

9. I do not admit Dr. Finsch's new Penguin from Akaroa Heads *Eudyptula oblongata*, and I feel sure that on receiving a larger series of specimens, he will himself relinquish it.

10. Dr. Finsch's observations on the coloration of *Apteryx haasti*, in which he declares that it "entirely agrees with *Apteryx oweni*, and is by no means darker, as Dr. Buller says," is another instance of the danger of generalizing from a single specimen. There is now an example of *Apteryx haasti* in the Canterbury Museum, in which the chestnut coloring is almost as dark as in *Apteryx mantelli*.

There are other points on which I am hardly inclined to agree with the learned author, but I have no wish to provoke a controversy by pursuing the subject further.

ART. XXII.—Remarks on various species of New Zealand Birds, in explanation of Specimens exhibited at meetings of the Wellington Philosophical Society, 1875-6. By WALTER L. BULLER, C.M.G., D.Sc., President.

1. On varieties of *Carpophaga Nova Zeelandica*.

DR. BULLER exhibited two remarkable specimens of the New Zealand Pigeon (*Carpophaga Nova Zeelandica*.) One of these was a beautiful albino, the entire plumage being of a pure milk white, the small wing coverts alone presenting a slight tinge of yellowish-brown; bill and feet carmine red. It was obtained in the Wairarapa by Mr. Keleher, who has presented it to the Colonial Museum. The other specimen was a partial albino, shot by Capt. Mair, of Tauranga, and presented to the exhibitor. In this bird the shoulders, back, rump, and upper tail coverts have a rich appearance, the white predominating. Some of the wing feathers and their coverts are wholly white, with bronzed edges and clouded with grey, while others again present the normal coloration. The distribution of colors, however, is quite irregular, the white largely predominating in the right wing. In remarking on these specimens, Dr. Buller referred to some other accidental varieties described at page 158 of his "Birds of New Zealand," and more particularly to an example presented to him by Mr. Edward Hardcastle, of Hokitika (now in the Colonial Museum), in which the head, neck, fore part of the breast, and all the upper parts are pale yellowish-brown, more or less glossed with purple; the wing coverts and scapulars stained towards the tips with coppery brown; the quills and tail-feathers uniform pale yellowish-brown, tinged with vinous, the tips of the latter paler.

2. On a Specimen of *Thalassidroma nereis*.

DR. BULLER exhibited a specimen of the Grey-backed Storm Petrel (*Thalassidroma nereis*), obtained on the coast near Cape Campbell, by Mr. C. H. Robson, a member of the Society, and forwarded by that gentleman to the Colonial Museum.

Dr. Buller stated that there are two examples of this rare Petrel in the Canterbury Museum, but that hitherto, so far as he was aware, it was a desideratum in all other local collections. Mr. Robson's donation would therefore prove a valuable addition to the collection of birds in the Colonial Museum.

3. On the occurrence of *Nyroca australis*.

DR. BULLER exhibited also a specimen of the White-eyed Duck (*Nyroca australis*), obtained in the Manawatu district, and purchased from Mr. Liardet. He stated that the existence of this well known Australian species in New Zealand was first ascertained by Captain Hutton, who, in 1869, obtained a specimen in the Waikato, and forwarded it to him for determination. (Trans. N.Z. Inst., Vol. II., p. 78.) It has since been met with at Canterbury and further south; but the present is the first known instance of its occurrence in this Province.

4. On a supposed New Species of Shag.

DR. BULLER exhibited to the meeting three specimens (male, female, and young) of a species of Shag, collected by Mr. Henry Travers, in Queen Charlotte Sound, and which, although in some respects closely resembling *Phalacrocorax carunculatus*, is probably a distinct form. Dr. Buller pointed out the distinguishing characters, and stated that if, on a further examination and comparison of specimens it should prove to be a new species, he proposed (with the concurrence of the discoverer) to name it in honor of Dr. Otto Finsch, of Bremen, who has made many valuable contributions to New Zealand Ornithology.

5. On *Prion banksii* as a Species.

FIVE examples of the adult and young of *Prion banksii*, together with a specimen of the egg, were exhibited, and Dr. Buller pointed out the characters which, to his mind, sufficiently distinguished this species from *Prion ariel* on the one hand, and *Prion vittatus* on the other. The specimens exhibited were obtained at the small islands off the New Zealand coast, known as "The Brothers."

