

STORM DRIVEN BIRDS

For the first time since 1917, a white-winged black tern (Chlidonias leucoptera) was recently recovered in the South-West.

Following a report that rare birds had, after the cyclone in March, been observed at Mandurah, the Director of the W.A. Museum (Mr. L. Glauert) despatched Messrs A.M. Douglas and W.H. Butler to investigate. The party obtained the specimen of the tern referred to and also recovered another less-rare visitor, a fork-tailed swift (Mycropus pacificus).

Mr. Glauert said that the white-winged black tern was found in southern Europe and Asia and that it normally migrated to Africa and to the islands north of Australia. It had only rarely been recorded in our State. The last previous report of its occurrence had been from Broome in 1945. Last month, however, the cyclone must have brought them far south of their normal range, and an unconfirmed report from Honorary Warden W.C. Ford mentioned 200 of them on Bibra Lake in the Spearwood district.

The fork-tailed swift was usually seen on the Western Australian coast once or twice a year, Mr. Glauert added, but now this species was being reported in thousands.