

## GIANT PETREL AT BUSSELTON

In July this year Mr John Mardon of Busselton discovered a distressed Giant Petrel while taking a run along the beach. The bird left the beach and entered the water but was unable to take off and was obviously weak. When Mr Mardon stopped to watch, the Petrel came on to the beach, waddled up to him and opened it's beak. If Mr Mardon had any doubts that the bird was hungry they were dispersed when it started to nibble at his toes. Mr Mardon ran home for his car and despite the Petrel's five foot wing span managed to get the bird onto the back seat.



At home it was put in a shed and fed meat and fish, ravenously taking all that was given and demanding more. It made a rapid recovery and appeared to be quite tame. The following day it wandered around the garden and was then observed making its way towards the sea. Mr Mardon took it to the beach in his car and released it, whereon it entered the water and took off with no difficulty. The Petrel had been banded and released in the South Orkneys by the British Ornithological Trust and Mr Mardon forwarded the necessary details to London. The bird was black, which is the more common form. There are also pure white Giant Petrels which seem to comprise between five and eight per cent of the population. Any sightings of the species, in either the white or black phase are useful, as intensive banding programmes have been carried out by both American and British Museum Authorities. Bands should not be removed from the birds, simply the number taken and the date and place of sighting recorded. The Petrel should then be released to continue its fact finding mission.