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LETTERS

The Editor,

11 April 1979

Sir,

Mr Sibson writing on the correct scientific name for *Daption* (*Notornis* 25, p. 149) states that the authors of the current Checklist examined the question of genders very carefully. In view of the confusion which is everywhere apparent it might well be considered that their time would have been better spent replacing vernacular names for the 130 or so species from which they were removed by the 1953 committee.

Due presumably, to this lack of guidance most authors now ignore the Checklist and derive their own vernaculars, often with ambiguous and sometimes quite misleading results. In the resulting chaos it is frequently not possible, when a vernacular name is used, to know whether the reference is to full species or merely to a race.

When competent and careful professional scientists are forced into making such confused statements as "Pied Tit (*Petroica macrocephala*) . . . this species" (*Notornis* 23 p. 315) there is I feel something seriously amiss.

Those ambiguous birds "Australian Gannet (*Sula bassana*)" and "Black-fronted Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*)" are now so regularly reported and unquestioningly accepted that it seems only a matter of time before they join "Black Shag (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)" and "Pukeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)" as permanent members of New Zealand's avifauna.

I would earnestly suggest therefore that urgent consideration be given to a further revision of the NZ Checklist with the object of providing for all species both a scientific and a vernacular name irrespective of gender.

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