

SEABIRD OBSERVATIONS AT BUSSELTON

During the past winter season, Fauna Warden Kevin Morrison has made some notable and interesting reports on storm casualties in the Busselton area.

Kevin was called upon to attend to a large seabird which had been blown ashore at Geographe Bay Road, Busselton on the 2nd June, 1974.

The bird was identified as a Light-mantled Sooty Albatross (*Phoebetria palpebrata*).

This bird is recorded as being rare in Australian seas, being known only from sight records in the Great Australian Bight and from two beach-washed specimens collected near Portland, Victoria in July 1950 and July 1956. Two others of this species were found on Stradbroke Island, Queensland, but none ever from Western Australia.

The skeletal remains of another seabird with a 110 cm wingspan were forwarded to the W.A. Museum for identification. The specimen was examined by Dr G. Storr at the Museum and, although he was not able to

positively identify it, he said the wings matched in length and colour that of the Grey Petrel (*Procellaria cinerea*). This could not be confirmed because there was no specimen in the Museum's collection.

One of the only three recorded specimens collected from Australian shores also came from Busselton—the other two were from Victoria.

If identification had been positive this would have been the second only recording of the Grey Petrel from Western Australia and the fourth only from the whole of Australia.