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A Second Grey-mantled Albatross

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In *The Emu*, vol. 50, pp. 16, 135-7, W. B. Hitchcock describes the finding, and gives the description of, the first Grey-mantled Albatross (*Phoebetria palpebrata*) recorded in Australia. This bird was found by Allan Miller on Discovery Bay beach, east of the Glenelg mouth, on July 2, 1950. On July 7, 1956, three very active members of the Portland Field Naturalist Club—Cliff Beaglehole and Percy and Eugene Finck—found a second bird (or part bird) of the species on the east shore of Discovery Bay, 14 miles from Portland, and 30 miles east of Miller's find. The exact locality is known as the Little or White's Beach, the only gap in the black basalt rocks on the wild west side of Cape Bridgewater. It was here that in September 1851 six bodies from the wreck of the *Marie* were washed ashore, a wreck in which all hands perished. A cairn just above the beach marks their resting place.

The three Portland Naturalists, accompanied by Mr. Sam Jennings of Portland, in whose debt they are for transport, had spent the morning on the Discovery Bay beach behind the Bridgewater Lakes but had found nothing. Then they moved to White's beach where earlier in the year Cliff Beaglehole had picked up the remains of the first Flesh-footed Shearwater (*Puffinus carneipes*) found in Victoria. This beach is about 400 yards of broken shells with a very steep slope to the sea up which the ocean rollers rush with a fearsome roar. Just above high-water mark the beach-combers saw the remains of a bird which, on examination, was seen to be a Sooty Albatross, but whether *fusca* or *palpebrata* they were unable to decide until a study of Hitchcock's clear description of the two very similar species made them almost certain that another Grey-mantled had been

found. When sent to Melbourne for identification this was confirmed, and the following letter, addressed to Mr. Beaglehole, received from the Curator of Birds, Mr. Allan McEvey.

Many thanks to you and your friends for the valuable specimen you have forwarded. It is *Phoebastria palpebrata* (Forst.), Grey-mantled Albatross, and here are the data:

Reg. No. B. 6283 comprising chiefly skull, cervical vertebrae, right foot, tarso-metatarsus, tibia, fibula, femur, and pelvic girdle.

Measurements: Culmen (total) 115 mm. Tarsus 81 mm. Middle toe with claw, 120 mm. (est).

Colour: The sulcus (groove on side of lower mandible containing fleshy skin) varies from light brownish olive to greyish-olive (Ridgway colors) and while this is not as dark as that in other specimens of *P. palpebrata* available, it is still distinct from the straw-coloured sulcus of *P. fusca* as illustrated in our specimen of the latter.

Leg: Horn brown with a vinaceous tinge (not Ridgway colors). There is also a pinkish tinge on one claw. The culminicorn and right ramicorn are missing.

Among the feathers which remained, none was found to show any distinct sign of juvenile scalloped pattern, nor were any feathers found as light as those of the mantle of the immature specimen, B. 3074. This, in conjunction with the bill measurement, strongly suggests the bird was adult. This is, of course, the second Australian specimen of the species, the previous one being Nat. Mus. no. B. 3074 as recorded W. B. Hitchcock, *Emu*, vol. 50, pp. 16, 135-7.

The remains of this Albatross had evidently been on the beach for some days as they were quite dry. This conjecture is borne out by the meteorological conditions preceding the find. From July 1 to July 7 the winds were from dead calm to light north. From June 27 to 30 there was a succession of heavy gales from the north to south-west with barometer as low as 29.15 at 2 p.m. on June 27. These storms accounted for a number of sea-bird tragedies on other local beaches and gave us some good petrel and prion records.

Another Victorian Specimen of the Sooty Shearwater.—On December 14, 1955, while searching for beach-washed birds on the shore half a mile east of Seaspray (near Sale, Vic.), Mr. Ian Cross and I recovered a recent specimen. At first glance it resembled a Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), but on closer examination it was found to be darker in colour, and the underwing was white, the feathers showing black shafts; the beak was longer and heavier. The head and wing were removed, and later taken to the National Museum where they were identified as belonging to the Sooty Shearwater—*Puffinus griseus* Gmelin. This is, I believe, the fifth record of this bird in Victoria within recent years. The measurements as taken were: culmen length, 39 mm.; wing span, 38 in.; and body length, 17 in.—TREVOR PESCOTT, Geelong, Vic., 20/1/56.