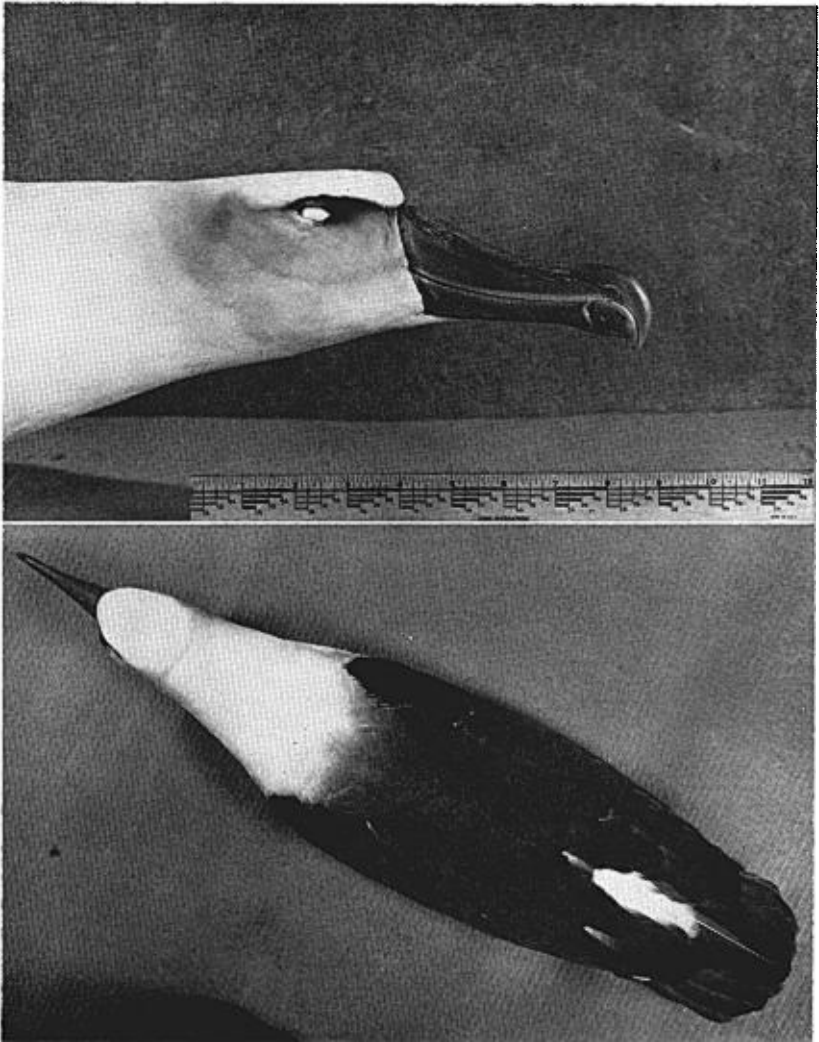


GENERAL NOTES

A Record of the Tasmanian White-capped Albatross, *Diomedea cauta cauta*, in American North Pacific Waters.—Despite their great size and interest, the albatrosses as a group remain among the least known of North Pacific birds. Recently Kenyon (*Condor*, 52: 97–103, 1950) has done much to clarify the status of the three resident species (*Diomedea nigripes*, *D. immutabilis*, and *D. albatrus*, the latter probably now extinct) in the northern and northeastern Pacific. The papers of Thompson (*Auk*, 68: 227–235, 1951) and others cited therein are also generally helpful toward the same end. J. K. Townsend's century-old records of southern hemisphere Tubinares reportedly taken off the mouth of the Columbia River in 1834 and 1835, including two species of albatrosses, *Diomedea chrysostoma* and *Phoebetria palpebrata auduboni*, have been doubted in recent years (*cf.* A.O.U. Check-list N. Amer. Birds, ed. 4: 366, 1931; and Stone, *Auk*, 47: 414–415, 1930; *Auk*, 48: 108–109, 1931; and *Auk*, 51: 225–226, 1934). Similar doubt is expressed regarding the authenticity of the record of a skull of the first named species from California (Grinnell and Miller, *Pac. Coast Avif. No. 19*: 557, 1944). However *D. chlororhynchos* has been twice recorded authentically on the coast of eastern North America (A.O.U., *op. cit.*), and *D. melanophrys* has been reported from Greenland (Hørring and Salomonson, *Medd. Grønland*, 131 (5): 1941), all in the North Atlantic, where, incidentally, resident species of albatrosses are wholly lacking. From this and perusal of Peter's 'Birds of the World' (vol. 1: 41–46, 1931), Murphy's 'Oceanic Birds of South America' (vol. 1, 1936), and the 'Zoological Record' (1930–), it appears that the following description of the capture of an individual of *Diomedea cauta cauta*, the Tasmanian White-capped Albatross, constitutes the first published record of that species not only in the North Pacific but in the northern hemisphere as well, and the first known occurrence of the typical race in the waters of the Americas.

