

AN OLD RECORD OF A BALEARIC SHEARWATER *PUFFINUS MAURETANICUS* FROM GERMANY

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The Balearic shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* is a rare bird in Germany. It was not yet listed to occur in the country by Bauer & Glutz von Blotzheim in 1966. The first German records were of two individuals seen off Heligoland on 12 and 13 August 1992 (Stühmer 1993). Accordingly, the species is classified as vagrant in the species list of Barthel & Helbig (2005). In recent years, Balearic shearwaters are more frequently observed, with thirty records from Heligoland between 1992 and 2009, all between late April and mid-October, with peak numbers in late August and early September (Dierschke *et al.* 2011). However, evidence of its occurrence in Germany from before 1992 was not available until present.

Therefore, it may be of interest that the second author pointed out that the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden, The Netherlands, hosts a specimen of Balearic shearwater from Heligoland (ZMA.AVES.44474) (figure 1). According to its label, this bird was collected on 5 December 1893. The bird is in somewhat worn plumage, as could be expected for a juvenile in December, and has characters typical for this species: dark brown upperparts, whitish belly with extensive brown on the undertailcoverts, side of neck, flanks, and underwing coverts. Measurements of this specimen are: wing 246 mm, tail 76 mm, bill to feathers on forehead 40.7 mm, tarsus 50.8 mm, middle toe with claw 53.7 mm. The lengths of wing, bill and tarsus exceed those of Manx shearwater *P. puffinus* but are within the range of *P. mauretanicus* (cf. Roselaar 1977, which excluded ZMA 44474, as it was not yet available at the time).

This specimen of Balearic Shearwater was likely collected by a fisherman co-operating with Vogelwarte Helgoland, probably close to Heligoland rather than on the island proper. According to Gätke (1900), collecting birds at sea by local fishermen was common practice in the nineteenth century. Doctor Hugo Weigold, staff member of the Vogelwarte in 1910-1924, presented the bird to Dr. René baron Snouckaert van Schauburg, founder and first president of the Nederlandsche Ornithologische Vereeniging from 1901-1911. The shearwater was accompanied by at least eight other birds from Heligoland, which, next



figure 1. Balearic shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*, collected near Heligoland, Germany, 5 December 1893 (Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden, The Netherlands, ZMA.AVES.44474). Photo: Hans van Brandwijk

Vale pijlstormvogel, verzameld door een visser nabij Helgoland, Duitsland, op 5 december 1893, vermoedelijk op zee.

to some common migrant songbirds and the shearwater, included a black guillemot *Cephus grylle* (undated) and an aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* (dated 8 August 1910). Snouckaert had a large private collection, which started in 1886 and included 3000 well-labeled skins at the end of 1909; he was internationally a well-known ornithologist at the time. The exact date on which Snouckaert received the bird from Weigold is not on record, but was probably between late 1910 and late 1913: Weigold and Snouckaert first met during the 5th International Ornithological Congress from 30 May to 4 June 1910 in Berlin (Schalow 1911), while Weigold departed to China to collect birds in late 1913 and was forced to stay there until May 1919 because of the outbreak of the First World War (Weigold *et al.* 1922-1927). Both Weigold and Snouckaert profited from the congress: Weigold was introduced to bird ringing (being the first person in Germany to ring birds in 1910) and Snouckaert made lots of contacts with other bird collectors and dealers to enlarge his bird skin collection (adding a further 1500 birds between 1910-1914). From 1915 onwards Snouckaert lost interest in expanding his collection (probably for financial reasons; only some Indonesian collections are from a later date than 1915), and a large part of it, including the Balearic shearwater, was sold in 1925 to the Sillem-Van Marle Society, which in turn arrived in ZMA in 1979. Of the labels attached to ZMA.AVES.44474, one (white) was added by CSR in 1979; the yellow cardboard label with red ciphers and underlining is from Snouckaert, the more flimsy yellow one is from Weigold (figure 2a). Snouckaert clearly states on his label: 'Dr. Weigold (Helgoland) pres.' (figure 2a).

Why would Weigold give away a specimen that is unique for Germany? The reason may be simple: the bird was identified by Weigold as *Procellaria anglorum*, a synonym of Manx shearwater. Manx shearwater was a common bird off Heligoland in the early nineteenth century: 'eine ganz gewöhnliche jedermann bekannte Erscheinung' (Gätke 1900). Though Manx shearwaters may have been far less common later on, Weigold apparently did not consider it to be very rare when presenting the bird to Snouckaert between 1910 and 1913. That it was not a Manx shearwater, but the first specimen of Balearic shearwater for

