

On the first day two downy white chicks with unopened eyes were present. Remains of prey at the nest included an adult and juvenile kiore (*Rattus exulans*) and a Saddleback (*Philesturnus carunculatus*), all characteristically beheaded. On the third day one chick was dead, and within a day it was gone from the nest. Before our departure the nest was again inspected and prey consisted of two beheaded Allied Shearwaters (*Puffinus assimilis*). On each occasion an adult bird presided at the nest, with the mate often in attendance closely.

It is noteworthy that *Puffinus assimilis* has not been recorded before as Morepork prey, as it is large relative to the size of the Morepork (mean body weight 219 g cf. Morepork 174 g, Marchant & Higgins 1990). It is possible the shearwaters were fledging young (R.B. Sibson, pers. comm.).

Most previous studies of Morepork diet have concluded that insects form the main component with bird prey infrequent and restricted to the smaller passerines (Cunningham 1948, Edgar 1962, Imboden 1975, Lindsay & Ordish 1964, Saint Girons *et al.* 1986).

Evidence of Saddleback predation is also largely circumstantial (Lovegrove 1991, Saddleback transfers from Stanley Island to Kapiti Island, Dept. of Conservation Science & Research internal report no. 98). An exception is an instance on Hen Island where a Morepork was described taking a Saddleback near an aviary (Wilkinson 1927).

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Sightings of White Heron at Suva

On a recent visit to Suva I was delighted to see and photograph a White Heron (Large Egret) *Egretta alba*. A Reef Heron (white phase) *Egretta sacra* obligingly stood alongside for comparison. *Egretta alba* is not listed in the "Checklist of Birds Recorded in the Fiji Region" included in Dick Watling's book. Jim Moore, OSNZ recorder for the South West Pacific, confirms that he has been unable to find another record of this species in Fiji. As white phase Reef Herons are common in Fiji, it is possible that the larger White Heron could fail to attract attention.

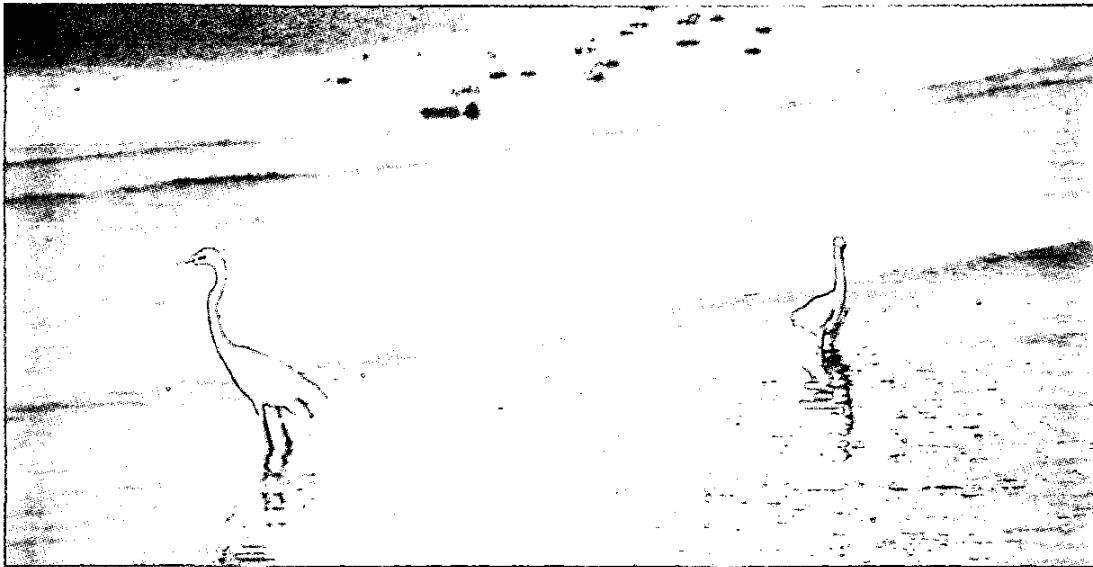


FIGURE 1 — White Heron (left) and white phase Reef Heron, Suva waterfront

The *Egretta alba* sightings were on the Suva waterfront opposite the Government Buildings. On 3 September 1991 I observed and photographed this bird from 0805 to 0830 hours. It was seen (and photographed) again at the same place at 1240 the same day and at 0825 on 6 September 1991. In all, nine satisfactory photographs were obtained and three of these included *Egretta sacra* for comparison.

My description was of a heron much larger than a Reef Heron. Plumage, pure white; bill, yellow right to its base; legs dark, very long; feet not seen (under water); neck much longer than body; curvature uneven. It flew with slow deep wingbeats. These characteristics would seem to distinguish it adequately from *Egretta sacra*, the only other all-white heron on the above Fijian list, and from *Egretta intermedia*, the only "similar species" listed by Pizzey (1980).

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REVIEW

Birds by night, by Graham Martin. T & AD Poyser, London, 1990.
 ISBN 0 85661 059 3. 227 pp. Price: unknown.

Graham Martin has made extensive studies of vision in nocturnal birds, in particular the tawny owl (*Strix aluco*). In this book he considers all nocturnal birds and discusses how they are able to be active at night. In doing so he provides fascinating details from physics, the natural history and behaviour of birds, and the anatomy and physiology of the senses in birds.