau of Science. This collection, holding most of the skins taken by McGregor and by its collectors, was destroyed during the Second World War. It has been remarked by Rand & Rabor (1960), based on the identity of an extant Calayan specimen (see below), that "McGregor did not properly distinguish



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