

# PAPERS

RELATIVE TO THE

TRANSFER OF MR. BULLER'S

COLLECTION OF NEW ZEALAND BIRDS

TO THE

COLONIAL MUSEUM.

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PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF  
HIS EXCELLENCY.

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WELLINGTON.

—  
1871.



## PAPERS RELATIVE TO TRANSFER OF BIRDS TO COLONIAL MUSEUM.

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### No. 1.

Mr. BULLER to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 27th July, 1867.

I do myself the honor to address you on the subject of a contemplated work on the birds of New Zealand, the prospectus of which I beg to furnish herewith.

Professor Newton of Cambridge has kindly undertaken to secure for me the services of one of the best zoological artists in London, and Mr. Van Voorst, the well-known Natural History publisher, has consented to undertake the publication of the work if proceeded with.

According to an estimate furnished by the latter, the cost of producing an edition of 500 copies will be not less than £500; while, in common with almost all other books on local Natural History, it is hardly likely to prove remunerative. I have no wish to regard the matter in the light of a commercial speculation, but I am anxious to protect myself against absolute pecuniary loss. In order, therefore, to facilitate the undertaking, I have the honor to submit for your consideration the following proposal:—

Being unwilling to ask the Government for a direct grant in aid (as has been frequently suggested to me), I am prepared to hand over to the Colonial Museum the collection of New Zealand birds on which the descriptive portion of the work is chiefly founded—with the understanding that it shall be preserved entire for future reference—on condition of receiving from the Government the sum of £300 towards the cost of publication.

The collection is a large one—comprising over 200 specimens—and is unquestionably the best in existence.

The Hon. E. W. Stafford, Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.,  
WALTER BULLER.

### Enclosure in No. 1.

#### PROSPECTUS.

Now preparing for the Press

“THE BIRDS OF NEW ZEALAND.” By Walter Buller, F.L.S.; Author of the New Zealand Exhibition Essay on New Zealand Ornithology.

THE work will comprise an Introductory Treatise, a short diagnosis of each Genus, synoptical lists of the Nomenclature, and a Popular History and Description of all the known Species; illustrated by twenty-five coloured drawings of New Zealand Birds, by a zoological artist in London.

About 600 pages, Royal octavo. Price £2 2s. Publisher: J. Van Voorst, London.

### No. 2.

Mr. BULLER to Dr. HECTOR.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 2nd July, 1870.

As my work on the “Birds of New Zealand” will shortly be ready for the press, I beg, through you, to renew the offer I made to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary three years ago, and detailed in the correspondence herewith. I shall feel favoured by your informing me whether the Colonial Government is disposed to accede to this offer.

Dr. Hector, F.R.S., Director, Colonial Museum.

I have, &c.,  
W. BULLER,

### No. 3.

Dr. HECTOR to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Geological Survey Office, Wellington, 2nd August, 1870.

I have the honor to forward a letter from Mr. W. L. Buller, together with the attached correspondence with reference to an offer which was made by him respecting the purchase of his collection of birds for the Colonial Museum, as a means of his obtaining Government assistance towards the publication of his Handbook of New Zealand Ornithology. Since receiving these papers I have communicated with Mr. Buller, and ascertained that the collection would be ready for deposit in the Museum within three months, and have also obtained from him the appended catalogue.

In forwarding this application, I beg to state that my own opinion (and also that of Mr. Potts) is, that £300 is rather an over estimate of the value of the collection; as, out of the 253 birds, seventy-nine

specimens represent only fifteen very common species, owing to the number of duplicates; nevertheless, as being the type collection containing the actual specimens which form the groundwork of what will be the standard book on the birds of New Zealand, I would strongly urge that they should be purchased for the Museum, with the stipulation that the Government should receive, in addition to the collection of birds, say twenty-five copies of the work for distribution to the various Public Libraries in the Colony, when it is published.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.,  
JAMES HECTOR.

#### No. 4.

Dr. HECTOR to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Colonial Museum, Wellington, 21st November, 1870.

I have the honor to report that, in accordance with your minute of 7th October last, I have made arrangements with Mr. Buller for the transfer of his collection to the Colonial Museum, in the terms of the attached letter, in consideration of his receiving the sum of £300 from Government to assist him in publishing his work on the "Ornithology of New Zealand."

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.,  
JAMES HECTOR.