In the late summer of 1951 I was privileged through the kindness of Mr. Joseph G. Ellson, Chief, North Pacific Explorations and Gear Research section of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to accompany the research motor vessel, *JOHN N. COBB*, on a deep-trawling expedition off the Washington coast. On September 1 at 13:30 PST the crew was engaged in completing an otter trawl haul in 240 fathoms at 47° 55' N. and 125° 37' W., about 39 miles west of the Quillayute River mouth on the Olympic seacoast of Washington, when a large black and white albatross appeared in the congregation of Black-footed Albatrosses, *D. nigripes*, attending the ship. After consultation with those in charge I borrowed a gun and collected the specimen for positive identification and preservation. Dayton L. Alverson and Ernest O. Salo assisted in the capture, and Karl W. Kenyon of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service helped prepare and photograph the specimen.

Field and preparational data were as follows: length, 36 inches; wingspread, 8 feet 1½ inches; weight, 3890 grams (8.55 pounds); adult female; ovary 24 x 15 mm. with many ova 1–2 mm. in diameter and several apparent corpora lutea; a definite post-sternal brood patch; condition excellent, flesh full and sapid; fat accumulations, both subcutaneous and visceral; stomach contents none; no parasites noted; plumage fresh and clean; iris gray-brown; feet pale gray, somewhat dusky on joints and to some extent on webs; nails pale horn-colored, somewhat worn and irregular; mandibles in general pale gray, yellow-nailed—upper margined and invaded basally with black; fleshy rictal extension of gape narrowly rimmed with carmine, extending downward and forward onto base of lower mandible. In view of the taxonomic importance which has been attached to the colors of the beak (*cf.* Mathews, *Bull.*



TASMANIAN WHITE-CAPPED ALBATROSS, *Diomedea cauta cauta*

Brit. Orn. Club, 213, 1934) the following more detailed laboratory notes taken from the frozen specimen are also offered: culminicorn, latericorn, naricorn, ramicorn, and inter-ramicorn generally light gray with a slight yellowish tinge, equivalent to the "Oyster Gray" (19A2) of Maerz and Paul (A Dictionary of Color, 2nd ed., McGraw-Hill, 1950); nail of upper mandible rich corn yellow, of lower similar but clouded with dusky back of incisive border; ramicorns streaked medially with dusky; preanal groove narrowly dusky, behind nostril caulked with prominent extension of black membranous ridge margining entire base of upper mandible; rictal extension of gape edged by narrow vivid carmine lip continuing down and forward nearly across lateral face of ramicorn. Standard measurements taken from the thoroughly dried skin are as follows: chord of culmen, 136 mm.; width of maxilla at base, 33.0 mm.; depth of closed bill at base, 54 mm.; tarsus, 92; middle toe with claw, 145; wing (chord) 584; and tail, 224. The prepared skin has been photographed (Plate 16) by University of Washington photographer, E. F. Marten. The subspecific identification is based on the very large size of the bird, particularly of the bill and feet, the color of the bill, and the white nape and pileum. Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy of the American Museum of Natural History has kindly examined this report, and the photographic materials upon which it is based, and concurs in the racial determination (Murphy, *in litt.*; see also Amer. Mus. Novit. No. 419, April 5, 1930).

The specimen consisting of the skin and body skeleton is cataloged as Number 1616 in the Slipp collection at Pacific Lutheran College, Parkland, Washington, with provision for its transfer to the United States National Museum.

Efforts to account for erratic occurrences of sea birds far from their normal range are usually futile. However, we can say positively that in the present case there is no doubt that the specimen was a wild bird which had arrived on the scene by means of its own powers of flight, for its size and nature would render it a most unlikely captive, and its immaculate and unfrayed plumage testify to freedom and normal good health. It seems inconceivable, likewise, that it might have been tolled so far from its native waters by any one ship, although it showed no very great reluctance to joining the flock of "goonies" around the *JOHN N. COBB* and may well have traveled long distances in the company of ships encountered in its wanderings. Cyclonic wind storms are known to be a frequent cause of long distance transfers of sea birds from the tropics to higher latitudes (Murphy, 1936: 50-59), possibly accounting for a part of the extreme dislocation in the present case. The unprecedented nature of this record suggests that whatever combination of the above agencies may have been operative, a large residual allowance must be made for individual caprice on the part of the bird itself. We can hazard little more to account for the appearance of a relatively localized subspecies (*cf.* Murphy, 1936) some 8,000 miles away, across the tropic barrier, from its native islands.—J. W. SLIPP, *School of Fisheries, University of Washington, Seattle 5, Washington.*

West Indian Black-capped Petrel, *Pterodroma hasitata*, Picked up on Fairfield Beach, Connecticut.—On October 7, 1938, a bird was found on Fairfield Beach and brought to Birdcraft Museum. It was smeared with fuel oil and appeared to have been dead for two or three days. Mr. Frank J. Novak, curator, mounted it and placed it in one of the cases as a Greater Shearwater, *Puffinus gravis*. While visiting the museum last June, Dr. Robert C. Murphy at once noted the bird and said that it was not a shearwater but one of the rare specimens of Black-capped Petrels. Later in the summer Mr. Novak and I took the mounted bird to The American Museum of Natural History for comparison with other specimens. Dr. Murphy examined it very carefully and made the following comment: "The disas-