

**Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association Inc.**

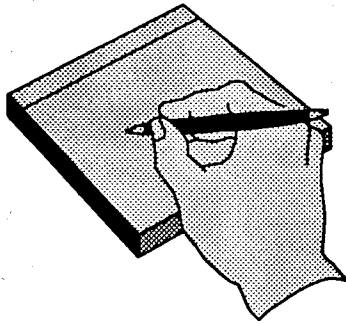
**" Wildlife Research "**

**"ALBATROSS"**

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**Editor**

**Lindsay E. Smith**

**P.O. BOX. 142**  
**UNANDERRA. N.S.W. 2526**

PH: 02 - 4271 6004 - Mobile: 0418-603 007  
SOSSA Fax: 02 - 42724 626

**E-MAIL ADDRESS IS:**  
**sossa@ozemail.com.au**

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**EDITORIAL**

Welcome to 1998 the international year of the Ocean. It is great to know that there are many people out there who have shown great spirit and interest in our studies here at SOSSA. In true international spirit we are again to welcome some of our French colleagues to H.Q. Roland & Julia Seitre are returning in July, this time to photograph the Albatrosses off Wollongong. They are to be followed by a French film crew, who intend to further document the movements of the Wandering Albatross as it forages over the Southern Ocean. Filming of the breeding and courtship rituals are to be filmed on the Croztes Islands French Territory in the South Indian Ocean. They will be working under the directions of Dr Henri Weimerskirch.

After the capture and release of a banded adult Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*) off Wollongong, Hugh Clifford of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Waikato, informed us of their studies into the biology and distribution of the Grey-faced Petrels (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*) at Mauao (Mt. Maungani and Motuotau Island NZ).

This was of great interest and further extended international co-operation in seabird research, as did the capture of a Tristan Albatross (*Diomedea dabbenena*) in Australian waters.

With co-operation we have achieved a great deal towards the understanding of the importance of the Five Islands Nature Reserve in the lives of our local seabirds.

In this the International Year of the Oceans it is disappointing to note the down turn in patronage of the organised boat trips, particularly off Wollongong. We would have thought, with the new taxonomy of albatrosses, there would be a scramble among birders to attend these trips. The New South Wales Albatross Study, relies on your support of the Sandra K, the only recognised albatross research vessel in NSW. Thanks largely to the generosity of Captain Carl Loves the NSWASG has been able to obtain a great deal of knowledge and understanding not only of albatrosses, but of many pelagic seabirds, mammals and fish which roam our oceans.

Thankfully things are faring better with the interest increasing in the Brisbane Seabird Group and the dedication and tenacity shown by Paul Walbridge & Tony Ashby is to be admired.

Their interest is rivalled only by that of the Portland Group under the charter of Mike Cater and crew.

P.S. Apologies for the typo on last boat trip report for Portland. (Albatross newsletter No. 17). It should have read 50 Black-browed Albatross, **NOT 50 Royal Albatross** Ed.

Once again we have an insert of a trip to Antarctica with Cruiseabout Tours. Those interested should have a look at the article on birdwatching in Antarctica. It certainly sounds like a very exciting adventure!

Cheers Ed.

### GREAT-WINGED PETREL STUDY

*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*

As part of our ongoing research into the distribution and origins of the seabirds occurring in our local waters, Captain Carl Loves and P.J. Milburn captured a Great-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma Macroptera gouldi*) on October 26th 1997. The bird was carrying a New Zealand band (E188020). The Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme advised that E188020 had been banded by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Waikato who were undertaking the Grey-faced Petrel Project on Mauao (Mt. Maungani and Motuotau Island NZ). We at SOSSA were unaware that this project was under way until this bird (E188020) was captured off Wollongong. Project leader Hugh Clifford was most pleased to hear of its capture and release alive. This was the project's first distant recovery. In reply he has kindly forwarded a copy of the Seventh Annual Report of the Project 1997 / 98. This is a most informative study into the breeding biology of the Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*).

It is doubtful that anyone understands the amount of effort that goes into gathering this data, other than those who have participated. The members of the group are to be congratulated on their efforts!

Ed.

Over recent years members the SOSSA research team have been developing methods to capture petrels at sea. Whilst developing these techniques we have captured and banded several Great-winged Petrels at sea aboard the Sandra K, in November 1995 (6) and April 1st 1996 (10).

The capture of E188020 has sparked our interest and enthusiasm, we shall endeavour to capture and band more Great-winged Petrels in the future.

(Depending on support or funding). It is hoped that by working together, we will learn a great deal

more of their movements and distribution. We will most certainly be looking for more of the birds from Mauao.

It was interesting to note the breeding adults ashore during April and again in December. We captured and banded adults in April, October, November & December. This may indicate foraging areas for breeding birds. Where else do they Go? Ed.