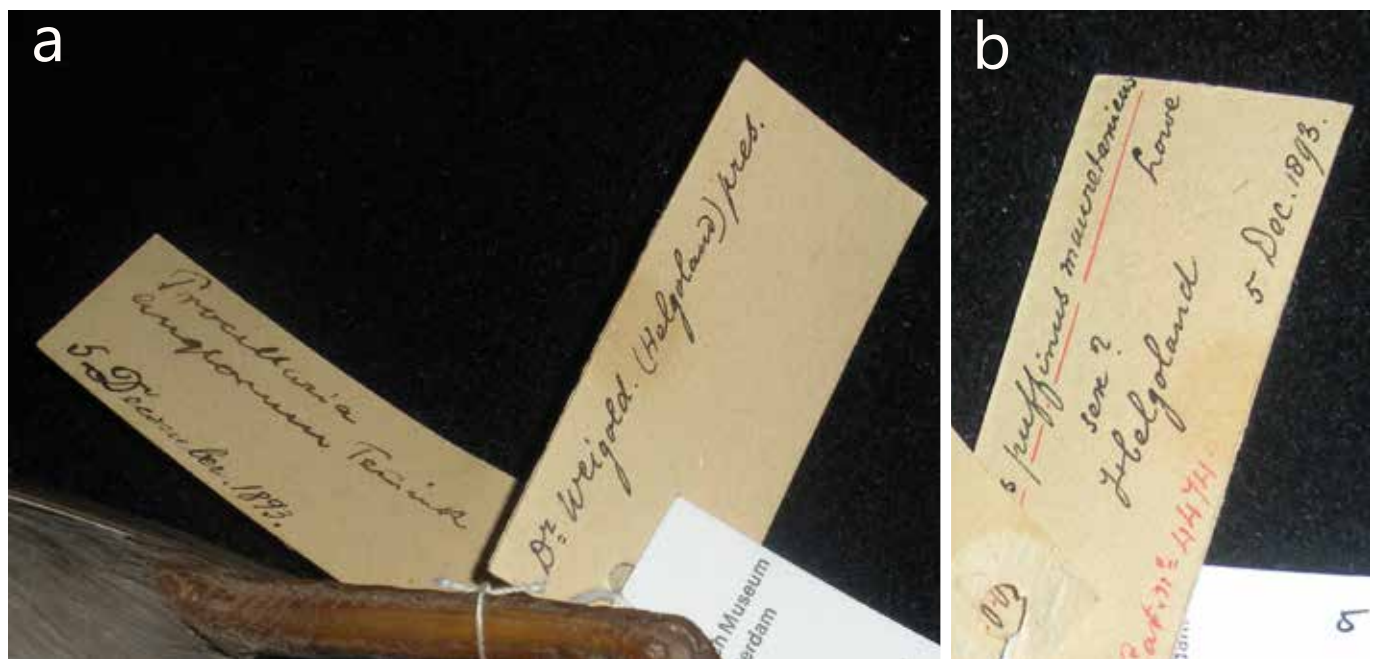


figure 2. Labels attached to Balearic shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*, collected near Heligoland, Germany, 5 December 1893 (Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden, ZMA.AVES.44474). In a, the left label is the original one from Weigold, the right label is from Snouckaert. The back side of the label of Snouckaert is shown in b. Photos: Becky Desjardins *Labels van valse pijlstormvogel, Helgoland, Duitsland, 5 december 1893. In figuur 2a is het linker label van Weigold en het rechter label van Snouckaert. De achterkant van het label van Snouckaert staat afgebeeld in 2b.*

Germany, he could not know, because *mauretanicus* was not described until July 1921 (Lowe 1921)! Gätke (1900) does not mention the shearwater from 1893 in his book, probably because the manuscript was closed by 1891.

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SAMENVATTING – HISTORISCHE VONDST VAN EEN VALE PIJLSTORMVOGEL IN DUITSLAND

De vale pijlstormvogel is een zeldzame soort in Duitsland. Hij is pas in 1992 voor het eerst – in het veld – vastgesteld; sindsdien wordt hij regelmatig in kleine aantallen waargenomen. Er waren uit Duitsland geen museumexemplaren van deze soort bekend, totdat de tweede auteur een vale pijlstormvogel ontdekte in de collectie van het Zoölogisch Museum Amsterdam (ZMA.AVES 44474). Het betreft een vogel in gesleten juveniel klee, verzameld bij Helgoland op 5 december 1893. De vogel toont de gebruikelijke kenmerken voor de soort: bruine bovendelen, wittige buik met donkerbruine tekening op onderstaartdekveren, flanken, neksijden en ondervleugeldeveren. Het exemplaar is waarschijnlijk door vissers bemachtigd op zee nabij Helgoland en werd ergens tussen eind 1910 en eind 1913 door Hugo Weigold, stafmedewerker van de Vogelwarte Helgoland in 1910-1924, geschonken aan René baron Snouckaert van Schauburg. Waarom zou Weigold zo'n bijzonder exemplaar weggeven? Het antwoord op die vraag is simpel: Weigold determineerde de vogel als een noordse pijlstormvogel, een toen nog vrij algemene soort in Duitse wateren. Deze foute determinatie is hem echter niet aan te rekenen, want vale pijlstormvogel is pas acht jaar later, in 1921, officieel beschreven door Lowe.



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