

Kin recognition in blue penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) on Tiritiri Matangi Island

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We investigated whether little blue penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) chicks could distinguish siblings from other

chicks using auditory cues, by measuring behavioural and heart rate changes during playback experiments with 5 treatments – the begging calls of siblings, neighbouring chicks, and unfamiliar chicks, and 2 controls. The results have indicated that chicks are able to distinguish siblings from strangers but that their ability to discriminate between siblings and neighbours remain uncertain. We also analysed begging calls of each chick to find out whether they are individually distinctive. The results showed each chick's calls were distinctive and could act as a vocal signature.



Letter

Correction: *Leucocarbo* shag at the Snares Islands

O'Donnell & West (2001) contains the following reference to a *Leucocarbo* shag seen by Martin Renner at the Snares Islands in Apr–May 1997:

Bounty I shag *Leucocarbo ranfurlyi*
[SO] Snares Is, 1 ad early Apr–20/5, photographed (MR).

This contradicts Miskelly *et al.* (2001), which contains the following:

Auckland Island shag (*Leucocarbo colensoi*)
A juvenile Auckland Island shag first seen in Boat Harbour on 24 Jul 1994 had gained full adult plumage by Mar 1996 (Plate 4D). This bird was seen on 14 visits and was still present in Oct 2000, often associating with Snares crested penguins on Ho Ho Point, where it defended a nest site in a penguin colony. When penguins were present the shag walked to and from the colony with the penguins, however, when penguins were absent the shag flew to and from its nest site.

The caption to Plate 4D in Miskelly *et al.* (2001) reads:
D, Auckland Island shag (*Leucocarbo colensoi*), Ho Ho Point, Mar 1997. P. Sagar.

Both accounts refer to the same bird. Note that the photograph reproduced as Plate 4D in Miskelly *et al.* (2001) was taken within a month prior to Mr Renner's visit. The shag sightings in April–May 1997 were included among the 14 visits between July 1994 and October 2000 referred to in Miskelly *et al.* (2001), although not explicitly stated in the paper.

Our identification of this bird as an Auckland Island shag is mainly based on facial skin coloration. Auckland Island shags in breeding plumage typically have dark purple facial skin with a strongly contrasting bright

yellow stripe along the base of the upper mandible, extending forward from the gape. This is clearly shown for the vagrant Snares Island bird in Plate 4D in Miskelly *et al.* (2001). In contrast, Bounty Island shags in breeding plumage typically have orange facial skin gradually grading into yellow at the base of the bill, with no prominent contrasting stripe along the base of the upper mandible.

An Auckland Island shag (assumed to be the same bird) has subsequently been seen on Ho Ho Point and in Ho Ho Bay, Snares Islands in Jan and Feb 2001 (P. Scofield and P. Sagar pers. obs.).

This same bird was referred to incorrectly as a vagrant Stewart Island shag *L. chalconotus* in Heather & Robertson (1996: 245), based on an incorrect identification by PMS when the bird was in juvenile plumage in 1994. We suggest that Bounty Island shag *L. ranfurlyi* and Stewart Island shag *L. chalconotus* be omitted from the list of birds recorded from the Snares Islands.

LITERATURE CITED

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