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Australian darter: pp 95-96.

Australian Darter *Anhinga melanogaster novaehollandiae* (Gould 1847), Vagrant (4)
January 1874 Hokitika, Westland

The taxidermist of the Canterbury Museum, F.R. Fuller, found the skin of an adult female nailed to a wall of an old shed at Hokitika. Buller (1874b) wrote an account of this bird. "THE Canterbury Museum contains a roughly prepared skin of the Australian Darter (*Plotus novæ-hollandiæ*) obtained under circumstances which leave no doubt on my mind of the occurrence of this bird as a straggler in New Zealand.

Mr. F. R. Fuller, the excellent taxidermist attached to the Museum, during a visit to Hokitika in January last, found the skin stretched flat and nailed up inside an old shed. He brought it away, but could get no information as to how it came there. An examination of the skin shows clearly that it was in a fresh state when affixed to the wall, the edges having, in the process of drying, shrunk away from the nails on both sides. It would seem that some digger or working settler, probably attracted by the rarity of the bird, had adopted this rude mode of preserving it.

The suggestion will occur that the bird may have come down from Australia in some vessel; but the condition of the tail-feathers, which to the very tips are clean and unbroken, proves, I think, that this was no caged bird".

Haast thought that he saw one on Lake Ohau in the summer of 1862. One was seen near Kaitaia in December 1992, and there have been several more unconfirmed sightings in Northland. More recently there were Darters at Lake Daniells, Nelson in November 2003 and in Wellington Harbour in December 2003.