

from West to East, and found the paths of the feathered inhabitants: [There follows a list of bird species which Reischek observed on Little Barrier]. Then I found nothing but very large petrels which I saw for the first time in New Zealand: above dark brown, below ash-grey. I will show it to Dr. Buller, which I anticipate [doing] in a few days. I am writing from my house. During his absence I have [obtained] a beautiful pair of *Pogonornis* for him. He may also again copy my notes for his book. [In the margin:] I visited Little Barrier in October 1880 for three weeks, then in October 1882 to January 183 [sic] and in December 1883. [There follows a conventional closing and a request for a reply.]



SHORT NOTE

A PARADISE SHELDUCK IN THE CHATHAM ISLANDS

In January 1984, while on South East Island, we visited on 20 January the Fur Seal colony at the southern end of the island near The Clears. Our attention was drawn to the presence of a male Paradise Shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*) by the repeated mobbing activities of Red-billed Gulls. Mobbing occurred continuously, whether the Paradise Shelduck was in flight or settled. The bird flew rather weakly, appearing to be tired, and had dishevelled plumage.

Williams (1971) gave three records of bone finds from the Chatham Islands, all related to pre-European occupation. He considered that a small local population may have existed on the Chatham Islands and had perhaps been exterminated by hunting.

B. D. Bell (pers. comm.) and M. Campbell (pers. comm.) have reported unconfirmed sightings of vagrant Paradise Shelduck by local people on a few occasions. However, this seems to be the first dated record.

The mobbing activity of Red-billed Gulls promotes some speculation as it does not widely occur on the mainland of New Zealand, except near gull colonies. The gull activity could be simply a reaction to a stranger. However, gulls frequently mob Southern Skua, which breed on South East Island, and the prominent white wing-coverts shown by the Paradise Shelduck may have provoked the attacks, being suggestive of the skua wing flashes.

Advice given by E. G. Turbott is appreciated.

LITERATURE CITED

WILLIAMS, M. 1971. The distribution and abundance of the Paradise Shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*, Gmelin) in New Zealand from pre-European times to the present day. *Notornis* 18: 71-86.

JOHN FENNELL, 224 Horndon Street, Darfield, Canterbury; DAVID MERTON, 21 Benge Crescent, Upper Hutt