

LETTERS

The Editor,
Sir,

WELCOME SWALLOW BANDING GROUP

We would be grateful if you would bring to the attention of members of the OSNZ that in Tasmania we have formed a Welcome Swallow Banding Group, which is under the aegis of the Australian Banding Scheme and is operated through the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research. The object of this group is to find out something about their migratory movements from Tasmania to the mainland of Australia. Up till now no Tasmanian banded Welcome Swallow has been picked up on the mainland or vice versa. Having read Mr A. T. Edgar's paper in *Notornis* Vol. XIII on "Welcome Swallows in New Zealand 1958-1965," we thought that there might be a very slim chance of someone picking up a dead Tasmanian banded Welcome Swallow. But, at any rate, we would be very glad if everyone would keep an extra watch for banded Welcome Swallows, dead or alive, as the whole success of our project depends on the return of bands to CSIRO, Canberra, ACT, Australia. Thank you.

PRISCILLA PARK

(Organiser, Welcome Swallow
Banding Project)

Campania,
Tasmania 7202,
Australia.
23 February 1974

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The Editor,
Sir,

THE WHITE-TAILED TROPIC BIRD IN THE GALAPAGOS: A MISTAKE ?

Today the December 1973 issue of *Notornis* arrived and I was astonished to learn from Mr S. R. Brown's note on page 381 that the White-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaeton lepturus*) was breeding in the Galapagos. That does not appear to be the case. I know because I was stationed there for over 15 months spread over two years, and I saw most of the tropic bird colonies (see *Condor* 1966: 95) without ever finding more than one species. In the latest list by Harris (*Condor* 1973) the text for the Tropic Bird has unfortunately been dropped by the printers, but I know from Harris that he still has only one species there.

It would be interesting to know where the observer found about *P. lepturus* in the Galapagos islands.

NOTORNIS 21: 190-191 (1974)

REFERENCE

BROWN, S. R. 1973. First record of White-tailed Tropic bird in New Zealand. *Notornis* 20 (4): 380-1.

RAYMOND LEVEQUE

Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach
Station ornithologique Suisse,
CH-6204 Sempach,
Switzerland
6 March 1974

Mr Stan Brown writes that he obtained his information from a magazine article but is unable at the moment to recall the reference. Mr F. C. Kinsky, who identified the New Zealand specimen, comments as follows:

"M. Leveque is quite right, as there are no White-tailed Tropic Birds breeding or otherwise on the Galapagos Islands. Of *Phaeton lepturus*, 5 subspecies have been described and have been generally acknowledged.

P. l. lepturus, breeding on islands in the Indian Ocean;

P. l. fulvus, confined to Christmas Island (Indian Ocean);

P. l. dorotheae, Southwest Pacific islands, including Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Nauru, Cooks and many others;

P. l. catesbyi, West Indies;

P. l. ascensionis, Ascension Island and some other islands in the Gulf of Guinea (West Africa).

Where Mr Brown obtained his information from, I do not know. He might have possibly seen some pictures of the other "white-tailed" tropic bird normally referred to as the Red-billed Tropic Bird (*P. aetherus*) which, in addition to breeding on islands in the Caribbean Sea and other islands in the tropical Atlantic, breeds on islands west of Central America including the Galapagos."

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The Editor,
Sir,

THE SOCIETY AND ITS CONSTITUTION

As still "another longstanding member," may I suggest to Mr J. M. Cunningham that unless we do take action, there may be no "living birds in their natural state" left to study. The original constitution of the OSNZ was admirable when first formulated, but the march of time left it outdated, as often happens with constitutions, and giving power to our officers to do something constructive, if necessary, towards conservation was an overdue measure. As I remarked at the AGM where the constitution was amended, "if we cannot trust our officers to act wisely, why bother to elect them?"

R. J. SCARLETT

Canterbury Museum,
Christchurch, 1
6 June 1974