### MARINE HABITAT REPORT

Tony Ashby

In the previous issue of the Albatross, I discussed the various oceanographic and climatic parameters that effect the position of birds at sea. It is now interesting to contemplate whether any of the movements of seabirds can be predicted. I did suggest that in a El Nino (SOI-) phase the abatement of the South East trades and the build up of warm water in the central pacific causes atmospheric circulation in the tropical pacific to flow from the centre. The associated westerly winds will tend to manoeuvre trans-equatorial migratory birds to the eastern edge of their flight path. Conversely in a La Nina (SOI+) phase when there is a tendency for easterly winds, trans-equatorial migratory birds could be expected to fly down the western edge of their flight path. If in fact there is a relationship between the SOI and the position of birds at sea, then it is interesting to plot the relationship between the preceding three monthly average of the SOI prior to their appearance, against longitude which is a measure of the east west location of the migrating birds.

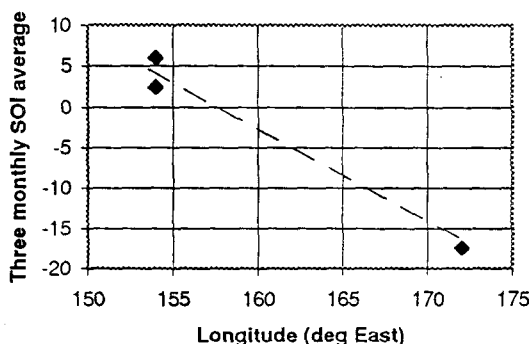


Fig.1 Relationship between SOI and longitude

Fig.1 above is based on three sets of records that we believe represent passing migratory birds. Firstly the 1996 record was that made by the Brisbane (Paul Walbridge) and Sydney (Tony Palliser) seabird groups, then the 1994 occurrence reported by Chris Jowett which was for a regular

stream of birds observed between the top of the North Island of New Zealand and the Wanganella Bank, which is located some 360 kilometres south of Norfolk Island from late October to early November. It is assumed to be part of the southern migration for 1994. In 1988 numerous sightings were made along the east coast of Australia (HANZAB Vol 1. 1990) and this was again presumed to be the result of a southward migration during October and November of that year. As the graph shows there is an encouraging trend of the data with easterly flight paths for negative SOI, but with such a small number of records it would be premature to suggest any definite relationship based on this information. I have drawn a line between the points and hope that one day the data might become available to confirm or discount this line.

In 200 years time some seabirds will note that it is late October and the Mottled Petrels should (hopefully) be passing through. So the SOI is looked up and the latitude assessed, then on to the stable platform of a 200Km/h hovercraft (lucky buggers as our editor would say), and out to the location to watch these lovely frosty grey petrels glide by, a sight that a few of us have had the privilege to watch.

### SHORE LINES

With the fledging of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters along the South East coast of New South Wales we are getting some very unusual recoveries! Up to 5 rescued by Wildlife Carers at Bulahdelah, Northern NSW, another rescued at Bowral NSW May 3rd. 1998. Both of these sites are well inland! There have also been many rescues along the coast at more traditional sites. The number of Little Penguin recoveries locally is as it was last season with little mortality. Long distance recoveries of Little Penguins banded at the Five Islands have been widely dispersed.

Recent recoveries of birds banded at the Five Islands, 190-87673 was an adult male 3+ years and was captured and released at O'Hara Head 130 Kilometres south.

190-99092, found dying on beach at North Entrance NSW. This fledgling had moved a distance of 138 Kilometres in only 20 days.

### PENGUIN "SEX" SCANDAL

London - The shocking truth about Antarctic penguins secret life of "vice" was exposed in the

British press, in reports detailing how female birds run a sophisticated prostitution racket. Scientists on Ross Island, 1287 km from the South Pole, told the journal Auk, quoted by the Daily Telegraph, how they had observed how male penguins paying for sex with stones. The newspaper said that stones, which are needed for nest platforms to keep eggs out of the icy waters can become very scarce and difficult to extract from the frozen mud.

Some penguins will steal stones off one another risking attack from their owners. Fiona Hunter and Lloyd Davis of Cambridge University, have seen female penguins lure males for sex in exchange for the stones. "Females have figured out that one way to steal the stones without attack is to swap copulations for them". One bird had amassed 62 pebbles this way, they said.

### NSWASG.

#### "MOLLIES" & "ODD JOBS"

The albatross season has started. On recent field trips the odd Black-browed and Yellow-nosed albatross have been observed off Wollongong. Captain Carl Loves and P.J. Milburn report capturing an adult Campbell Island albatross (*Thalassarche impavida*) off Wollongong on May 10th 1998.

A Wanderer sighted off Wollongong May 10th Cpt. Carl Loves Sandra K.

Mike Carter reports good numbers of Black-browed (70) and Yellow-nosed albatrosses (80) off Portland in February 1998.

