

The Editor,
Sir,

THAT GENTOO PENGUIN

After reading the interesting article by J. T. Darby and A. W. Wright on the first N.Z. record of the Gentoo Penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*) and also your note in *Notornis* 20 (1): 28-30, it appears that from the point of view of a healthy Gentoo Penguin, the chances of survival when landing on the South Island coast are much greater at Tiwai Point in Southland than at St. Kilda Beach, Otago.

J. A. COWIE

P.O. Box 59,
Kaikoura
13 August 1973



The Editor,
Sir,

THE NORTHERN SHOVELER

May I comment briefly on Dr Eisenmann's letter in which he expresses some doubt about the validity of records of the Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) in New Zealand.

When it was first learnt that an unusual drake shoveler, which later proved to be an unmistakable *clypeata* had been shot in the lower Waikato, those of us concerned with its identification naturally wondered about its provenance and asked ourselves the question "Could it be an escape?" But if so, where from? The law of the country being what it is with regard to the importation of foreign fowl, we knew of no collection, and could learn of none, from which it might have escaped. We were therefore forced to accept the conclusion that it was a genuine migrant, which somehow had overshot the normal mark. This, of course, does happen quite often among species which migrate long distances.

That Northern Shovelers should reach New Zealand is certainly most interesting. But is it altogether surprising if we remember that, with the Pintail (*Anas acuta*) and Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), Shovelers are among the most enterprising travellers of the sub-arctic surface-feeding ducks? In Africa some habitually cross the Equator and a few may pass right through the tropical zone. In the Pacific region, omitting the rather unsatisfactory Australian evidence, they are known from Sarawak, just north of the Equator; and the many Hawaiian records prove that the species is capable of crossing great distances of ocean.

Moreover, it is perhaps worth mentioning that a number of palaearctic species, and two nearctic waders reach the southern limit of their migrational range in New Zealand. The following list does not claim to be exhaustive:— Spine-tailed and Pacific Swifts, Pacific Golden Plover, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Bar-tailed and Asiatic Black-tailed Godwits, Siberian and Wandering Tattlers, Terek Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Oriental Pratincole, White-winged Black Tern.

If favourable nor-westers can waft White-winged Black Terns and Blue Moon Butterflies from the region of north eastern Australia to New Zealand, this should not be an impossible crossing for a strong-winged Northern Shoveler.

REFERENCE

EISENMANN, E. 1972. Might Northern Shovelers in New Zealand be escapes? [Letter to the Editor] *Notornis* 19 (4): 370.

R. B. SIBSON

26 Entrican Avenue,
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7 June 1973
The Editor,
Sir,



BIRDS IN EXOTIC FORESTS

I would like to draw the attention of readers of this journal to the recent publication of two short articles on birds in exotic forests. Jackson (1971) lists 54 indigenous and 26 exotic birds recorded from within the bounds of exotic forests in New Zealand; in reply, Heinekamp and Ramsay (1973) find Jackson's work "... misleading in that many species are recorded merely because they have been seen in exotic forests or near them, inside the legal boundaries of exotic State forests, which are not always the plantation boundaries."

Both articles emphasize the need for closer definition of the ecology and habitat requirements of native and introduced birds. While ornithologists are generally reluctant to allow their work to be influenced by political issues, nevertheless there are others for whom their statements can provide credible political ammunition. In this respect, the generally careful definitions of habitat provided by Jackson have already been discarded on at least one overtly political occasion (see Heinekamp & Ramsay 1973: 16). However, the failure to adequately separate for the purposes of argument the legal boundaries of exotic plantations, does suggest that in this particular case the confusion was initially the ornithologist's.

The conclusion must be that when the implications of ornithological discussion affect the wider public we must be especially careful to keep misunderstandings at a minimum.

REFERENCES

- HEINEKAMP, H. F.; RAMSAY, G. W. 1973. A closer look at birds in exotic forests in New Zealand. *Forest and Bird* No. 188: 16-18.
JACKSON, R. W. 1971. Birds in exotic forests in New Zealand. *N.Z. Journal of Forestry* 16 (1): 61-68.

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29 May 1973*