SHORT NOTES

AGE OF A DOLERITE FROM DRONNING MAUD LAND

By D. C. Rex*

The palaeomagnetism of dolerite samples from Dronning Maud Land has been measured by Blundell (1964). The specimens were collected by G. Blundell and M. J. Winterton from a group of nunataks† (lat. 73°50′S., long. 15°W.) in Vestfjella. Potassium-argon age measurements, carried out on the same specimens, are as follows:

	K (per cent)	Radiogenic ^{40}Ar (s.c.c./g. $\times 10^{-6}$)	Atmospheric ^{40}Ar (per cent)	Age (m. yr.)
Specimen A	0·90	6·3167	7·3	168±6
Specimen B	0·81	5·8123	8·6	172±6

Decay constants: $\lambda_\beta{}^{40}K = 4{\cdot}72 \times 10^{-10}yr.^{-1}$; $\lambda_e{}^{40}K = 0{\cdot}584 \times 10^{-10}yr.^{-1}$.

$^{40}K = 1{\cdot}19 \times 10^{-4}$ mole/mole K.

The age determinations were made on whole rock samples crushed to −40 +80 mesh. The potassium was determined on a flame photometer, the quoted result being the mean of three determinations. Argon was extracted by fusion *in vacuo* and measured by isotope dilution on a Reynolds mass spectrometer.

The results given above agree with measurements made by McDougall (1963) on similar dolerite samples from Victoria Valley, Beardmore Glacier and Skelton Glacier in southern Victoria Land, Antarctica.

MS. received 11 November 1966

REFERENCES

Blundell, D. J. 1964. Orientated dolerite sample from Dronning Maud Land. *British Antarctic Survey Bulletin*, No. 4, 57.

McDougall, I. 1963. Potassium-argon age measurements on dolerites from Antarctica and South Africa. *J. geophys. Res.*, **68**, No. 5, 1535–46.

STRAY BIRDS AT SIGNY ISLAND, SOUTH ORKNEY ISLANDS

By R. W. Burton

On 26 October 1965 two ducks were seen swimming amongst ice floes off Signy Island (lat. 60°43′S., long. 45°38′W.), South Orkney Islands. From a colour film taken by A. J. Walker they appeared to be either South Georgian teal (*Anas georgica*) or the closely related South American pintail (*Anas spinicauda*). Murphy (1936, p. 219) has stated that *Anas spinicauda* and other South American species have been found at Deception Island (lat. 62°57′S., long.

* Institute of Geological Sciences, Age Determination Unit, Department of Geology and Mineralogy, Oxford.

† It should be pointed out that when these specimens were collected G. Blundell and M. J. Winterton firmly believed that they had taken them from the nunatak group known as Milorgknausane (lat. 74°35′S., long. 14°35′W.). Since that time further exploration has shown conclusively that Blundell and Winterton had in fact reached a part of Vestfjella (lat. 73°50′S., long. 15° W.).

60°38′W.). Although South Georgia is 300 miles (480 km.) nearer to the South Orkney Islands than is the tip of South America, the prevailing wind is westerly, so that strays are more likely to have come from South America. Thus it seems likely that these visitors were *Anas spinicauda*.

A king penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonica*) was seen on 24 November 1964 with a group of Adélie penguins (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) near one of the latter's rookeries on Signy Island. This bird, an adult, was the first to be seen at Signy Island since 1947. As with the South American pintails, climatic factors suggest that the king penguin had come from South America rather than from South Georgia.

MS. received 25 November 1966

REFERENCE

MURPHY, R. C. 1936. *Oceanic birds of South America*. New York, American Museum of Natural History.