May 23rd Carl reports numbers of Yellow-nosed and BBA off Bellambi.

#### Recent albatross recoveries (Controls)

R-52364 *Diomedea e. antipodensis*, Banded as a chick by M.J. Imber Antipodes Island NZ December 1995. Caught and released off Wollongong. SOSSA. August 1997.

R-47025 *Diomedea e. gibsoni* Banded by Graeme Elliott and Kath Walker on Adams Island NZ February 1996. Caught and released off Bellambi July 1996 NSWASG.

R-42625 *Diomedea e. gibsoni* Banded by Graeme Elliott and Kath Walker on Adams Island NZ. February 1991. Caught and released off Bellambi NSW. August 1996. NSWASG.

## Arthur (Arfie) Mothersdill 1915 - 1998

We generally consider that 1956 was the year in which saga of the (human association) with the Bellambi Wandering Albatrosses started. In fact it really started long beforehand. Arthur (Arfie) Mothersdill was born in 1915 and early in life was acquainted by his father with the ways of ocean fishing.

In the 1920's and 1930's power boats were expensive and hard to come by so Arfie used to go several miles to sea by canoe to fish. As a result of this experience Arfie and his old man decided that it was time to buy a power boat, which they did, a 14 foot (4.27m) Kauri Pine clinker hull with a 4HP single cylinder 4-stroke water cooled engine, 'state of the art' pre WW2. Subsequently christened 'Mabel', this little craft and Arfie were there, fit, able and ready to go when the time came to catch Albatrosses. Arfie kept Mabel in a boat shed on the beach at Bellambi Point. Thus Bellambi, a relatively minor village, achieved the distinction of the Wanderer association, above Wollongong and more significant locations. There were plenty of Wanderers. Arfie's father recalled their presence in 1912, and this is the only evidence that we have that Wanderers were in numbers at Bellambi before the birth of the sewer outfall at Malabar (in 1916).

When the birdo's came onto the scene; Doug Gibson, Alan Sefton and Dave Walsh (all of whom have passed on), all had watched the Wanderers, often just a few metres off the shore and distributed along 30km of coastline and wondered from whence they came. It was only a matter of time that they and Arfie decided to try their hand at trapping and banding. The results of this experiment are now well documented history.

Birdo's tend to acknowledge the efforts of other birdo's and the contributions (often significant) of colleagues, such as Arfie, often fade from sight (in the history of the world according to birdo's) as time progresses. Without Arfie, his sense of humour, seamanship, knowledge and participation, it is likely that the NSW Albatross Study would never have eventuated.

**Sadly Arthur past away  
on April 9th 1998 at the age of 83  
The NSWASG has lost another of its pioneers.**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lindsay,

The attached notes could be possibly suitable for the letter to the editor column. Harry Battam mentioned that one of the aims of the cuttlefish bone beach survey was to get some idea of the mass of food that they provide for seabirds.

There appears to be maximum numbers beach cast in ENSO years (El Nino Southern Oscillation) which contrasts with the maximum numbers of Short-tailed Shearwater carcasses beach-washed. The percentage of Shearwater sized beak strikes on the cuttlefish bones at this time are also at a maximum at this period.

When I read Gibson *et al* report on the Shearwater wreck NSW 1954, it vividly described what I observed at Ocean Grove. The live birds that do not respond to treatment appear to be alert, with good bloom and colour when collected off the beach. Chris Gray

### WRECKS OF SHORT-TAILED - SHEARWATER (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) AND THE EL NINO SOUTHERN OSCILLATION.

Chris Gray

Wrecks of Short-tailed shearwaters appear to occur in the years of El Nino ENSO events. Schreiber and Schreiber (1984) in a study of the decline of seabirds in the Central Pacific during 1982-83 ENSO event suggested that; "field biologists must recognise that global atmospheric circulation patterns that undergo irregular anomalies may effect their study regions and species far from marine ecosystems especially the years 1940-41, 1954, 1957-58, 1963-68, 1969, 1972-73, 1976 and 1982-83 may be the reason for unexplained anomalies in their data".

Data acquired from monitoring beach-cast seabird carcasses as part of the Royal Australasian Ornithologist Union beach patrol scheme on a beach site Ocean Grove Victoria, 38°01' 26" S, 144°20' E, suggests that most of the Short-tailed Shearwater carcasses are beach-cast during weeks 43 and 44 of each year (Gray 1996). Wrecks occurred at the Ocean Grove site in 1994 and 1997 which corresponds to the Southern Oscillation negative index years 1993-94, 1997-98. The history of Short-tailed Shearwater wrecks (Serventy *et al* 1971) on the Australian coastline since 1851 appear to follow the ENSO years suggested by Schreiber and Schreiber (*loc cit*) and which are listed in Table 1.

