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Red wattlebird: pp 191-192.

Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata* (Shaw 1790), Vagrant (1)
October 1881 Rahotu, Cape Egmont, Taranaki

One was reputed to have been found at Matakana, north of Auckland in c. 1865, and was painted by Richard Laishley. Nothing is known of the circumstances of its discovery, and the specimen cannot be found in the Auckland Museum collection. It may have been brought over by ship.

“In my ‘Essay on the Ornithology of New Zealand, 1865’, I included the above species among our birds, on the authority of a specimen in the Auckland Museum, preserved by Mr. St. John, and said to have been obtained at Matakana, to the north of Auckland. The bird was retained on our lists for many years, but no fresh examples having been heard of, and St. John’s specimen being of doubtful authenticity, its name was ultimately expunged. After a lapse of nearly twenty years, I have once more the pleasure of recording it as a New Zealand bird.

During a visit to Marton last year, I was invited by Mr. Avery, the local bird-stuffer, to examine his novelties. Among these was a bird which he had himself collected when serving with the volunteers in Mr. Bryce’s expedition against Parihaka. He met with it in some high scrub at the rear of the camp at Rahotu, when on fatigue duty, and was fortunate enough to shoot it. The bird was new to him and he skinned it, performing the operation very successfully. The skin was in a fresh condition when it came into my hands, and proved on examination to be a well-plumaged specimen of *Anthochaera carunculata*, the well-known wattle-bird of Australia.

Mr. Avery was generous enough to give me this fine bird, which has now an undoubted right to a place in our Avifauna, and I have much pleasure in submitting it to your inspection this evening” (Buller 1883).

As Avery was a volunteer with Bryce’s expedition, he must have been at Rahotu about October 1881. Te Whiti, the prophet of Parihaka, was arrested on 5th November 1881, and the campaign finished then.

This honeyeater is a common southern Australian species, and is a “blossom nomad”, with marked seasonal movements. There were persistent rumours of a bird resembling this species near Pukekohe in spring 2005.

