

Short notes

SOFT-PLUMAGED PETRELS *PTERODROMA MOLLIS* AND ATLANTIC PETREL *PTERODROMA INCERTA* AT 60°S IN THE DRAKE PASSAGE *DONSSTORMVOGELS PTERODROMA MOLLIS EN ATLANTISCHE STORMVOGELS P. INCERTA IN DE DRAKE PASSAGE OP 60° ZUIDERBREEDTE*

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Dozens of Soft-plumaged Petrels Pterodroma mollis and a single Atlantic Petrel P. incerta were observed in Drake Passage, far south of their normal range in the South Atlantic. It is suggested that these birds were immatures or non-breeding adults.

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On 9 February 2000, we observed dozens of Soft-plumaged Petrels *Pterodroma mollis* and a single Atlantic Petrel *P. incerta* in the Drake Passage between South America and the Antarctic Peninsula. This is far south of their known range, which for both species in the South Atlantic is given at just south of the Falkland Islands, or about 1000 km to further to the north (Harrison 1983; del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). The sightings were made from MS *Grigoriy Mikheev* on cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula.

The first Soft-plumaged Petrel was observed at approximately 58°49'S, 59°19'W, when we began the observations in the early morning, and the last was seen at 60°37'S, 56°46'W in the late afternoon. The greatest abundance occurred between 59°38'S, 58°38'W and 60°01'S, 57°54'W, during which period we observed multiple small groups of seven to twelve individuals. We estimate a total number of between 50 and 80 individuals, dependent on the number of re-sightings. The single Atlantic Petrel was observed at 60°37'S, 56°46'W, flying with a Soft-plumaged Petrel.

All Soft-plumaged Petrels showed uniform dark upperparts, dark patterned underwings, pale bellies and the characteristic head and neck patterns. The

Atlantic Petrel was a bit larger than the Sort-plumaged Petrel it accompanied and was all dark, except for its diagnostic white belly. Most, or perhaps all, of the Soft-plumaged Petrels showed active moult of primaries and rectrices, with at least one or two feathers missing on each individual. This suggests, in combination with the fact that it was within the normal austral breeding season, that the birds were non-breeding adults or immatures.

The only other records of Soft-plumaged Petrels in the Drake Passage that we know of, were made by Brown *et al.* (1975) who saw six individuals at 59°32'S, 58°03'W on 18 February 1970 and Kaj Kampp (*in litt.*) who saw 14 individuals south to 60°30' on 19 March 1998, both well south of the Antarctic Convergence. None were seen by us, nor by Kampp, during seven previous passages in December and January 1992-1999. Atlantic Petrels may be more frequent in Drake Passage, given reported sightings by Brown *et al.* (1975) and Enticott (1991), although most records were north of 49°S.

Op 9 februari 2000 werden op een cruise naar het Antarctisch Schiereiland naar schatting 50-80 Donsstormvogels Pterodroma mollis waargenomen en een enkele Atlantische Stormvogel P. incerta, op ongeveer 60°Z in de Drake Passage. Voor zover bekend komen beide soorten normaal niet veel verder dan juist ten zuiden van de Falkland Eilanden voor, ongeveer 1000 km noordelijk van de hier beschreven plaats van waarnemen. De actieve vleugelrui en het feit dat de waarneming midden in de Australe zomer plaatsvond maakt het aannemelijk dat het hier om niet-broedende adulten of om onvolwassen dieren is gegaan.

Brown R.G.B., F. Cooke, P.K. Kinnear & E.L. Mills 1975. Summer seabird distributions in Drake Passage, the Chilean Fjords and off southern South America. *Ibis* 117: 339-356.

Enticott J.W. 1991. Distribution of the Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta* at sea. *Marine Ornithology* 19: 49-60.

Harrison P. 1983. Seabirds: an identification guide. Croom Helm, Beckenham.

del Hoyo J., A. Elliott & J. Sargatal 1992. Handbook of the birds of the world, 1. Lynx edition, Barcelona.