



FIGURE 1. Dorsal view of albinistic Mountain Quail from Lane County, Oregon.

the Willamette National Forest, Oregon, and was dominated by Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). The bird was a juvenile male; age was estimated as approxi-

mately 14 weeks based on the molt sequence of primaries for other species of North American quail (Taber, *Wildlife Management Techniques*, p. 332, 1969). Completely albinistic feathers occurred symmetrically throughout the plumage, with the exception of the rectrices which were normally pigmented. The albinistic feathers were mostly concentrated on the rump, secondaries, and secondary coverts (Fig. 1). Primaries 5 and 6 of each wing were completely albinistic; most of the remaining primaries contained some areas that lacked pigment. About 40% of the plumage was comprised of completely or partially albinistic feathers; no dilution of pigment in pigmented areas was detected. Except for several small, normally pigmented spots, the toes and tarsi were completely albinistic. The lower mandible was pigmented except for a small, white spot along each side of the base. The irides were normally pigmented.

Undoubtedly, many factors affect the rate at which albinism is reported. The restricted distribution of Mountain Quail and the remoteness of its preferred habitat in relation to other North American quail may partly explain the scant information regarding albinism in this species.

The specimen currently is in the collection of the author. E. C. Meslow and D. K. Edwards provided critical comments on the manuscript. This is Technical Paper No. 4641 of the Oregon State University Agricultural Experimental Station.

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A NEW HYBRID OYSTERCATCHER FROM SOUTH AMERICA, *HAEMATOPUS LEUCOPODUS* × *H. ATER*

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Hybrid oystercatchers have been reported from several regions. The American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) hybridizes with the Black Oystercatcher (*H. bachmani*) in Baja California (Jehl, unpubl. data; Bancroft, *Condor* 29:29-57, 1927) and with the Blackish Oystercatcher (*H. ater*) in Argentina (Jehl, unpubl. data; Jehl et al., *Bull. Brit. Ornithol. Club* 93:56-63, 1973). In New Zealand, pied and black forms of the Variable Oystercatcher (*H. unicolor*) interbreed (Baker, *J. Zool., London* 175:357-390, 1975).

In the austral spring of 1973, I made preliminary studies on the distribution and hybridization of oystercatchers along the coast of Argentina between Tierra del Fuego and southern Buenos Aires Province. Blackish and American oystercatchers are sympatric over much of this area, the American being much

more numerous in the north and the Blackish in the south. In southern Patagonia, the Magellanic Oystercatcher (*H. leucopodus*) replaces the American Oystercatcher. The former is a distinctively pied species with relatively short legs, a longish tail, yellow orbital ring, and a long slender bill. The three species occur together during the breeding season in Santa Cruz Province between the vicinity of Puerto Deseado and San Julián (Jehl and Rumboll, *Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist.* 18(8):145-154, 1976).

On 17 November 1973, I collected a hybrid from a flock of non-breeding oystercatchers near the mouth of the estuary at San Julián, Santa Cruz Province; the flock contained approximately 40 Blackish, 40 American, and 50 Magellanic oystercatchers. I had expected the specimen to be a *palliatus* × *ater* hybrid, which it resembles in several aspects (e.g., mottled rump and undertail coverts; ragged breast band; black feathers on flanks, abdomen). However, it was relatively large, like *ater*, and its back color was darker than that of either *ater* or *palliatus*. Further, the breast band was broad and the bill long and slender, as in *leucopodus*. The orbital ring was orange, intermediate between the yellow of *leucopodus* and the orange-red of *ater* and *palliatus*. I consider it a hybrid *ater* × *leucopodus*.



FIGURE 1. Dorsal and ventral views of a hybrid oystercatcher, *Haematopus leucopodus* \times *H. ater*, collected at San Julián, Santa Cruz Province, Argentina, 17 November 1973.

DESCRIPTION

Female (San Diego Society of Natural History No. 38656; Fig. 1); largest ovum less than one mm, weight 700 g; bill blackish, indicating an age of approximately one year (Baker, N. Z. J. Mar. Freshwater Res. 8:211–221, 1974).

Head, neck, and upper chest blackish with brown tinge and occasional greenish-black highlights. Back brownish-black, intermediate between the brown of *ater* and the glossy greenish-black of *leucopodus*; rump slightly blacker than *leucopodus*. Upper tail coverts form an incomplete white rump patch; the feathers are black distally and white basally, with white extending along shaft for one-half to three-quarters length of feathers. Basal one-fifth of rectrices

white, remainder black. Tertiaries and upper wing coverts, except greater secondary coverts, blackish to blackish-brown. Proximal six secondaries largely whitish with brown smudges near tips; smudges most extensive on outer vane of each feather. Distal secondaries appear black but are white-based; the outermost have white confined to base of inner vane only. Distal greater secondary coverts broadly tipped (ca. 12 mm) white; white areas reduced proximally, innermost coverts being almost entirely dark. Primaries entirely dark.