A study by the CSIRO indicated most of the birds were first year non-breeding birds and the cause of death was starvation (Serventy *et al* 1971). In nature the time of breeding apparently has evolved for each species so that the young are produced at the most productive time in the marine ecosystem (Croxall and Prince 1980). A long term weather pattern study 1945 -1985 (40 years) in Tasmania by Harris *et al* (1988) indicated that there was a correlation between fisheries productivity and ENSO year weather patterns. This study indicated that food availability was at a maximum during the Short-tailed Shearwater breeding period. Results of the SOSSA cuttlefish bone beach survey at the Ocean Grove site suggest that the Giant Cuttlefish (*Sepia apama*) and 4 other cuttlefish species, lay eggs and die during this period creating a mass of food for seabirds in Bass Strait waters. During the summer periods 1994-95 and 1997-98 there were maximum numbers of cuttlefish bones beach-cast, correlating with maximum numbers of Short-tailed Shearwater carcasses beach-cast. The large wreck described by Gibson and Sefton (1955) on a NSW coastal beach, and included live birds (which later died), was very similar to that observed at Ocean Grove during weeks 43 and 49 in 1994 and weeks 44, 45, 46, 50 and 51 in 1997, Gray (1997).

**Table 1.** Years of wrecks of Short-tailed Shearwaters and the El Nino Southern Oscillation

ENSO years	wreck years
	1851§
1880 (severe drought year) †	1880§
	1883§
1895(severe drought year) †	1895§
	1934§
	1935§
	1938§
1940-41**	1940§
	1941§
	1942§
1954**	1954§
1957-58**	1957§
	1959§
	1962§
1963-65**	
1969**	
1972**	
1973**	
1976**	
1982**	
1983**	
1992†	
1993†	
1994†	1994 (Ocean Grove)
1997†	1997(Ocean Grove)

\*\* Schreiber and Schreiber (1984)

§ Serventy *et al* 1971

† Negative Southern Oscillation Index (Australian Department of the Environment, Bureau of Meteorology)

ENSO events are known to affect seabirds along the western American coastline (REF????). During the 1982-83 ENSO event, there was a decline in the food availability in the marine ecosystem (Screiber and Schreiber *loc cit*) and August was possibly a critical time for Short-tailed Shearwater feeding in these waters to attain the body condition necessary for the long ocean flight to Southern Ocean breeding sites.

Serventy *et al* (1971) suggest that the wrecks occurred in years when krill failed to appear in local waters, creating low food availability for the birds after the long migration flight. The larger Short-tailed Shearwater wrecks in Australian coastal waters may be a result of a decline in sardine production in western American coastal waters in years of ENSO events.

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### \*\* SIGHTINGS OF SPECIAL INTEREST \*\*

#### Dunsborough WA

Ross Payton , Reports the sighting of Corey's Shearwater (*Calonectris Diomedea*) (2 ) April 19th 1998. Later (4) similar birds observed by his wife Ann.

#### Bateman's Bay

Local Fisherman Bruce Cantele reports sighting of a pod of approx 12 Orca along the continental shelf off Bateman's Bay on April 25th 1998. At least one

large adult male in the group, others thought to be females and calves.

**Capt. Carl Loves** and P.J. Milburn report that on May 10th whilst traversing the 70 fathom approximately 9 -10 nautical miles off Wollongong, they were surprised to observe flocks of Silver Gulls (200-300) flying east out to sea beyond sight.

### **Eden Boat trip**

May 31st 1998, Geoff Duggan reports "Diving Petrels" (*Pelecaniodies urinatrix*) 11 birds on the water swimming about the boat in very calm conditions. Fairy Prions were also quite common.

### **North Pacific - Jack Finney** reports,

April 5th 1998 Black-footed Albatrosses at 46° 42'N 124° 51' w. They were sitting on the water all in a group, (38-40) individuals. As the tug approached they flew up, only to land again behind as we passed. The wind was s.w. 10 knots and a long 3-4 metre swell was running.

I have never seen so many grouped together before in all my trips up and down the coast including Alaska. They did not appear to be feeding.

Also observed a pod of Orca Killer Whales in the Straits of Juan defuca in late February and a School ? Pod? of about 70 Bairds Dolphins just North of Greys Pt 49° 16' N 123°16' W, two Laysan Alby's off Washington Coast.

## **RESCUE TIPS**

### **Little Penguin. (*Eudyptula minor*)**

To many people a Penguin is an animal of the ice and snow ! (most frequently seen in the company of a Polar Bear, in comic strips in the local dailies).

To many people a Little Penguin is a baby Penguin that is yet to grow up!.

If transporting Little Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) do not place them on ice or in camp fridges!. They "WILL DIE!! from hypothermia.

### **Little Penguins are a temperate water species they do not like the cold.**

Place them in cardboard boxes large/long enough to house them comfortably. Line one end with dry bedding, put some air holes in the box and place it somewhere **quiet**, out of the sun and out of reach of children and pets!.

