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Red-tailed tropicbird: pp 84-85.

Red-tailed Tropicbird (Amokura) *Phaethon rubricauda* Boddaert 1788, Native
1/6/1788 Macauley Island, Kermadec Islands
1790 Norfolk Island

Bowes on board the *Lady Penrhyn* in June 1788 reported “many Tropic Birds under the trees, some of which were asleep” (Merton 1977). Cheeseman later reported them in “great numbers for breeding purposes” in 1887.

Buller wrote – “The fine specimen of the bird, however, which I have the pleasure of exhibiting to-night, and which was shot off the Three Kings (between 1865 and 1877) by Mr. Henry Mair, and the further information which I have been able to collect respecting it will fairly establish the right of this species to a place in our avifauna.

The bird is well-known to the Ngapuhi tribe at the north, under the name of Amokura, and they set a high value on the long red tail-feathers which they exchange with the southern tribes for greenstone. Almost every year, after the prevalence of easterly gales, some specimens are washed ashore (generally dead) at the North Cape or in Spirits Bay. The natives of that district go out systematically to hunt for them at these periods. Owing to their rarity these plumes are more prized than those of the huia or kotuku, and in one instance a valuable slab of pounamu was given by a Hawke Bay chief in exchange for three feathers, one of which is now in the possession of the Manawatu natives.

The allusion is to this bird in the love-song of the fairies, commencing— Kiatia taku rangi Te kapu o te amokura, etc. Come, deck my head With amokura plumes” (Buller 1877).