

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)  
Based on: Watola, G. 2009. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (2nd Edition)  
Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.  
Updated and amended text supplied by George Watola, October, 2011.  
Page numbers follow Watola, G. 2009 (2nd Edition)  
Reef heron: p 103.

**Reef Heron** (Matuku moana) *Egretta sacra sacra* (Gmelin 1789), Native  
May 1773 Queen Charlotte Sound, Marlborough

It was first observed on Cook's second voyage at Queen Charlotte Sound (Hoare 1982). Johann Forster described it, and Vieillot (1817) formally named it as *Ardea matook*. As this name referred to the dark phase of the species, it is a junior synonym, but as late as 1955 Oliver was still using it. Oliver regarded colour phases as "semispecies", and liked to give them formal recognition.

The white phase was described first by Gmelin in 1789, from specimens obtained in the southern Tonga Islands. The only record of the white phase in New Zealand was of one at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary, Christchurch in June 1987.