Contact local wildlife rescue carer's or zoo for further advice.

## **FIVE ISLANDS REPORT**

Just when things come together, there's a Great Crash! After all of the excitement of the NEW boat and trailer. To have it taken by the tide and smashed, almost beyond repair. This was a bitter blow!.

We have all worked tirelessly to complete the Consett Davis Hut, enabling us to collect a great deal of further data on the biology of the Five Islands Nature Reserve with some degree of comfort.

In the past month a total of 23 people have visited the islands without a permit to fish. All have been spoken to by NSW Water Police and NSW P&WS officers.

Threats to burn the Consett Davis Hut down and a hole knocked into the water tank ! Soon followed.

These incidences have been reported to the authorities, The NSW Royal Volunteer Coast Guard will continue to monitor the Islands diligently.

The breeding season for most species nesting on the Five Is has come to an end. Michael Jarman reports that the Wedge-tailed Shearwater burrows checked on the evening of May 9th 1998 were all empty.

### **Consett Davis Research Hut.**

The New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service has assisted in repairing the deck and the planting of suitable endemic plants as screens to the rear of the Hut.

### **Many thanks**

**to all who have assisted in this project to date.**

This has been a very productive season with a great deal of data being collected and many new birds banded.

This data along with past records will provide an insight into the local breeding success / and dispersal of birds, post breeding movements, moult, and energetics.

This is now the time to carry out maintenance and revegetation studies on the Islands, before the Silver Gulls and Little Penguins return to breed in late July early August.

SOSSA, in conjunction with (NSW P&WS) and the Coomaditchy Aboriginal Union is to conduct vegetation studies and regeneration of what is known from earlier works.

SOSSA is to monitor the effect of revegetation trials on seabird breeding activities, with additional work being conducted into the biology which is the Five Islands Nature Reserve.

These works are to be ongoing with all on site revegetation work for the season to be ceased for the year by late July.

## **DISASTER**

### **SOSSA BOAT SMASHED ON ISLANDS**

During a recent field trip to Big No. 1 to gather data on the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and in an effort to band as many fledglings before they left the island. For who knows where?.

The SOSSA boat, aptly named (Little Penguin) was washed on to rocks at high tide and badly damaged by the three metre swells. As the tide receded Damien Stanioch, and Mark Mayhew managed to retrieve her and haul her up to safety. Further inspection would be made in the morning it was 01.30 Hrs before heading back to the shelter of the Consett Davis Hut, very wet and very tired.

Morning bought with it the stark realisation of what had occurred during the previous evening.

Our Little Penguin (boat) was a mess, the 15 Horsepower Johnson motor had torn the mounting bracket in half, snapped like a carrot. The motor had been buried in the sand which had filled every orifice.

The once straight gunwhales were twisted and bent almost beyond belief, the sides were badly bent and buckled and every seat bracket and rib had been smashed or twisted!, but it had no holes and would still FLOAT!!.

Thankfully we were able to salvage it and have it towed back to the safety of the boat ramp by the NSW Water Police, under the watchful eye of the Royal Volunteer Coast Guard at Hill 60.

Our sincere thanks go all who assisted in the Rescue / Salvage operation.

Unfortunately the boat has had to undergo major repairs. By all accounts it should have been scrapped!. If it had been insured, the insurance company would not have hesitated to write it off.

Thanks largely to the efforts of John & Kevin Bode of Bode Bros Marine Wollongong, for securing parts for the Johnson Motor and the 3.8 meter "Brooker Albatross" (Boat). Not to mention a great deal of effort panel beating, stripping and reassembly of the motor by the Ed.

Many thanks for the specialised welding! by Cool-Col (Aka Colin Gray), Tug Boat deck hand & (builder of many things).

Legend has it that the Phoenix came out of the ashes. Fact has it, that thanks to the efforts of

many, we still have a boat and can continue our research!!

Unfortunately this incident occurred two weeks before the end of the breeding season. This has meant that we were unable to gain data on the fledging dates and weights of the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters from the study burrows this season.

When you work on Islands you learn patience. There's always next season!

## **DAMIEN STANIOCH**

### **Taxidermist Extraordinaire**

### **On A Mission - Flying High**

Never fear, Damien to the rescue. He doesn't mind if people talk about him and will look the other way if they point at him. He was really taken by surprise when a Police Officer turned on the fairy lights and pulled him over, Damien was bewildered as to why the officer had pulled him over, he had not done anything wrong!!!.

The officer smiled and asked "would you like an escort Sir," Damien's reply was, "I don't know what you mean??" "Sir with that bird on your roof and with having to travel at such a slow speed we felt you may need an escort so that your vehicle doesn't become airborne". Damien replied, "you have got to be joking, I do this sort of thing all the time, so it's OK Officer I can handle it"!!!. The officer left shaking his head shrugged his shoulders and threw his hands in the air.