#### Enclosure in No. 4.

MEMORANDUM of Articles to be handed over to the Colonial Museum by Mr. W. BULLER.

1. Collection of New Zealand bird skins, to be forwarded complete within one month; 255 specimens, as per list.
2. Besides the thirty-two specimens now mounted in the Museum, ten of the foregoing are to be mounted in the new case.
3. All deposits in the Museum at the present time to be presented to the Museum. [See attached list.]
4. All nests and eggs of New Zealand birds in Mr. Buller's possession to be presented to the Museum.
5. Publication to be proceeded with as soon as compatible with scientific accuracy.
6. Twenty-five copies of work on "New Zealand Ornithology" to be presented to the Colonial Government.

#### Sub-Enclosure to Enclosure in No. 4.

LIST of DEPOSITS at present in Colonial Museum, to be presented by Mr. BULLER.

Deposited 17th September, 1865.—1 Fishing Rod, 5 Spears, 7 pieces of Cloth, 2 ditto, coloured, 2 Mats, 2 pieces of Fringe, 4 large Clubs, 6 small Clubs, 6 Fish-hooks, 7 pieces of Stone, 1 Hatchet, 1 Cocoonut Wood Stick, 2 Bone Rings, 1 Stone covered with Shell (sniker), 1 Tongese, 1 small Paddle.

Deposited 30th August, 1866.—Tooth of Cetacean.

Deposited 2nd May, 1867.—Skeleton of Kiwi, prepared by Dr. Knox.

Deposited 23rd September, 1867.—Cetacean Jaw.

Deposited 29th September, 1867.—1 carved Box (Maori), and 1 Heitiki, very old (Maori).

Deposited 19th September, 1868.—5 Clubs and 1 Spear; 1 model Maori War Canoe.

Deposited 15th June, 1870.—2 Teeth of Cetacean.

Deposited 16th July, 1870.—Stone Adze, mounted on carved pedestal; 2 Spears (one bone mounted and one barbed: South Sea Islands); 1 Bow and 5 Arrows.

*The following were formerly in Museum of New Zealand Society.*

Also 14 specimens of New Zealand Lizards in spirits; Pigeon Feather Robe (Maori); Spine Fish, stuffed; Crocodile Lizard, stuffed; Head of Tunny (New Zealand); Fish-hook (South Sea Islands); Bone Walking-stick (New Zealand); Cabinet, with folding doors.

#### No. 5.

Mr. BULLER to Dr. HECTOR.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 20th December, 1870.

In reply to your letter of the 21st ultimo, I have the honor to state that I accept the proposal made therein on behalf of the Government.

To prevent any future difficulty, I would here state that by "handing over" I understand you to mean presenting the whole of my collection of New Zealand birds to the Colonial Museum.

In thus assenting to the terms of your letter, while not in a position to make any conditions, I assume of course that you will assist me in my projected work by a loan of such specimens as may be required by the artist in England, for the purposes of illustration.

Dr. Hector, F.R.S.,  
Director of Colonial Museum.

I have &c.,  
WALTER BULLER.

## No. 6.

Dr. HECTOR to Mr. G. S. COOPER.

SIR,—

Colonial Museum, Wellington, 3rd August, 1871.

I have the honor to forward, for the information of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, a descriptive catalogue of the Native and introduced birds of New Zealand, which has been drawn up by Captain Hutton, in compliance with my instructions. As it partly forms a report on the collection recently purchased for the Colony from Mr. Buller, and embodies in a form available for general use the chief advantage gained by that purchase, together with all other information that can be obtained on the subject, I beg to recommend that it should be printed for circulation.

I have, &amp;c.,

JAMES HECTOR.

The Under Colonial Secretary.

## Enclosure in No. 6.

CATALOGUE of the BIRDS of NEW ZEALAND, by Captain F. W. HUTTON, F.G.S., Assistant Geologist to the Geological Survey of New Zealand.

## Introduction.

THIS catalogue has been prepared, by direction of Dr. Hector, in the hope that it will enable naturalists in New Zealand to name correctly any bird whose habits they may have noticed, and so render their observations useful to science. It has been drawn up chiefly from the collection of birds purchased from Mr. Buller for the Colonial Museum, which contains type specimens of all his new species, except *Gerygone assimilis* and *Creadion cinereus*, but I have also examined all the Museums and several private collections in the Colony, and by these means have been able to see 143 out of the 159 species here described.

