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Antarctic prion: pp 54-55.

**Antarctic Prion** (Totorore) *Pachyptila desolata* (Gmelin 1789), Native  
November 1840 Auckland Islands  
23/01/1899 Ross Sea (British Museum (Nat. Hist. ) 1902)

The first record appears to be of birds collected on the Auckland Islands by Dr. McCormick of the British Antarctic Expedition in 1840 (Oliver 1930). Marchant & Higgins (1990) considered this species monotypic, whereas Turbott (1990) recognised two subspecies *desolata* and *banksi*. Silcock (2008) listed three subspecies recorded in New Zealand. Shirihai (2002) thought that at least two of these would be eventually recognized. Harper (1980) described variation between the various island populations, mostly based on morphological differences in the bill and facial pattern. Checklist Committee (OSNZ) (2010) does not accept any subspecies.

The puzzling aspect to previous subspecific attribution is that populations breeding closest to each other (Macquarie and Auckland Islands) were linked to populations breeding further away (Kerguelen and Heard respectively). It seems more likely that these subspecies should be geographically linked. Silcock (2008) attributes Macquarie Island and Auckland Island birds to *P.d. macquariensis* Mathews 1912, which may be a synonym of *P.d.alter* Mathews 1912.

Harper (1980) preferred not to recognise any subspecies due to intergradation, though thought some variation is apparent. Scofield & Onley (2007) also do not recognize any subspecies. Presumably any birds attributed to breeding islands away from New Zealand will have to have been banded there to verify their origin. A prion collected by Hanson in January 1899 in the Ross Sea was almost certainly this species (British Museum (Nat. Hist. ) 1902). One was shot by Wilson on 25/11/1902 at 67 S 178 W near Scott Island.