

## LETTER

13 February 1981

The Editor,  
Sir,

In *Notornis* 27: 297-298, W. R. P. Bourne has queried the recent statement by Warham & Bell (*Notornis* 26: 121-169) that the Whitney South Sea Expedition collected four prions on 15 February 1926 near the Antipodes Islands. I have looked into this apparent discrepancy and find that Warham and Bell were essentially correct in their original statement, the only difference being that the specimens were collected on 16 February. In Rollo Beck's journal there are entries for 15 and 17 February, but not for 16 February; thus the entry under 15 February covers two days. My interpretation is that the ship anchored on the 15th and that Beck collected, before breakfast on the 16th, the four prions and other birds.

In the American Museum catalog there are four prions collected on the 16 February in 49°S 179°W. The 179° West longitude was obviously a slip of the pen for 179°E, and was made consistently on specimens collected at that date. The four prions are in the collection, three identified as *Pachyptila turtur* and one as *P. desolata*. Details are given below.

It will be noted that specimens No. 334605 and No. 334606 were listed by Bourne as having been collected 1 February. This was an error, as they were collected 16 February. I have remeasured these specimens and my measurements are almost exactly those of Bourne. The specimen listed by Bourne as No. 211790 is not the specimen so catalogued; the specimen bearing that number is a specimen of *P. turtur*, sex ?, collected 8 March 1926 in 44°S 176°W, at Round Island, near Chatham I. (Beck journal vol. D, p. 132). Similarly, data given for No. 334610 are incorrect; the specimen bearing that number is identified as *P. desolata* but was collected 2 March 1926 in 46°S 180° near Bounty Island.

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| AMNH No. | Date         | Identity           | Sex | Wing | Tail | Culmen |       | Tarsus | Toe  |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|-----|------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|
|          |              |                    |     |      |      | Length | Width |        |      |
| 211791   | 16 Feb. 1926 | <i>P. turtur</i>   | ♀   | 180  | --   | 22     | 10.5  | 32.5   | 39   |
| 334605   | "            | "                  | ♂   | 179  | 88   | 21.5   | 10    | 32     | 38.5 |
| 334606   | "            | "                  | ♀   | 171  | 86   | 20.5   | 10    | 30     | 37   |
| 334604   | "            | <i>P. desolata</i> | ♂   | 188  | 90   | 28     | 14    | 32     | 36   |

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