

Blue Petrels in Victoria

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When I sent a Blue Petrel (*Halobæna cærulea*) to the National Museum, Melbourne, from Portland in September 1953 (*Emu*, vol. 54, p. 117) there had been only one other bird of the species recorded from the State—"from Mor-dialloc about 1890". It is worth recording the Blue Petrels found on the Portland beaches since the specimen of September 25, 1953, and for convenience I will number the birds as from no. 1 for that referred to above.

2. A very damaged bird found by C. Kurtze on Discovery Bay beach ten miles east of Nelson, September 19, 1954. Owing to its age and storm damage I was unable to identify it so forwarded it to Melbourne unlabelled. Here it was found to be *Halobæna cærulea* and kept as a skeleton.

3. A decomposed specimen sent by Miss Blythe to the Melbourne Museum, October 4, 1954. This bird was found on the beach near the Portland lighthouse, September 30, 1954. It was only fit for a skeleton. Warren Hitchcock forwarded me the measurements as follows—Reg. no. B.6078 (skeleton); exposed culmen 26, wing 220, tail 93, tarsus 32, toe and claw 41 mm.

4. Among other sea bird remains I picked up on the Portland town beach, October 19, 1954, another Blue Petrel. Unfortunately, like its forerunner, it was unfit for a skin. On being sent to the Museum it was preserved as a spirit specimen.

5. On November 1, 1954, Mr. B. Hardy, of Portland, brought me a good specimen of a Blue Petrel he had found two days previously on the town beach. Those two days' delay were fatal, and once more the Museum's chance of a skin from Victoria was lost. The head and sternum were kept and the following data supplied to me—sex, doubtful male; length 190 mm., wing span 661 mm.

6 and 7. Both picked up by me in close proximity on north shore of Portland Bay, November 1, 1954. Both specimens (still in my possession) were mere bones and feathers, but fortunately the tails and bills were intact thus ensuring identification.

It seems extraordinary that after a lapse of 63 years during which no birds had been reported from the State, seven specimens should turn up in one locality, in fourteen months, and probably a further number would have been added had we been able to patrol all the beaches available.

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