

moored there, also on the piles which have been driven into the swampy flat. It is very unusual to see this species in quantity about in the town, as it usually keeps away in small companies along the river or among the trees of the bush. They appear to have reached northern Tasmania in much larger numbers than usual during the past spring and summer, as a friend of Mr. Thompson's who lives out some miles from the city on a sheep-run, and who also is a keen observer, found that the Tree-Swallow had driven the ordinary Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) from their nests under his verandah, and, having lined the nests with gum leaves, had proceeded to lay and incubate therein. Mr. Thompson saw a clutch of their eggs from this place; they were three in number, and he describes them as much rounder than those of the Swallow and very prettily marked. This proceeding of ousting the *Hirundo* from its mud structure and usurping the same for breeding purposes is most unusual with the *Petrochelidon*, as far as our experience goes. Within my own knowledge, it always bred, on the North-West Coast, high up in holes of dead gum-trees, and never seemed to care for the proximity of a town, thus differing *in toto* from the other species.

Spine-tailed Swift (*Chaetura caudacuta*).—This fine bird has the peculiarity in some seasons of not making its appearance across the Strait until the end of summer. I have seen them from Mt. Bischoff, after a storm, up very high in the air, dashing along in their splendid strong flight, in the month of February, none having been noted previously. Mr. Thompson had not observed any this season when he wrote at the end of February, but on the 15th March he saw two pairs over the Cataract Hill, in showery weather with a north-east wind. After circling over the hill for some time they made away to the south.—H. STUART DOVE. Moonee Ponds, 27/5/08.

Forgotten Feathers.

BY J. R. M'CLYMONT, M.A., HOBART.

THE DERIVATION OF THE WORD PENGUIN AND THE BIRD DENOTED BY THE NAME PIJLSTAERT.—“Penguin” may come to us from Latin through French, either from *pinguis*, fat, or from *pingue*, fat between the skin and the flesh. There are two forms of the word in French—*pinguin* and *pingouin*. The final *in* is merely a substantival and adjectival affix. *Pingui* is employed by François Pyrard, whose *Discours du voyage des François aux Indes Orientales* was published in Paris in 1611, but it is evident from the context that he does not designate a Penguin by this name. Clusius, whose *Exoticorum libri decem* was published in 1605, employs *Pinguins* as if it were late

Latin, and affirms that they were named by the Dutch "a pinguetudine qua erant præditæ." But this is certainly an error, for the name in some form or other was employed of great auks before 1595, in which year it was employed of Penguins by the Dutch. In a narrative of the first expedition of the Dutch to the Eastern Archipelago, written by "G. M. A. W. L." (William Lodewijckszoon), and published in Amsterdam in 1597, Penguins are mentioned. The work was translated into English by "W. P." (William Phillip), and this translation was published in London in 1598. It is a very scarce book, and the title of it does not appear in the printed "Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum." But one or more examples must have existed in 1812, for it was reprinted in London in that year in "A Selection of Curious Rare and Early Voyages." From this reprint I extract the following sentences:—"The second of August (1595) we saw the land of the Cape de bona Sperance and the fourth of the same Month we entered into a hauen called Agne Sambras (i.e., Agua de Sam Brás) where wee ankered and found good depth at 8 or 9 fadome water, sandy ground. The 5 day we went on shore to gather fruite, therewith to refresh our sicke men that were thirty or 33 in one shippe. In this bay lyeth a smal Islande wherein are many birdes called Pyncuius (*sic*) and sea Wolues that are taken with mens handes." In Dutch editions of the narrative the name of the birds is printed "Pinguyns." "Pyncuius" is doubtless a typographical error, and "Pyncuins" the correct reading. Pylstart Island received its name from Abel Janszoon Tasman, as he has recorded in his Journal under the date January 20, 1643, in the words:—"Dit eijlandt hebben wij de naam gegeven van het hooge pijlstaerts eijlandt om datt soo vies pijlstaerten ware." Pijlstaert—in modern spelling Pijlstaart—is the Pintail. One Polynesian Pintail is known—*Dafila modesta*—but it appears to have been recorded only from Sidney Island, in the Phoenix Group, and it is, I think, more probable that it was the Australian Wild Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) which Tasman saw, for that Duck has a range in Polynesia which extends from the Pelew Islands to the Society Islands, and includes the Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga Islands. The Palæarctic Pintail (*Dafila acuta*) in its summer plumage is nearly as dark in colour as the Australian Wild Duck, and it is at that season destitute of the long tail-feathers from which it derives its English and Dutch names. Both Ducks have green specula.

CUCKOO CAUGHT.—A Cuckoo, flying between an outhouse and a shrub on The Range, became entangled in a spider's web, fell to the ground, and was picked up by a spectator of the accident.—*The Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton.



McClymont, James R. 1908. "The Derivation of the Word Penguin and the Bird Denoted by the Name Pijlstaert." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 8(1), 39–40. <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu908039a>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/88007>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu908039a>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/379511>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.