

FIRST RECORD OF MOTTLED PETREL (*PTERODROMA INEXPECTATA*) FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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On March 9, 1974, the body of a petrel was picked up on the beach at Yilki, near Victor Harbour, about half a mile east of Yilki Post Office. The bird was identified as a Mottled Petrel. Identification was confirmed by H. T. Condon of the S.A. Museum who wrote the following complete description. The specimen is in the S.A. Museum.

Pterodroma inexpectata (Forster), MOTTLED PETREL.

Locality: Encounter Bay, S.A. Collector: Mrs. J. B. Paton. Date: March 9, 1974.

Measurements: wing 258; tail 102; tarsus 33; middle toe and claw 45; culmen 29; depth of bill 8.5 mm.

Bill: black; legs: flesh-white; feet: blackish; base of inner web (?): flesh-white.

Plumage: body mutilated. Above — feathers of head white at base with very dark grey (blackish) tips; wings very dark grey (almost blackish on forward edge); inner webs of primaries for the greater part white (outer webs and tips darker); long upper tail coverts and rectrices pale bluish (slate) grey except the three outer ones which are mottled white and grey on the inner webs. Forehead, face and feathers around eyes white; chin

and throat white; breast and abdomen (??); long under tail coverts white; rectrices pale grey beneath, the three outer ones mottled with white. Axillaries white (? mottled with grey); a dark grey bar (up to 25 mm. wide) — actually the wing coverts — extending from the axillaries to bend of wing and continuing as an outer strip of darker coverts (the prominent dark tips to the white feathers giving a mottled appearance) on the forward edge of the wing to the base of the first primary. Primaries very pale grey to white below with darker tips and edges. Plumage generally was fresh (unworn).

These birds breed on the islands south of New Zealand and are rare stragglers to south-eastern Australia. Serventy in "The Handbook of Australian Sea-Birds" mentions specimens collected near Sydney (N.S.W.), Lakes Entrance and Phillip Island (Vic.) and the west coast of Tasmania. The presence of this bird so far west of its usual distribution is attributed to the unusual frequency of easterly and north-easterly winds during January, February and March of 1974.

I wish to thank Mr. Condon for permission to use his complete description of the specimen.

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