Ventrally, the dark chest band extends onto the upper abdomen, as in *leucopodus*, but posterior margin is ragged; scattered dark feathers occur on sides, flanks, and thighs. Undertail coverts mottled black-and-white. Underwing bordered black anteriorly; les-

TABLE 1. Measurements of oystercatchers.

	<i>H. ater</i> (7♀) ¹	Hybrid	<i>H. leucopodus</i> (8♀) ²
Exposed culmen	73.0–83.4 (77.4) mm	84.5	73.5–84.8 (78.2)
Bill depth	15.0–16.5 (15.9) mm	12.0	8.5–10.8 (9.8)
Bill depth/length	.20–.22 (.21)	.14	.11–.13 (.12)
Wing (flat)	255–280 (267.5) mm	260 ³	253–263 (257.1)
Tarsus	54.2–62.6 (56.9) mm	59.6	44.0–50.4 (48.9)
Weight	775–790 g ⁴	700	585–610 ⁴

¹ From Magellanic Region of Chile, Argentina.

² From Magellanic Region of Chile, Argentina, and Falkland Islands.

³ Slightly worn.

⁴ Two females.

ser primary coverts grayish, rest of underwing largely whitish, but darker and more mottled than in *leucopodus*.

Measurements of the hybrid are compared with those of *ater* and *leucopodus* in Table 1.

DISCUSSION

The relatively large size of the hybrid and its intermediacy in plumage characters between *ater* and *leucopodus* leaves no reasonable doubt of its parentage. Hybridization between *ater* and *palliatu*s can be ruled out on the basis of the slender bill, darker back color, greater extent of the chest band, and the color of the orbital ring; further, the specimen does not match any of a large series of *ater* × *palliatu*s (or *bachmani* × *palliatu*s) hybrids (specimens in San Diego Natural History Museum). Hybridization between *palliatu*s and *leucopodus* can be excluded on the basis of the hybrid's large size, reduced white in the wing, and mottled flanks, belly, undertail coverts, and rump.

Although taxonomists disagree on the number of oystercatcher species that should be recognized, there is no dispute with respect to *ater* and *leucopodus*: they are good species by any standards. *Ater* is a large, stout-billed, heavy-bodied melanistic oystercatcher that is resident on rocky coasts; it feeds principally on mussels and other intertidal mollusks. *Leucopodus* is a small, slender-billed, pied species that inhabits sandy beaches in the Falklands (Woods, Birds of the Falkland Islands, Nelson, 1975) but in southern Patagonia and northern Tierra del Fuego

breeds in pastures; it seems to feed mainly on earthworms. At least part of the population is migratory, as flocks occur as far north as Chubut Province, Argentina, in winter (Jehl et al. 1973).

As Blackish and Magellanic oystercatchers occur sympatrically without known interbreeding along more than 1800 miles of coastline, from Santa Cruz Province, Argentina, southward through the Magellanic region (and the Falkland Islands) and north to Chiloé Island, Chile, the failure of isolating mechanisms in this one case is interesting. I collected the hybrid near the northern edge of *leucopodus*' range in Patagonia. Obviously, the probability of mixed matings is greater near the edge of a species' range, where opportunity for normal mate choice is limited. Recall, however, that all three species of South American oystercatchers overlap in this area, and that *ater* and *palliatu*s hybridize there with appreciable frequency (Jehl, unpubl. data). The mating preference of their hybrids is unstudied, but I would expect such birds to be at a disadvantage and therefore more likely to participate in mixed pairings. It is even conceivable that one dark parent in the *leucopodus* × *ater* cross described above was itself of *ater* × *palliatu*s ancestry. Plumage and mesural characters are inadequate to test this idea.

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BEHAVIOR OF A PAIR OF SANDHILL CRANES ON THE DAY OF NEST DESTRUCTION

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On the morning of 23 May 1967 a Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*) nest was destroyed on Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney County, Oregon. Examination later showed that a raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) had consumed the eggs' contents. I had spent the night near the nest intending to watch

the pair's incubation activity. The following is a description of their behavior on the day of nest destruction.

04:00–06:00 PDT. At 04:18 it was dark when the incubating female gave numerous alarm calls as the eggs were being destroyed by the raccoon. It was not until 05:10 that the pair could be seen. Both members were feeding about 90 m south of the nest. At 05:23 both flew to the nest site. The male landed about 15 m south and assumed an alert posture by standing with the neck extended and the tail lowered, while the female walked onto the nest. She positioned her legs as if getting ready to incubate,