

roaming habits of the Brolga, the occurrence of this species in New Zealand cannot be considered an unexpected phenomenon; rather, it was on the 'waiting list' as it were.

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## A NEW ZEALAND RECORD OF THE NORTHERN SHOVELLER

By P. J. HOWARD

A drake Shoveler in fine plumage was shot on the 6th May 1968 by Mr. Tony Cathcart of Onewhero in the Maungatawhiri Swamp, near Pokeno, Lower Waikato. I noted at once that it differed from the New Zealand Shoveler (*Anas rhynchos*). Reference to literature led to its tentative identification as a specimen of the Northern Shoveler (*A. clypeata*). H. R. McKenzie came to see it, bringing further literature and we were sure enough of the identity of the bird to refer it to Mr. E. G. Turbott and Mr. R. B. Sibson, by whom its identity was finally confirmed.

A study skin, A.V. 1224. 1 was made and is in the Auckland War Memorial Museum. Measurements are:— Length 487, Wing 241, Tail 94.5, Tarsus 32. Bill 63, Gonads 8 x 3.5 mm.

The head and neck are solidly a glossy dark green. There is no sign of the white crescent on the side of the face as in *rhynchos*. The breast is white, clearly and sharply defined from the green of the neck and the smooth russet brown or plum colour of the lower breast and belly. In both the white and the brown is a scattered pattern of very small patches of vermiculations. This is described by Witherby. The back is patterned as in *rhynchos*, but the colours are brighter. The under-tail has a broad white band across, whereas the New Zealand bird has only large side patches of white. No significant difference in the bill can be discerned. The legs are bright orange.

It is worth mentioning that when this bird was shot it was flying with a female of unknown species.

[*Anas clypeata* tends to travel further south on its migrations than other northern ducks and is not deterred by the 'heat barrier' of the tropics. As a stray it has reached South Africa and Australia. Its occurrence in New Zealand is therefore not as surprising as at first it may appear. — Ed.]