What happened was, we had asked Damien to collect a stuffed Wandering Albatross which had been given to SOSSA for our talks and displays, however this was no ordinary Albatross, this was indeed an old bird which had been taxidermed many years ago and had a long term stay at the Australian Museum in Sydney.

Can you visualise the scene. Damien a thin man with long hair and a long goatee beard, driving along in a silver Toyota Land Cruiser, affectionately known as "Stinky", with a stuffed albatross tied to the roof, not just any albatross, but a Wandering Albatross mounted with its wings fully extended, a little over 3 metres!. Perhaps you and I can understand the Police Officers interest. Damien certainly couldn't understand what all the fuss was about.

The good news is, that yes, it was a slow trip from Sydney to Wollongong that day, and yes Damien and the Albatross arrived in one piece without taking off.



Damien did comment that he had a lot of fingers pointing and many strange looks, though he was unsure if the strange looks were directed at him or the Albatross on the roof!. Oh well, doesn't matter we all had a good laugh!!!!.

## REPORT ON BIRD WATCHING IN ANTARCTICA

By Grahame Clark, Tour Member  
Cruiseabout Antarctic Cruise Tour Group  
January 1998

The difficulty I have in describing the birds observed on the trip, is knowing where and how to start. To avoid ending up with an endless list of birds seen.

As the main objective of the trip was to go to Antarctica, perhaps it is best to start with Ushuaia, the port of embarkation. Whilst waiting on the pier to board the Marco Polo, it was surprising to see a Southern Giant Petrel cruising past the stern of the ship and then to see a Black-browed albatross floating on the water 50 metres astern as another glided overhead. Albatrosses behaving like gulls in the harbour was not something I had thought I'd see. A highlight of the port was the rubbish tip, complete with four different species of caracaras

(Crested, Chimango, White throated and Striated) as well as the expected three species of gulls (Dolphin, Brown-hooded and Kelp). Other highlights included the Flightless and Flying Steamer Ducks, four species of Geese (Kelp, Upland, Ashy-headed and Ruddy-headed), a Great Grebe's nest and a Sheathbill at a colony of Imperial and Rock Cormorants. One thing that will stay in my mind was a Magellanic Diving-Petrel going like a "Bat out of Hell" past our ship. Totally unexpected and all the more enjoyable for it.

The trip across Drake's Passage provided excellent birdwatching, indeed it was an example of how all birdwatching should be. Lounging in a steamer chair at the stern of the ship, watching the birds whilst enjoying excellent food and later in the evening hot mulled wine to keep any chill from the bones. The ship had an excellent library with all the right seabird guides. The birds observed were much as expected, including an assortment of albatrosses (Black-browed, Light-mantled, Sooty, Grey-headed and a good number of Wanderers) plus various petrels and storm-petrels.

The Antarctic Peninsular was everything expected and more. The bird life was plentiful and varied. It was very interesting to wake up each morning, go up on deck to find that overnight the species composition had changed. Although all species

were there on most days, each particular day one species was in ascendancy out numbering the others. One day the common species was the Cape Petrel (Pintado) the next the Southern Fulmar, then porpoising Chinstrap Penguins, another day pure white Snow Petrels against blue icebergs.

Television and books had not prepared me for the smell of the penguin colonies, which is something that will stay with me for a while, suffice to say it carried for several miles across the water. The Gentoo colonies seemed to be the worst. It was also interesting to see the Sheathbills behaving around the colonies like feral pigeons around the town centre.

One thing that I enjoyed about the trip was the ability to compare the "Jizz" of the three large Skuas in the space of two days. Of the three species, I found the Chilean Skua the easiest to pick from the Great and the South Polar Skuas because it had more of a jaeger look about it. Despite the trip being mainly to Antarctica, I must not forget the land birds. At one stage near El Calafate we were lucky enough to see five Condors rising from a dead Guanaco at the side of the road, like Wedge-tailed Eagles off a Kangaroo in central Australia. Later a condor flew around a mountain and disappeared when the binoculars were put on it. It had landed on a cliff ledge next to a brown plumaged bird presumably at a nest site. After a couple of minutes the adult flew off again. Also at El Calafate we observed a Cinereous Harrier feeding a young bird only 3 metres from us near a lake where birds appear much tamer than they would be in a similar situation in Australia. The Rheas near the road were as nervous as Emus here in Australia. Finally to finish where it really all began at Buenos Aires.

There was an ecological reserve only 10 minutes walk from the hotel. Here in only two hours we identified 55 new species using only a local bird book. It brought back to me how much of a challenge it is to be left to your own devices. I am sure that with a guide we would have seen more, though it would not have been "all our own work". Two memories of the reserve were the clownish looking Guyra Cuckoo and the Homero (or Oven bird), nest built by a bird the size of a Magpie-lark. The nest contained four times the amount of mud used by the Magpie-lark and is totally covered over with a doorway in the side.

