

SHORT NOTE

The correct type locality of the shore plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin, 1789)

DAVID G. MEDWAY

25A Norman Street, New Plymouth, New Zealand
dmedway@xtra.co.nz

A "Sandpiper" was among the many birds killed by a surveying party in Dusky Sound in southern New Zealand on 16 Apr 1773 during Lieutenant James Cook's sojourn there in the course of his 2nd (1772-1775) voyage (Forster in Hoare 1982: 256). This "Sandpiper" is likely to be the specimen that Johann Reinhold Forster, the official naturalist on the voyage, described as *Charadrius torquatus* (Forster 1772-1775: II: 18v,19r). His description was dated 17 Apr 1773. He said that the bird inhabited "portu obscuro" (= Dusky Sound). Forster's detailed manuscript description in Latin was edited and published later by Lichtenstein (1844: 108-109) who, however, omitted Forster's date of description. What was almost certainly the same specimen was drawn by Forster's son, George, an assistant naturalist and the natural history draughtsman on the voyage. George Forster's undated painting, folio 121, is now in The Natural History Museum, London (Lysaght 1959: 301). The original painting has never been published, but it can be viewed online at <http://piclib.nhm.ac.uk>. Forster's description and the younger Forster's painting are of an adult male shore plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin, 1789). The Forsters are not known to have taken any specimens of the shore plover back to England.

Sir Joseph Banks may however have possessed a spirit specimen of the shore plover collected during that voyage. The specimen was identified by Banks with the bird depicted in a painting of the shore plover that was among a small collection of bird paintings he received from the voyage (Lysaght 1959: 315). However, nothing more is known about the origin of this specimen, and its fate is unknown. Latham did not mention it in his description in English of the "New Zealand Plover", accompanied by his own illustration based on George Forster's painting, that appeared in 1785 in his *General Synopsis of Birds* (Latham 1781-1801:3(1): 206, Pl.

83). Latham said his "New Zealand Plover" was "In the collection of Sir Joseph Banks", and that it "Inhabits Queen Charlotte's Sound. Known there by the name of Doodooroa-attoo", which locality and name he obviously obtained from a notation on George Forster's folio 121: "Doodoorroo-attoo. Charlotte's Sound" (Lysaght 1959: 301). There is no doubt that Latham's description and illustration both were based solely on the Forster painting that he saw in the library of Sir Joseph Banks who, in 1776, had obtained ownership of George Forster's natural history drawings from the voyage. Latham's description was in turn the sole basis of Gmelin's 1789 description in Latin of *Charadrius novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin 1788-1793: I: 684). Therefore, the bird depicted in George Forster's folio 121 is the type of *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin, 1789). Not surprisingly, Queen Charlotte Sound has been generally accepted as the type locality of this taxon (e.g., Mathews 1927-1928; Turbott 1990; Marchant & Higgins 1993).

The Maori name rendered as Doodoorroo-attoo on George Forster's folio 121, and the Maori names on other paintings by him of New Zealand birds and fish, almost certainly were provided by Maori at Queen Charlotte Sound, and not by the Maori the Europeans had met earlier in Dusky Sound as Begg & Begg (1966: 122-124) thought. On 5 Nov 1774 when at Queen Charlotte Sound, Cook recorded (Beaglehole 1961: 576,n) that his party returned to their ship "bring(ing) with us some fish we had got from the Natives and a few birds we had shott, amongst which were some of the same sort of Ducks we got in Duskey Bay and we have reason to think they are all to be found here as the Inhabitants of this place knew them all by the drawings - and had a particular (name) to each". Consequently, the notation "Doodoorroo-attoo. Charlotte's Sound" on Forster folio 121 indicates no more than that the bird depicted in the painting was known as Doodoorroo-attoo by the natives at Queen Charlotte Sound. The

Forsters left no other record of the shore plover at Queen Charlotte Sound, despite visiting the area 3 times during Cook's 2nd voyage (Forster 1772-1775; Kahn 1968; Hoare 1982).

In summary, the only specimen of the shore plover known to have been examined by the Forsters, and the basis for their description (Johann Reinhold) and painting (George) of *Charadrius torquatus*, was obtained at Dusky Sound. That specimen, as depicted in George Forster's folio 121, again was the only source for Latham's description of the "New Zealand Plover", on which Gmelin based his description of *Charadrius novaeseelandiae*. Therefore, Dusky Sound must be the correct type locality for the shore plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin, 1789).

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Keywords shore plover; *Thinornis novaeseelandiae*; type locality