

Some Notes on *Puffinus Tenuirostris*.

—By A. M. Morgan, M.B., B.S.—

In the South Australian Museum is a skin of a female Petrel, taken in September, 1914, on Neptune's Islands, by Mr. E. R. Waite, which presents some remarkable differences from the typical *P. tenuirostris*. On looking into the matter, I found that it compared very closely with Mr. Bassett Hull's *P. intermedius*, except that the shafts of the breast feathers are not black, but white. It also compares closely with two specimens mentioned by Mr. Mathews as being in his collection, one of *P. pacificus (brevicaudus)* from the Barrier Reef, and the other from Phillip Island. On 4th January, 1923, Professor Cleland collected another bird from Neptune's Islands which differs in no respect from typical *P. tenuirostris*. The remarkable points about the Museum bird are that it has a white chin, a very pale grey throat, a much paler under surface generally, and the under wing coverts ashy grey with black shafts. The length of the skin is 40 cm. (15.75 inches), wing, 25.5 cm. (10 inches); tail, 7 cm. (2.75 inches); culmen, 3.1 cm. (1.50 inches); tarsus, 5.30 cm. (2 inches); middle toe, with claw, 6 cm. (2.25 inches). Mr. Hull's bird, a male, measures:—Length, 17 inches; wing, 10.5 inches; tail, 3.5 inches; bill, 1.25 inches; tarsus, 2 inches; middle toe and claw, 2.25 inches. Of course, his statement that the bird is 4 inches longer and more robust than *P. brevicaudus* is an error, for a typical *P. tenuirostris brevicaudus* picked up dead on the beach at Robe, South Australia, measured, in the flesh, 47 cm. (18.5 inches), or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches longer than *P. intermedius*. The wing also is 2 inches longer, the bill .35 inch longer, and the tarsus .30 inch longer. Knowing that Captain White had a full-grown young bird taken on Althorpe Island, I asked him to allow me to examine it, and found that it corresponded exactly with the Museum specimen from the Neptunes, some 60 miles distant. Mr. J. Sutton, of Adelaide, on 19th April, 1923, had an opportunity of seeing many full-grown young *P. t. brevicaudus* which had been killed by foxes on Phillip Island, all of which he informs me were distinguished by their very light grey chins and throats. The facts, I think, prove that the Museum skin and Mr. Mathews' Phillip Island skin are of fully-grown young birds still in immature plumage, and suggest that his Barrier Reef bird and Mr. Hull's *P. intermedius* are similar immature young of *P. pacificus*, the more so as Mr.

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Hull's single specimen was found close to an adult *P. pacificus* "in a similar retreat." The South Australian Museum skin also corresponds with Temminck's original description of *P. tenuirostris* (as quoted by Mathews), especially in the particular "*menton blanc*," although the length of his skin is given as 12 inches. I suggest that Temminck's description was taken from a bird in immature plumage. In Godman's "Petrels," the plate of *P. tenuirostris* is drawn from a South Australian specimen, but the descriptions are of the male from a bird from Bonin Islands and the female from a Nagasaki bird. In this description there is no mention of the white chin or pale-grey throat which are so conspicuous in our own bird that they could not possibly have escaped attention had they been present in the Japanese specimen. If this be so, it would seem that *P. tenuirostris* and *P. brevicaudus* cannot be separated even subspecifically, although it is strange that a species should have breeding-places so far distant on each side of the Equator without any intermediate ones.

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