

A Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chrysocome moseleyi* in Victoria

A specimen of *Eudyptes chrysocome moseleyi* (Spheniscidae: Aves) was found at Williamsons Beach near Wonthaggi on 27 June 1986. This appears to be the most eastern record for this race in Victoria.

Penguins of the genus *Eudyptes* (penguins with yellow or gold plumes on the side of their heads) are most numerous on the islands off New Zealand. Rockhoppers belong to the species *chrysocome* which is divided into three subspecies. *E. chrysocome chrysocome* (n nominate subspecies, Forster 1781) breeds on the islands off Cape Horn and the Falklands Islands; *E. chrysocome filholi* Hutton 1879 breeds on Marion Crozet, Kerguelen, Herd, Macquarie, Campbell, Auckland and Antipodes islands; the northern race *E. chrysocome moseleyi* (Mathews and Iredale 1921) breeds on the Tristan da Cunha group, Gough, St Paul and New Amsterdam islands (Marchant & Higgins 1990).

On 27 June 1976 a juvenile Rockhopper Penguin was beachwashed alive at Williamsons Beach, near Wonthaggi, Victoria. The penguin was dark blue and white. No sign of crests was evident, the cheeks were ash-grey, the bill dull red and the eyes brick-red. The bird was in poor condition and unable to stand. Despite a multi-vitamin injection administered by the local veterinarian (Dr D. Cassels), the bird died the next day and its body was lodged with the Museum of Victoria (specimen number MV B15237).

The bird was identified by Mr K. Simpson (Science Department, Victoria College — Burwood Campus) as belonging to the northern race *moseleyi*. Juvenile Rockhopper Penguins of this race have been reported at Gunnamatta Beach (near Cape Schanck July 1970) and Pt Lonsdale (28 July 1968), Victoria, and Porky Beach, King Island, Tasmania (12 June 1970) and adults at Stanley, Tasmania (Simpson 1972) and Wellington, New Zealand (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Records of birds of unidentified age and subspecies are more numerous (see Marchant & Higgins 1990) and locations in Victoria include Discovery Bay (1954, 1978, 1986 and 14 others), Portland (1933, 1936, 1956, 1959 and two others), Port Fairy (1957), Warrnambool (1928, 1961), Lorne (1910), Portsea (1970), Mud Island (?), Port Melbourne (?), Cowes (1970) and Darby Beach, Wilsons Promontory (1968) (Wheeler 1967; Marchant & Higgins 1990).

References

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