To make it as complete as possible, a list of introduced birds, as far as I know them, has been added.

Birds of doubtful authenticity as natives are marked with an \*, and a note of interrogation is placed before those species which appear to me to be of doubtful value, and these doubtful species in all cases follow immediately after the one with which they will probably have to be united.

Those species represented in the Colonial Museum are marked C.M., while O.M. means that the specimen described is in the Otago Museum; CY. M., in the Canterbury Museum; and N.M., in the Nelson Museum.

All measurements are in inches and decimal parts of an inch. L. means the length from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail; B., means the length of the bill from the tip to the gape; W., means the length of the wing from the flexure or carpal joint to the tip, except in the case of the Penguins, where it means the whole length of the wing; T., means the length of the tarsus, or lower part of the leg.

The least satisfactory part is, I am afraid, the geographical distribution of the species and genera; for such information is difficult to obtain in a Colony. The nomenclature of the species, except in one or two doubtful cases, such as *Larus Jamesoni*, will I trust be found tolerably correct, but for this, I, in common with all naturalists in New Zealand, am deeply indebted to Dr. O. Finsch, without whose labours it would have been impossible, out here, to have corrected many of the mistakes which have gradually crept into our lists of birds.

F. W. HUTTON.

Colonial Museum, Wellington, August, 1871.

[Here follows a list of 159 birds, natives of New Zealand, and sixty-nine birds which have been introduced since the settlement of the country; each genus and species having a short diagnosis prefixed. This list has been published in a separate form.]

## Sub-Enclosure to Enclosure in No. 6.

Hieracidea Novæ Zealandiæ.—8 specimens, showing the various states of plumage incident to age and sex.

Circus Gouldii (Harrier).—5 specimens (difference of age and sex represented).

Athene Novæ Zealandiæ (New Zealand Owl).—4 specimens (including a small variety from the South Island).

Athene albifacies.—1 specimen.

Halcyon vagans.—2 specimens.

Heteralocha Gouldii (Huia).—4 specimens.

Prothemadera Novæ Zealandiæ.—3 specimens (including a beautiful albino, unique).

Pogonornis cincta.—2 specimens (male and female).

Anthornis melanura.—2 specimens.

Anthochæra Bulleri.—1 specimen (unique).

Anthornis auriocula.—1 specimen (unique).

Anthornis ruficeps.—2 specimens.

Xenicus longipes.—2 specimens.

Xenicus Haastii.—2 specimens.

Acanthisitta chloris.—3 specimens (1 male and 2 female).

Mohoua ochrocephala.—2 specimens.

Mohoua albicilla.—2 specimens.

Sphenœacus punctatus.—1 specimen.

Sphenœacus rufescens.—1 specimen (unique).