6. On a remarkable variety of *Porphyrio melanotus*.

DR. BULLER exhibited a very singular example of the Pukeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*), shewing a tendency to albinism, which he had purchased from Mr. Liardet. Both this and another very similar specimen (of which a full description is given at p. 186 of "The Birds of New Zealand") were

obtained in the Manawatu district. He remarked on the frequency of albinism in this species, and invited the attention of the meeting to the plate of *Porphyrio stanleyi*, in Mr. Dawson Rowley's "Ornithological Miscellany," which bears unmistakable indications of being merely an albino. The Canterbury Museum contains a specimen in partial albino-dress, very closely resembling the one exhibited.

7. *On the validity of Aponis zealandicus.*

DR. BULLER read to the meeting an extract from a letter which he had recently received from the well-known ornithologist, Dr. Otto Finsch, of Bremen, to the following effect :—

"It will interest you to hear that the specimen of the so-called *Gerygone igata*, in the Museum at Paris is positively *Gerygone flaviventris*, and that *Aponis zealandicus* is a good species, of which there are undoubted specimens from New Zealand in the museums of Paris and Leiden. I have been working several weeks at Leiden, and have gathered some further material on the ornithology of New Zealand."

Dr. Buller remarked on the singular fact that since this species was collected by M.M. Quoy and Gaimard, at Tasman Bay, during the voyage of the "Astrolabe," it has never been met with in any part of the country. There is no confirmation, however, of the allied species *Aponis obscurus** as a New Zealand bird, and *A. caledonicus*, Bonap. (which is a native of New Caledonia and Norfolk Island) has apparently been admitted into our list by mistake.

8. *On the specific value of Eudyptula undina.*

DR. BULLER exhibited a specimen of the small Penguin (*Eudyptula undina*) with remnants of down adhering ; to show that this species assumes the full plumage from the nest, the blue on the upper surface being very bright. He compared it also with specimens of *Eudyptula minor*, and pointed out the specific characters—the latter form being readily distinguished by its larger size, duller plumage, and more robust bill. As to whether *E. albosiquata* (Finsch), can be considered distinct from this species, Dr. Buller referred to his former remarks ("Trans., N.Z. Inst.," Vol. VII., p. 210) and quoted the following passage from the last letters he had received from Dr. Finsch :—

"Very likely it may turn out to be only a variety of *E. minor* ; but, if the latter, I have seen many other specimens, and not a single one showed the peculiar markings on the wings characteristic of *albosiquata*. Besides, it has a white spot on the upper tail-coverts, which I have not observed in *E. minor*."

* Dubus, Bull. Acad. Sci. Brux., 1839. Part I., p. 297.

Dr. Buller exhibited a drawing, which Dr. Finsch had sent him of the wing of *Eudiptula albosiquata*; but he still maintained the opinion that it was only an accidental variety of the common species.

ART. XXIII.—Notes on Birds observed during the Voyage to England, in a Letter to the President.

By JAMES HECTOR, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.S.

[Communicated to the Wellington Philosophical Society by DR. BULLER, C.M.G.,
7th August, 1875.]

“On board the ‘Howrah,’ 18th May, 1875.—I hope we shall be in London in a week, and may as well write a few lines in readiness to post to you. Our voyage has been slow, but pleasant, with very little rough weather. We did very well to the Horn; but since then have had very light winds, and but little help even from the Trades. * * * * I have been rather surprised at the small number of birds we have seen. For some days out from New Zealand we had *Diomedea melanophrys* and another small species with a white head and brown mottled body. These were very common near the Bounty Islands; but were not seen afterwards. The Mollymawks we had till we reached the South Tropic. It was not till we rounded the Horn that we saw any of *D. exulans* or *D. fuliginosa*. The latter species I am positive we never saw in the Pacific, as it is so easily recognised by the blue streak on the mandibles. It is very abundant between the Falkland Islands and latitude 30° S. Off the Western Isles two or three birds like albatrosses, but much smaller, with white bellies and white ring round the throat, were seen. I dare say I shall recognise it in the British Museum. *Thalassidroma nereis* followed us almost to the Horn; but, after entering the Atlantic, *T. melanogastra* took its place, at first in large flocks, but, since latitude 35° S., only a few stragglers have been seen. In the Pacific I saw one *Lestris*, and large flocks of “whale-birds” as the sailors called them—which were the Blue Billy (*Prion turtur*); but, in the South Atlantic, we met flocks of another but larger-sized grey bird, which they also called “whale-birds.” These were evidently *Procellaria glacialis*. When 100 miles off the Horn, a specimen of the White-throated Shag (*Graculus brevirostris*) flew on board. We never saw a single Cape Pigeon during the voyage. Where can they be at this season—February–March? Only two Tropic Birds, one Frigate Bird, and a few Noddies were seen near St. Paul’s Rocks, and these complete the list of birds. I am anxious to get to the end of the