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## First occurrence of Pallas' Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*) in Finland

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In the bird collections of the Kuopio museum there has for a long time been an immature sea-eagle, the exact taxonomy of which has remained unknown although it has caused some speculation. The bird, a male, had been caught in some fishing nets and was killed on the 30.6.1926 in Juovesi, near Kuopio. It was prepared by Matti Karppanen, who was a well-known artist as well as a good ornithologist and who worked as taxidermist for the Kuopio museum until his death in 1953. Karppanen often painted pictures of the birds he prepared, besides taking detailed written notes on their structure and colouring. Since his curiosity was aroused by the strange colour distribution of this specimen he

sent a painting of the bird to Dr. Hortling, the renowned ornithologist. Hortling, too, was puzzled, even more so after receiving the bird and being able to compare it with sea-eagles in the collections of the Zoological museum of the University of Helsinki. In 1927 he published an article on the specimen in *Ornis Fennica*, and gave a thorough description of its morphology. He was inclined to regard it as a strange, individual variant of the White-tailed Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), but at the same time he remarked on the many morphological traits which decidedly set this bird apart from the native species.

The Kuopio specimen is shorter and more lightly built than *H. albicilla*,

especially the beak is much weaker. The wingspan compares well with the White-tail, but the tail seems longer and since all the rectrices are almost equally long the tail has an only slightly rounded appearance instead of the keeled form of the tail of *H. albicilla*. The colouration of the plumage, too, is different. The greater part of the plumage is sepia brown with tawny olive feather tips on the crown, nape, back, rump, chest, and belly, and upperwing and tail coverts. The throat is a light tawny olive-yellow ochre. The underparts of the wings have conspicuous white markings comprising the underwing coverts and axillaries, and part or most of the 5th—10th primaries (see picture in *Ornis Fennica*, 1927:I).

Hortling also remarked on the greyish-blue feet of this specimen; in the White-tailed Sea Eagle the feet are yellow. The blue colour of the feet is no mistake, however; Karppanen was very particular with the specimens he prepared. According to his diary in the Kuopio museum he received the bird fresh the day after it had been killed, and at once started working on it. The colours had thus not yet changed. His detailed notes on colouring and size of the bird were those used by Hortling in the description in *Ornis Fennica*. The colour of the feet and the white undercoverts of the wings were the main reasons why RÄSÄNEN (1953) believed the bird to be a *Haliaeetus albicilla* x *Pandion haliaetus* bastard.

In September 1969 one of the present authors, L.P., taxidermist at the Kuopio museum, visited the Zoo at Högholmen in Helsinki and noticed a great similarity in general appearance between the museum's young sea-eagle and the two old Pallas' Sea Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*) in the Zoo. Descriptions of the immature plumage of *H. leucoryphus* in "Birds of the Soviet Union" and "Birds of Prey of the World" agree with

our specimen. At our request, Dr. Bergman of the Zoological museum in Helsinki expressed his opinion that our specimen represents the Asiatic species (BERGMAN, pers.comm.). Since comparative material is lacking in Finland, some photographs of the bird were sent to Nordiska Riksmuseet, Stockholm, where Lic. Edelman, Curator of Birds, was able to confirm our suspicions of the taxonomical nature of the specimen (EDELMAN, in litt.). The bird in the Kuopio museum is thus a Pallas' Sea Eagle (*H. leucoryphus*); an immature individual, almost certainly about 12 months old (KARPPANEN, 1926 notes; EDELMAN, in litt.). It represents the first observation of this species in Finland. According to PETERSON *et al.* (1966) *H. leucoryphus* has earlier been found in Poland, Germany, and Norway. Its main area of distribution is Central Asia, east of the Caspian Sea, our specimen had thus come far north of its range. Edelman did not believe that the bird had escaped from a cage, although the tips of the primaries and rectrices are rather worn. He has observed that a strongly worn appearance of these feathers is typical of young sea-eagles just before the second plumage is formed. Usually the young birds, yet to settle in a territory of their own, wander widely, and thus most stragglers are immature individuals.

The authors thank Dr. Göran Bergman and Lic. Carl Edelman for their interest and help in identifying the bird. We also thank the newspaper, Savon Sanomat, for furnishing us with excellent photographs, necessary for the identification of the specimen.

**Selostus: Valkojuovamerikotka (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*) ensimmäisen kerran Suomessa.**

Kuopion museon lintukokoelmassa jo monta vuotta ollut nuori, urospuolinen merikotka on määritetty valkojuovamerikotkaksi. Lintu oli tarttunut kalanpyydyksiin Juovedellä 30.6.1926,

ja joutui Matti Karppasen, Kuopion museon silloisen preparaattorin, täytettäväksi. Toht. Hortling, jonka kiinnostusta lintuun herätti eräs Karppasen maalaama taulu siitä, julkaisi 1927 kirjoitelman, jossa hän antoi yksityiskoh- taisen kuvauksen kotkasta. Hortlingin mielestä nuori kotka edusti erästä merikotkan erikoista muunnosta, vaikka hän samalla huomauttikin monista rakenteen ja värityksen piirteistä, jot- ka selvästi erottavat tämän merikotkasta.

Kuopion merikotka on sirompi rakenteel- taan, esim. nokka on paljon hennompi kuin merikotkalla. Pyrstön sulat ovat melkein yhtä pitkät, joten pyrstön alaviiva on vain heikosti kaareva, kun se sen sijaan merikotkalla on kiilamainen. Höyhenpeite on seepian ruskea; pääläessä, niskassa, selässä, yläperässä, rinnassa ja vatsassa on höyhenillä kellertävän ruskeat kärjet. Kurkku on vaalean ruskean kellertävä. Siipien alapeitinhöyhenet, kainalohöyhenet ja käsisulat 5:stä 10:een ovat osittain tai koko- naan valkoiset. Jalat ovat sinisen harmaat.

Syyskuussa 1969 L. Pohjolainen kävi Kor- keasaaren eläintarhassa ja huomasi suurta yhtä- läisyyttä eläintarhan kahden vanhan valkojuova- merikotkan (Pallaksen merikotkan) ja Kuopion museon nuoren kotkan välillä. Toht. Berg- manin ja lis. Edelmanin avulla voitiin nuorta merikotkaa määrittää valkojuovamerikotkaksi. Edelmanin mielestä lintu luultavasti ei ole

karannut häkistä, vaikka sen käsi- ja pyrstö- sulat ovatkin kuluneet; tällainen kulutus on Edelmanin mukaan tavallinen nuorilla meri- kotkilla ennen ensimmäistä sulkasatoa.

Valkojuovamerikotkan esiintymisalue on Keski Aasiassa, Kaspian Meren itäpuolella. Lajia on aikaisemmin tavattu Euroopassa ainoastaan Puolassa, Saksassa ja Norjassa.

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