

The Editor,
Sir,

REEF HERONS WITH WHITE BILLS

I would like to ask you, or any reader of *Notornis*, for help. I have seen two Reef Herons (*Egretta sacra*) with white bills. All my books state that it has a brown bill, which most of them do have. However, the white phase of this bird has a yellow bill which is closer to white, but not pure white.

I saw one opposite the boat ramp at Warkworth and the other at Pearts Finger, Raglan. They were definitely Reef Herons.

They have puzzled me for months and I would very much like to know if there is an explanation for it.

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SHORT NOTE

FRENCH-BANDED LESSER BROAD-BILLED PRION ASHORE

Earlier this year, while on a beach patrol, I found a dead prion on the northern west coast of the North Island. It was identified as a Lesser Broad-billed Prion (*Pachyptila salvini*) and carried a band F.L. 13456. Inquiry showed that it was banded on 6 March 1974 as a chick on Pig Island in the Crozet Islands. The bird was found about 3 miles south of Charles Gorge on the coast near Dargaville on 30 June 1974. The Annotated Checklist (OSNZ 1970) lists the New Zealand records of this species as *P. salvini salvini* (Mathews, 1912), breeding on Marion and the Crozet Islands and ranging eastwards to New Zealand, but it is also stated: "Small-billed *P. salvini* occur in the Tasman Sea in winter and are sometimes storm-wrecked. They have been treated as *P. salvini crozeti* Mathews, 1932, the type specimen of which is understood to have been collected on the eastern Crozet Islands." The Banding Officer, Wildlife Service, has been notified of this recovery.

REFERENCE

OSNZ, 1970. Annotated checklist of the birds of New Zealand. . . The Checklist Committee (F. C. Kinsky, Convener), Ornithological Society of N.Z. Inc. Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed.

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