

The Feeding Range of the Short-tailed Shearwater.—The occurrence of pumice in the stomachs of fledgling Mutton Birds *Puffinus tenuirostris* (Temminck), taken on Big Dog Island in the Furneaux Group of islands on 29/3/1963 (Sutherland 1964) has revealed information of the likely extent of the feeding range of these birds during their breeding season.

The pumice recovered from the birds appears to be identical to that of the South Sandwich Islands eruption of March, 1962. This identification is based, amongst other things, on chemical analysis. Details of this and the drift of the pumice eastwards into southern Australian waters are to be presented by Sutherland in a paper to be published in the records of the Queen Victoria Museum. However, because of the ornithological implications it is thought advisable to record the basic details, relating to the Mutton-birds, in the Emu.

Sutherland's data shows that the pumice did not reach Tasmania much before January, 1964, and that at the time of the recovery from the Mutton-birds the front of the pumice drift was probably at least five hundred miles west of Tasmania. The parent birds must have spanned at least this distance and been collecting food beyond these limits to have been able to pick up this pumice.—R. H. GREEN, Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, Tasmania.

REFERENCES

- Sutherland, F. L. 1964. "Pumice from Tasmania" *Australian Journal of Science*, **26**: 367.

Young Boobook Owls.—At midnight on December 19, 1964, at Beaumont, a suburb of Adelaide, my attention was drawn to a soft, whirring trill—rather like a subdued cricket—which at first seemed to be in a tree overhead, but on careful listening was traced to the top of an electricity pole a couple of hundred yards away. By means of a torch I saw it came from a small, fluffy, pale owl. Shortly afterwards the noise was heard again, and this time two birds were found together on a pole, and a third was on a nearby television aerial. As I watched, a larger, darker bird—obviously a Boobook Owl, *Ninox novae-seelandiae*—flew up to the two on the pole. It was holding in its beak a thin dark-reddish strip, in shape, the size of a large centipede but I think it was a strip of meat. This was taken and eaten by one of the owls. The adult then moved off and the three youngsters moved to other poles, still making the characteristic call, and not apparently making any effort to look for food.

The three owlets were seen and heard on the following three nights, the last of which was wet. The following morning an adult owl was caught, about 6.45 a.m., in a mist net set at about 6 a.m. Was this the poor over-worked parent still searching for food in the early morning after an unproductive night? It was released after banding with C.S.I.R.O. band, 110.44303. The following particulars were noted: length, 300 mm.; weight, approx. 300 gms.; skin round eye, grey; iris, greeny-yellow; gape, grey; bill, grey, 20 mm. long; toes, grey.

I was on vacation from December 23, 1964, to January 8, 1965, and since then the curious whirring has not been heard. However, on January 10, two young owls were seen, at about 10 a.m., perched together in a rubinia tree about six feet from the ground. Both were paler around the eyes and on the breast than the adult, but one was darker than the other, and also more hunched. Though the birds were disturbed, they were found close together again later in the day, and again the next day, when their presence was indicated by an unusual, raucous note from a Red Wattle-bird, *Anthochaera carunculata*, apparently disturbed by their presence.—J. B. PATON, 1 Dashwood Road, Beaumont, S.A.