

On the receipt of the above I set out to trace Antarctic ships in southern Australian waters during May, June and July 1933.

1. The shipping records here (Portland) contain no such records.

2. The Collector of Customs, Melbourne, said—

This department has no record of any ship arriving at Melbourne from the Antarctic during May, June and July 1933.

3. The Collector of Customs, Adelaide, wrote—

You are advised that records held at this Port disclose that no vessel reported from the Antarctic during May-July 1933.

4. The Collector of Customs, Hobart, wrote—

A perusal of this Department's inward shipping register for the months in question revealed that no ships arrived from the Antarctic, in fact none arrived during the entire year 1933.

So the reports from all these southern shipping cities seem to make it clear that the 'assisted passage' obstacle can be ruled out.

Here is another angle to the problem. There is a definite connection between sou'-west gales and the finding of storm-washed birds on the Portland beaches. So I wrote to the Director of Meteorology for the weather reports in May, June and July 1933. Mr. L. J. Dwyer replied—

The position here is that records of the beginning of winter 1933 do not extend beyond the Australian coastline. Shipping reports were not common in those days . . . and would be well north of the normal habitat of Adelie Penguins. Sea water temperatures well south of fifty degrees and the position of the pack ice boundaries would, if the ice were further north than usual and the water temperatures abnormally low, encourage the bird to swim further north in search of food. In this respect no information is held here, and it is unlikely that any ships were in the region at the time. In regard to odd occurrences, Admiralty Charts show that in 1908 an iceberg was sighted some 150 miles west of Cape Leeuwin, so that the appearance of an Adelie Penguin at Portland should not be considered an impossibility.

It only remains to be stated that the latitude of Cape Leeuwin is nearly 300 miles north of Portland, and there does not seem to be any evidence to show that the bird identified by Prof. Wood Jones was not a genuine Australian record of an Antarctic resident.

Tree-Ducks on the Murray.—A flock of twenty-eight Plumed Whistling Tree-Ducks arrived on the bank of the Murray at Beverford on October 1, 1955. They have dispersed gradually and appear to be pairing. At present (October 30, 1955) only six remain and have become quite tame. Old local residents have not seen them hereabouts before.—DERECK FRENCH, Beverford, Vic., 30/10/55.