Cruiseabout is organising another group cruise on the Marco Polo for January 1999. For further information call 029 4408727, Fax 029 4889717

E mail: tmurra@ibm.net

### **"BIRDING BOAT TRIPS"**

#### **Wollongong or Sydney Boat Trips**

Contact

**TONY PALLISER** on

palliser@zip.com.au

PH: 02-9427 7563-H.

PH: 02-9900 1678-W.

#### **Western Australia Pelagic Trips**

Contact

**FRANK O'CONNOR**

8 C Hardy Road, Nedlands. W.A. 6009

PH: 08-9386 5694-H.

PH: 08-9167 1445-W.

Email: o'connor@argylediamonds.com.au

**Brisbane Trip Bookings:** Ph: 073- 3918 839

**PAUL WALBRIDGE.** (SOSSA) 135 Lytton Road  
East Brisbane QLD 4169 Fax: 073- 3918 839

**Portland Trip Bookings: MIKE CARTER.**

(SOSSA) 30 Canadian Bay Road Mt. Eliza VIC  
3930 Ph: 03- 9787 7136

**CAPTAIN CARL LOVES** (SOSSA) (Sandra K)

Ph: -61-18-423 555-International

Email: Bookings for Sandra K:

fishing@wollongong.starway.net.au

### **NEXT SOSSA MEETING**

No meeting for June, the next will be

#### **SOSSA's AGM**

**Saturday 1 st AUGUST 1998,**

held at HQ. 7.30 pm. 10 Jenkins Street -  
Unanderra. NSW. We only supply the Coffee, Tea  
and Biscuits !!!



## **MEMBERS IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND The Annual General Meeting**

### **PLEASE SIGN & RETURN YOUR PROXY VOTE FORM**

#### **ALSO YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED**

98 to 99 Memberships are due

### **MEMBERSHIP FORMS**

**WHITE SHEET WITH RED WRITING**

#### **NEXT NEWSLETTER**

**SEPTEMBER 1998**

(providing there are no major hold ups)

#### **DONATIONS \$2.00 and OVER**

**ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE.**

## BOAT TRIP DATA SHEET - DSOSSA-BTDS-V1.7-04021997

SOSSA - (02) 4271 6004 - Fax: (02) 4272 4626. PO. Box 142 UNANDERRA NSW 2526

E-mail address: [ssossa@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ssossa@ozemail.com.au)

Seabird Records

1998

WOLLONGONG BRISBANE PORTLAND SYDNEY BUSSELTON PERTH TASMANIA

Species	month	Brisbane		Wollongong			Portland		Sydney		Busselton	
		Apr	May				Mar	Apr	May	March	Apr	May
Little Penguin, <i>Eudyptula minor</i>							44	7				
Common Diving Petrel, <i>Pelecyanoides urinatrix</i>							2				7	1
Southern Giant-Petrel, <i>Macronectes giganteus</i>									Isp?			
Northern Giant-Petrel, <i>Macronectes halli</i>												
Cape Petrel, <i>Daption capense</i>							6	70	16	80+	2	
Great-winged Petrel, <i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>											9	10
White-headed Petrel, <i>Pterodroma lessonii</i>										2		
Providence Petrel, <i>Pterodroma solandri</i>	3	36										
Tahiti Petrel, <i>Pseudo bulweria rostrata</i>	23									1		
White-necked Petrel, <i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>										1		
Gould's Petrel, <i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>										1		
White-chinned Petrel, <i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>							1					
Grey Petrel, <i>Procellaria cinerea</i>											12	1
Cory's Shearwater, <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>											2	
Wedge-tailed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus pacificus</i>										15		
Flesh-footed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	5						80	90		50	29	
Sooty Shearwater, <i>Puffinus griseus</i>	1						3	2	1			
Short-tailed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>							40	40	80	10		
Fluttering Shearwater, <i>Puffinus gavia</i>	1	3					11	16	10	2		
Hutton's Shearwater, <i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	3						12					
Fluttering/Hutton's							20		50	3		
Antarctic Prion, <i>Pachyptila desolata</i>								Isp?	3			
Slender-billed Prion, <i>Pachyptila belcheri</i>									1			
Fairy Prion, <i>Pachyptila turtur</i>									4			
Wandering Albatross, <i>Diomedea exulans</i>							3	4	7			
Royal Albatross, <i>Diomedea epomophora</i>							1					
Black-browed Albatross, <i>Diomedea melanophrys</i>							80	500	175			
Shy Albatross, <i>Diomedea cauta</i>							20	180	110			
Yellow-nosed Albatross, <i>Diomedea chlororhynchus</i>							40	110	6		1	3
Buller's Albatross, <i>Diomedea bulleri</i>							11	2				
Salvins Albatross, <i>Diomedea c. salvini</i>								4				
<i>Fregata sps</i>		1										

