



A Flight Picture of the Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*),
Taken by K. A. Hindwood, B.A.O.U.

Camera Craft

The Arctic Skua.—While on a holiday trip recently I availed myself of the opportunity to study the Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) from the deck of s.s. Macquarie, a small coastal steamer travelling between Sydney and Port Macquarie, a distance of about 280 miles north. The photograph herewith depicts the two projecting central tail feathers, also the mottled and barred brown and white plumage; one of the two phases of this dimorphic bird. Although rather heavy in build and ungainly in flight, when compared with other sea birds, the Arctic Skua is not without that beauty of form which is characteristic to all birds whose food is secured wholly or partly from the sea. The Arctic Skua is found all along the eastern coast of Australia, but breeds in Siberia, hence it will be seen that it is a strong flier and a great traveller. Its food consists mainly of fish, also of refuse thrown overboard from the many steamers which travel up and down the coast; the fish are secured mainly by harassing other birds until they disgorge their catch.—KELTH A. HINDWOOD, R.A.O.U., Willoughby, N.S.W.

Correspondence

WHITE'S JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO NEW SOUTH WALES.

To the Editors of *The Emu*.

Sirs,—I am much interested to learn from the letters of Messrs. Mathews and Waite, published in the last number of *The Emu*, that I was correct in my surmise that the editor of the above-named work was Thomas Wilson, and that various authorities, including Swainson, Sherborn and Mr. Waite, had previously concluded that Shaw was the author of the scientific names and descriptions given therein. I can only state that my conclusions were arrived at without knowledge of these facts, and I regret the apparent lack of caution in the abstract which Mr. Waite quotes, in which I said that the scientific names had *always* been quoted as of White. It is a difficult task to compress an account of a paper, even a brief one, into fifty words, and it leaves no room for qualifying phrases such as "as far as the author is aware."

In common with many other students of Australian birds, I owe much of my knowledge of the early literature of the subject to Mr. Mathews' great work, and since reading his letter I have looked up his references to White's Journal to see if he had ever stated, or even hinted there, that Shaw and not White was probably the author of the names. I cannot find anything of

the sort. On page 59 of Vol. VI. of *The Birds of Australia*, we read:—"In the *Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales*, published in 1790, White gave figures and descriptions of new or rare birds and to these attached Latin names." On page 470 of the same volume he writes:—"White, in the '*Journal Voyage New South Wales*,' also gave a plate opposite p. 263, and also selected the same vernacular name [as that given in Phillip's *Voyage*], but added a Latin diagnosis and gave a Latin name, *Psittacus discolor*." On page 250 of Vol. I. we find:—"White described *Fulica alba*, and gave a figure," and on page 288 of Vol. VIII.:—"This common species was figured by White."

As regards the quotation of the names of Shaw and Nodder as the authors of names given in the "Naturalists' Miscellany," I believe this usage was begun by Mr. Mathews, and that previously it had been customary to quote Shaw only as the author. Mr. Mathews states that he does this because "in the dedications both these names are included." I pointed out, however, that on the title-page of a volume in my possession the words "by G. Shaw, M.D., F.R.S.; the Figures by F. P. Nodder, Botanic Painter to Her Majesty," occur. Whether such a title page is rare or is found in most volumes, I do not know—we in Australia are at a great disadvantage in such matters. It occurs only in the first volume of my set.

Since Mr. Mathews in the last sentence of his letter advocates the quoting of "the name on the title page of the work," he will surely now revert to the name of Shaw alone as the author of "The Naturalists' Miscellany," even though the author and illustrator both attach their names to the dedication of the first volume to the Queen, and of later volumes to other eminent persons.—Yours, etc.,

W. B. ALEXANDER.

Prickly Pear Laboratory,

Sherwood, Queensland, July 15, 1924.

Postscript.—Since writing the above letter, I have noted that in "The Birds of Australia," Vol. V., p. 45, Mr. Mathews wrote: "Almost simultaneously was published in the '*Journal Voyage New South Wales*,' by White, p. 250, a description of 'The White Hawk (*Falco albus*),' and this was accompanied by a coloured figure, which appears to be the first published figure of this bird. White's account admits Shaw's aid when doing the birds." I was incorrect, therefore, in stating that Mr. Mathews had given no hint that the descriptions in White's *Journal* were by Shaw, but this statement is not accurate, since it was not White, but the editor, Wilson, who "admitted Shaw's aid."—W.B.A. (21/7/24).