- Gerygone flaviventris*.—3 specimens (2 adult and 1 young).  
*Certhiparus Novæ Zealandiæ*.—2 specimens.  
*Fosterops lateralis*.—4 specimens.  
*Petroica macrocephala*.—3 specimens (2 male and 1 female).  
*Petroica toitoi*.—2 specimens (male and female).  
 ? *Petroica Dieffenbachii*.—1 specimen.  
*Petroica longipes*.—2 specimens.  
*Petroica albifrons*.—2 specimens.  
*Anthus Novæ Zealandiæ*.—2 specimens.  
*Turnagra crassirostris*.—2 specimens.  
*Turnagra Hectori*.—2 specimens.  
*Rhipidura flabellifera*.—2 specimens.  
*Rhipidura melanura*.—1 specimen.  
*Rhipidura Swainsonii*.—(? N.S.)—1 specimen (unique).  
*Callæas cinerea*.—3 specimens (male, female, and young).  
*Callæas Wilsoni*.—2 specimens (male and female).  
*Creadion carunculatus*.—1 specimen.  
*Platycercus pacificus*.—1 specimen.  
*Platycercus auriceps*.—2 specimens, (1 read and yellow variety, unique).  
*Platycercus alpinus*.—1 specimen.  
*Nestor meridionalis*.—5 specimens. (2 of these are of a large variety, which may prove to be a distinct species. There is also an albino, and a beautiful "Kaka-kura," or scarlet variety, both of which are unique.)  
*Nestor superbus*.—1 specimen.  
*Nestor occidentalis*.—2 specimens.  
*Nestor notabilis*.—1 specimen.  
*Stringops habroptilus*.—4 specimens.  
*Eudynamis Taitiensis*.—3 specimens (2 adult and one young).  
*Chrysococcyx lucidus*.—1 specimen.  
*Carpophaga Novæ Zealandiæ*.—2 specimens (1 spotted variety, unique).  
*Coturnix Novæ Zealandæ*.—4 specimens (2 male and 2 female).  
 ? *Apteryx Australis*.—2 specimens.  
*Apteryx Mantelli*.—4 specimens (2 male and 2 female).  
*Apteryx Oweni*.—2 specimens (male and female).  
*Charadrius obscurus*.—3 specimens (winter and summer plumage).  
*Charadrius bicinctus*.—2 specimens (different ages).  
*Anarhynchus frontalis*.—2 specimens.  
*Ardea flavirostris* (White Crane).—4 specimens. (Presenting differences which may prove to be characteristic of two distinct species.)  
*Ardea matook* (Blue Crane).—3 specimens.  
*Nycticorax Caledonicus*.—1 specimen (unique).  
*Ardea Novæ Hollandiæ*.—2 specimens (unique).  
*Botaurus poiceopterus*.—5 specimens. (A series of skins showing the transitions and variations in the plumage of the New Zealand Bittern.)  
*Limosa Novæ Zealandiæ*.—3 specimens. (Showing variations in size and plumage).  
*Himantopus Novæ Zealandiæ*.—2 specimens.  
*Gallinago pusilla*.—1 specimen.  
*Ocydromus Earli*.—5 specimens. (Various ages, including a chick, and one remarkable albino variety, unique.)  
*Ocydromus Australis*.—6 specimens. (Presenting much variation of colour, characteristic of "local varieties".)  
*Rallus assimilis*.—4 specimens.  
*Rallus Featherstonii*.—1 specimen (unique).  
*Ortygometra affinis*.—3 specimens.  
*Ortygometra tabuensis*.—2 specimens (adult and young).  
*Ortygometra Fluminea*.—1 specimen (unique: of doubtful authenticity, but said to have been killed in Auckland Province).  
*Porphyrus melanotus*.—6 specimens (3 adults and 2 young, and 1 albino: unique).  
*Casarca variegata*.—5 specimens. (Series showing changes of plumage: 1 adult male, 2 female, and 2 young.)  
*Anas superciliosa*.—4 specimens (of which two are chicks).  
*Anas chlorotis*.—4 specimens (illustrating the differences of age and sex).  
*Anas gibberifrons*.—2 specimens (male and female).  
*Nesonetta Aucklandica*?—1 specimen.  
*Spatula variegata*.—7 specimens. (Showing variations of plumage, age, and sex: 4 adult male, 2 adult female, and 1 young male.)  
*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus*.—4 specimens (various ages).  
*Fuligula Novæ Zealandiæ*.—5 specimens (2 adult male, 1 adult female, 1 variety with white belly, and 1 white-faced variety).  
*Podiceps cristatus*.—3 specimens (2 male and 1 female).  
*Podiceps rufispectus*.—6 specimens (various ages).  
*Spheniscus minor*.—2 specimens.  
*Spheniscus undina*.—1 specimen (unique).  
*Eudyptes pochyrhynchus*.—2 specimens.  
*Pelecanoides urinatrix*.—1 specimen.  
*Puffinus assimilis*.—2 specimens (adult and young).

*Procellaria glacialis*.—1 specimen (unique).  
*Prion vittatus*.—3 specimens.  
*Lestris* .—1 specimen (unique).  
*Larus antipodum*.—2 specimens.  
*Larus scopulinus*.—1 specimen.  
*Larus melanorhynchus*.—2 specimens.  
*Sterna frontalis*.—1 specimen.  
*Sterna Antarctica*.—3 specimens (male, female, and young).  
*Hydrochelidon albobristata*.—1 specimen.  
*Jula serrator*.—1 specimen.  
*Fregatta aquilla*.—1 specimen of female (unique).  
*Graculus carboides*.—3 specimens.  
*Graculus melanocephalus*.—1 specimen.  
*Graculus varius*.—2 specimens (male and female). ♀  
*Graculus punctatus*.—3 specimens (1 male and 2 female).  
*Graculus brevirostris*.—3 specimens (various states of plumage).  
*Graculus stictcephalus*.—2 specimens.  
*Graculus* (Ocean Shag).—1 specimen.

Making a total of 255 specimens.

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