

MISLEADING PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF ROYAL PENGUINS *EUDYPTES SCHLEGELI* AT SOUTH GEORGIA — A CAUTIONARY NOTE

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A black and white photograph by Frank Hurley entitled “Moraine Fjord, a colony of penguins below the Degeer Glacier. 1917” (Fig. 1) appears on page 33 of a compendium of Hurley’s photographs compiled and annotated by Ennis (2002). The book is based on holdings of Hurley’s photographs in the National Library of Australia (NLA), Canberra, Australia, which were acquired from the Hurley family in 1963; a print of the photograph was made in 1961 (Ennis 2002). The image is catalogued by the NLA as PIC FH/1172.

The Degeer Glacier is on South Georgia and terminates in East Cumberland Bay, south of Grytviken and King Edward Point, the main settlement sites. The Degeer (or De Geer) Glacier was renamed Harker Glacier in 1912, according to the South Georgia and SSI Place-name Gazetteer (UK Antarctic Place-names Committee 2015).

The photograph shows the Degeer Glacier at South Georgia terminating on a beach with rocky cliffs on either side. It includes



Fig. 1. “Moraine Fjord, a colony of penguins below the Degeer Glacier. 1917” by Frank Hurley. This is a combination print of the Degeer (or Harker) Glacier at South Georgia and Royal Penguins at Nuggets beach, Macquarie Island (Source: National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia).

a group of crested penguins with white throats and faces standing on the beach in front of the glacier among several southern elephant seals *Mirounga leonina*, with three men standing near the farthest edge of the penguins. A similar photo of the Degeer Glacier, but without penguins, seals or people, appears in Hurley's book on the Shackleton expedition (1979, p. 24). Hurley was at South Georgia in 1914 with Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914–1917 (Hurley 1979) and again in February 1917 after completion of that expedition "to shoot additional footage of the spectacular alpine scenery" (Ennis 2002, p. 16).

The main point of interest in the photograph for naturalists is the identity of the penguins. They are clearly crested penguins of the genus *Eudyptes*. At South Georgia, there are two crested penguin species: the Rockhopper Penguin *E. chrysocome*, which is very rare, with fewer than 10 pairs, and the Macaroni Penguin *E. chrysolophus*, which is abundant, with more than 1000000 pairs (Prince and Croxall 1996). In both species, the throat and face colour are black. In Hurley's photograph, the penguins' throats and faces are white in some birds and pale grey and white in others. These colour patterns are typical of the Royal Penguin *E. schlegeli*, which breeds solely at Macquarie Island (Marchant & Higgins 1990, Woehler 1993). There, the face and throat colour of Royal Penguins varies, with birds on the east coast having white throats and faces or similar coloration with a few grey feathers, and birds on the south and west coasts having darker throats and faces (Shaughnessy 1975). Only two vagrant Royal Penguins have been recorded at South Georgia, distinguished from the similar Macaroni Penguin by bill measurements (Prince & Croxall 1996).

Hurley visited Macquarie Island twice. He was there in December 1911 on Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911–1914, when the expedition vessel anchored for several days while a party was established on The Isthmus near the northern end of the island. Hurley and some colleagues walked southwards along the east coast to The Nuggets to "secure photos of Royals" (Mawson 1942, p. 19). He was on Macquarie Island again in early December 1930 with Mawson's British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition 1929–1931, as part of a group ashore for two days (Jacka & Jacka 1988, p. 356). On that visit, Hurley visited The Nuggets, when he had another opportunity to photograph Royal Penguins.

Hurley often used combination printing, in which two or more negatives from separate photographs were combined to produce a print with greater effect than a photograph from a single negative (Boddington 1979, p. 18; Ennis 2002, pp. 3, 12). Information in the NLA catalogue entry for the Hurley photograph indicates that it is a composite of two negatives and states "A South Georgia landscape was combined with an image of Royal penguins and sea elephants taken on Macquarie Island to create this composite." We agree with that interpretation. A negative nominated by the NLA as part of the composite (PIC FH/1020) includes Royal Penguins in the foreground,

as well as southern elephant seals and two humans. It also includes other material that has been omitted in the published photograph: The Nuggets pinnacles in the background and, in the foreground, two men holding an advertisement for a Tasmanian beer.

We propose that Hurley deliberately exposed a negative of the Degeer Glacier taken in February 1917 with a negative of Royal Penguins taken at The Nuggets beach, Macquarie Island, in December of 1911 or 1930. From this he produced the photograph reproduced in Ennis (2002) of Royal Penguins with a background of the Degeer Glacier at South Georgia. The combination print should be considered a misleading deception showing penguins far beyond their normal range. Hence, we caution against using photographic images, especially those produced by Frank Hurley, to extend faunal distributions.

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