

*Catalogo dei tipi di uccelli del Musco Civico di Storia Naturale di Genova*, by G. Arbocco, L. Capocaccia, & C. Violani. 1979. Ann. Mus. Civ. St. Nat. Genova 82: 184-265.

The collections of the Genoa Museum of Natural History are rich in type specimens of subspecies and species, mostly from the Oriental and Australian regions. 317 types are listed, of which 249 are said to be still valid. Most were described by Salvadori, Sharpe, or Sclater; the majority are from New Guinea; most of the rest are from the Indonesian islands. Although not of direct interest to New Zealanders, it is a scholarly work of taxonomic importance to lands in our region; it is also a reminder of the amount of material in early journals and in the collections and archives of European museums. Would that more such catalogues were available to help us in the south to trace types and other early specimens with their often valuable collector's notes. Copy in OSNZ library.

B. D. HEATHER

## LETTER

The Editor,  
Sir,

29 July 1980

### WHITE NELLIES

In his interesting article in *Notornis* 27: 176-178, R. B. Sibson refers to my 1962 paper on giant petrels — "From studies subsequently made by Warham (1962), we now know that there is a high frequency of white-phase birds in the breeding colonies on Macquarie, nearly 7% on the west side of the island and more than 15% on the east."

I don't know where these figures came from but Mr Sibson got his wires crossed somewhere as the data are not from my 1962 paper. There, on page 156, I stated that of 557 birds on the colonies 44 or 8% were white, that in November 1952 32 of 305 adults banded (10%) were white, and that in 1959 20 white birds were counted among 200 (10%). I made no comparisons between the proportions on the west and east sides of the island because, in my time, all but one of the colonies were on the west side and about 2700 of the 2846 chicks I ringed were from that coast. Hence any differences in proportions would probably have been ascribed to chance.

JOHN WARHAM