Species	month	Apr	May	Mar	Apr	May	Mar	Apr	May
Wilson's Storm-Petrel, <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>		3	1		14	20	4		
Grey-backed Storm-Petrel, <i>Neris garrodia</i>						3			
White-faced Storm-Petrel, <i>Pelagodroma marina</i>					11	1	1	1	
Australasian Gannet, <i>Morus serrator</i>	1	6		8000	8000	8000	3	92	48
White-tailed Tropicbird, <i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	1						1sp?		
Red-tailed Tropicbird <i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>									
Great Skua, <i>Catharacta skua</i>						2		17	1
South Polar Skua, <i>Catharacta macconnicki</i>						1			
Arctic Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>				22	8		3	6	
Pomarine Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>		1		2			10		
Silver Gull, <i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	10	250		11	24	30	50+	✓	✓
Pacific Gull, <i>Larus pacificus</i>				3	1	2			
White-fronted Tern, <i>Sterna striata</i>						2			
Bridled Tern, <i>Sterna anaethetus</i>									
Crested Tern, <i>Sterna bergii</i>	80	182		23	17	28	40	✓	✓
Caspian Tern, <i>Sterna caspia</i>		1							
Little Tern, <i>Sterna albigrons</i>								7	
Black-faced Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax fuscescens</i>				80	30	20			
Pied Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	1	10						✓	✓
Little black Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>		5							
Great Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>							2		
Australian Pelican, <i>Pelicanus conspicillatus</i>							5		
Lesser Frigatebird, <i>Fregata ariel</i>		1							

# **Note: Errors in last Newsletter No. 17 Boat Trip Report.**

Please correct data sheets Ed

- 1)...Portland Nov 1997. 50 Royal Albatross should read 50 Black-browed Albatrosses.
- 2). Heading should be Seabird records 1997 should read 1997/98.

**Illawarra Boat Charter.** P.O. Box. 148 Fairy Meadow NSW 2519

**Captain.** Carl Loves (SOSSA) (Sandra K)

Email: Bookings for Sandra K:

Email: Bookings for Wollongong or Sydney: Tony Palliser (SOSSA)

**Pelagic Reports On Home Page Website Address:**

**Brisbane Trip Bookings:**

Paul Walbridge. (SOSSA) 135 Lytton Road East Brisbane QLD 4169

**Portland Trip Bookings:**

Mike Carter. (SOSSA) 30 Canadian Bay Road Mt. Eliza VIC 3930

**Busseilton Information:**

Ross Payton.(SOSSA) 20 Bayview Crescent Dunsborough.W.A. 6281

**Perth Information:**

Frank O'Connor.(SOSSA) 8c Hardy Road, Nedlands. W.A. 6009

Email: Bookings for Perth:

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Ph: -018-423 555

Ph: -61-18-423 555-International (outside Australia)

fishing@wollongong.starway.net.au

palliser@zip.com.au

http://www.zip.com.au/~palliser

Ph: 073- 3918 839

Fax: 073- 3918 839

Ph: 03- 9787 7136

Ph: 097- 553 263

Ph: 08-9386 5694-H. Ph: 08-9167 1445-W.

o'connor@argylediamonds.com.au

# Don't miss the Boat!

10 William Street,  
P.O. Box 349,  
Turramurra,  
2074 Australia  
Tel: 61-2-9440 8727  
Fax: 61-2-9488 9717  
EMAIL: tmurra@ibm.net

## MARCO POLO

### OUR SECOND ANTARCTIC PENINSULA/SOUTH AMERICA CRUISE TOUR

13 January 1999

Our group cruise tour to Antarctica in 1998 was such an unqualified success we are conducting it again!! The Marco Polo Antarctica Cruises are almost booked out for the 1998/99 season so you need to move fast.

*Marco Polo* carries only half the normal number of Passengers (400-500 instead of 800-900) because of environmental constraints. We can confirm that Marco Polo is an excellent 4-5 star cruise liner with superb staff, food and entertainment, as well as expert lecturers on the region.

Total costs from \$8378pp for the 18 day cruise-tour including international airfares from Australia to Argentina, three nights in Buenos Aires with sightseeing, 2 nights Iguassu Falls, eight nights on board the MARCO POLO, one night in Ushuaia and one night in El Calafate to see the Perito Moreno Glacier.

(We had concern before our recent tour that the Moreno Glacier may have been overrated. As it turned out it was agreed by all 29 of us on this year's tour as being one of the highlights).

To secure a cabin, a deposit of \$700.00 per person is required so call us **NOW** for a brochure.



#### CRUISEABOUT

The new way to travel

Phone: 02 9440 8727

Fax: 02 9488 9717

Email: tmurra@ibm.net