

THE OCCURRENCE OF THE MUSK DUCK, *BIZIURA LOBATA* (SHAW), IN NEW ZEALAND

By R. J. SCARLETT, *Canterbury Museum*

In *The Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, Vol. 24, p. 188, H. O. Forbes mentions a bone, or bones, of *Biziura* without specifying which bone he had, or its locality. The latter is, presumably, Enfield Swamp. He states: "The present species is named *Biziura lautouri* in compliment to Dr. H. de Latour, of Oamaru, to whom the author, as well as the Canterbury Museum, is deeply indebted for his kind aid in its acquisition of the recent important deposit of *Dinornis*



[Michael Trotter

Plate XX — *Biziura lobata*: Posterior aspect.

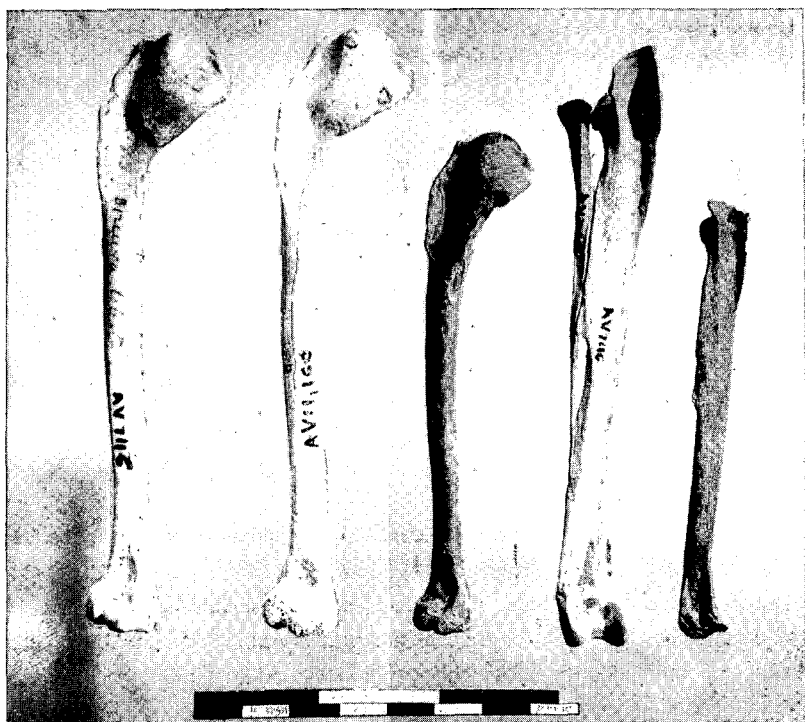
R. humerus AV. 7,116. M. Australia.

R. humerus AV. 11,160. ?M. Marfell Beach, Lake Grassmere, Marlborough.

R. humerus. ?F. Poukawa Swamp, Hawkes Bay.

R. tibio-tarsus. AV. 7,116. M.

Part R. tibio-tarsus. ?F. Poukawa Swamp, Hawkes Bay.



[Michael Trotter

Plate XXI — *Biziura lobata*: Anterior aspect.

R. humerus AV. 7,116. M. Australia.

R. humerus. AV. 11,160. ?M. Marfell Beach, Lake Grassmere, Marlborough.

R. humerus. ?F. Poukawa Swamp, Hawkes Bay.

R. tibio-tarsus. AV. 7,116. M.

Part R. tibio-tarsus. ?F. Poukawa Swamp, Hawkes Bay.

remains discovered near that town" (at Enfield Swamp). As the specimen, or specimens, mentioned by Forbes have disappeared, although it or they are possibly among the Forbes material in the British Museum of Natural History, one cannot be sure what he had. His description is inadequate and "*lautouri*" is a *nomen nudum*.

It is quite clear that Forbes considered his bone, or bones, as distinct from the Australian form, *Biziura lobata*. That he had a part skeleton of the latter for comparison is certain as it is still in the Canterbury Museum labelled in his handwriting.

In April 1963 Mr. J. R. Eyles found a right humerus in the sandhills at Marfell Beach, Lake Grassmere, Marlborough (C.M. AV. 11,160) which compares very well with the part skeleton Forbes left (AV. 7116, male). While in Australia recently, at the National Museum, Melbourne, I measured a series of skeletons of *Biziura*

lobata and there is no doubt that the Marfell Beach humerus belongs to this species, and is, so far as I am aware, the first New Zealand record.

On 10 August 1963 at Poukawa Swamp, Hawkes Bay, in Square M/10, Mr. Russell Price found a worn R. tibio-tarsus which also appeared to be a *Biziura*. As it was considerably smaller than the corresponding bone in the part skeleton I had for comparison I wondered if it might represent the form Forbes had. Since examining and measuring the skeletons in the National Museum of Victoria, I realised that it is well within the normal range of the species and is therefore the second New Zealand record. The part skeleton, AV. 7116, and the humerus from Marfell Beach, AV. 11,160, are from exceptionally large birds.

Unfortunately, the Australian skeletons had no indication of sex. Delacour, Vol. 3, p. 258, gives measurements which indicate that the female is much smaller than the male, although "there is a great deal of individual variation in size in both sexes." His measurements (on skins) are: "Male: wing 226-240 mm.; tail: 110-150 mm.; culmen: 43-51 mm.; tarsus: 48-52 mm. Female — wing: 180-218 mm.; culmen: 36-38 mm." No tail or tarsal measurements are given for the female.

I conclude, therefore, that AV. 11,160 is the humerus of a large male and Mr. Price's part tibio-tarsus is probably from a female.

I, also at the National Museum, examined skeletons of the Blue-billed Duck, *Oxyura australis* Gould, the wings and legs of which resemble *Biziura lobata* closely in bone structure, but which are much smaller.

MEASUREMENTS

Humerus:	L.	P.	M.	D.	C.M.
C.M. AV.11, 160	12.1	2.5	0.7	1.55+(a little worn)	
C.M. AV.7,110 male	11.9	2.45	0.65	1.525	
N.M. W.5353	9.7	2.1	0.55	1.15	
N.M. B.8662	9.7	2.05	0.55	1.225	
N.M. B.6808	9.4	1.9	0.55	1.0	
Tibio-tarsus:					
C.M. AV.7,110 male	11.9	1.4	0.725	1.5	
		---	0.6	---	
N.M. W.5353	9.9	1.1	0.55	1.2	
Poukawa actual -	9.0	---	0.6	---	
estimated -	9.7				
N.M. B.8662	9.45	1.025	0.525	1.2	
N.M. B.6808	9.0	1.05	0.55	1.125	

The National Museum, Victoria, specimens, and the Poukawa bone are probably female. I wish to thank Mr. A. McEvey for the opportunity to examine the Australia skeletons.

REFERENCES

- DELACOUR, J., 1959: Waterfowl of the World, Vol. 3.
 FORBES, H. O., 1892: Preliminary Notice of Additions to the Extinct Avifauna of New Zealand (Abstract). T.N.Z.I., Vol. 24, pp. 185-189.