

Another New Petrel for Victoria

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In *The Emu* (54: 113, 55: 100, and 60: 103) I recorded a total of 53 sea birds from Portland, Victoria. The addition of further species from this one locality was hardly to be expected, but in the winter of 1960 another petrel turned up in rather peculiar circumstances.

Cliff Beaglehole and his wife, Hilda, regularly patrol the 30-mile stretch of lonely, windswept beach along Discovery Bay, a locality where they have found so many of our beach-washed specimens. On August 9, 1959, Mrs. Beaglehole returned with a load of dead birds and other flotsam. Among the "spoil" was a skeleton that neither she nor Cliff had seen before, but which they thought was a Kerguelen Petrel (*Pterodroma brevirostris*) — and as such it was tentatively labelled. Exactly a week later, on the same beach, Mrs. Beaglehole picked up a second specimen of the same species. Both birds were put out to dry on wire-netting, and there the matter rested until July 24, 1960. On that day Mrs. Beaglehole found—again on Discovery Bay—another strange petrel.

On a ring from Cliff I went out to assist in identifying the bird. After considerable search, though with much doubt, we labelled the specimen Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), and sent the carcass to the National Museum.

On August 2, 1960, Mr. A. R. McEvey wrote: "After having held it long enough for the freshness of the colours to fade, I now have no doubt regarding its identity: it is *Pterodroma brevirostris* (Lesson). I draw your attention to the following points:

1. On arrival, the upper-wing surface was practically black (with a bluish diffusion through some feathers), and was much darker than our skins of previous specimens from your area.

2. The legs were blackish on the outer side; the inner side and toes were vinaceous-brown, the webs blackish. In your earlier specimens the legs were paler . . . it is certainly another good find."

As I had seen the other specimens referred to above I should have recognised it, and also realised that the birds found on August 9 and 16, 1959, were *not* Kerguelens. But what were they? Cliff got to work, and with the assistance of Alexander's *Birds of the Ocean*, concluded that they were Soft-plumaged Petrels (*Pterodroma mollis*). The specimens were then sent to the Museum and Mr. McEvey confirmed this, adding that: "The specimen is the first Victorian record, so far as I can ascertain."

So our numbers advance to 54 and we await the next arrival.