

RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS AT THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS,
DECEMBER 1983 — MAY 1987

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INTRODUCTION

Previous papers have covered records of non-breeding seabirds at the sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands up to November 1983 (Williams & Burger 1978, Berruti 1981, Berruti et al. 1981, Sinclair 1981, Cooper 1984). Nonmarine vagrants have been covered up to May 1983 (Burger et al. 1980, Berruti & Schramm 1981, Newton et al. 1983). This paper updates these records to May 1987, and also includes unusual records of breeding species. A summary is provided of all records of non-breeding species at the Prince Edward Islands. (Tables 1 and 2).

Fifteen species were identified during this period with a further three records unidentified to species. Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, Lesser Blackbacked Gull *Larus fuscus*, Redbacked Shrike *Lanius collurio* and Mountain Chat *Oenanthe monticola* were all recorded for the first time at the Prince Edward Islands. Nearly all records refer to Marion Island (46 52S, 37 51E) since ornithologists were present on nearby Prince Edward Island (46 38S, 38 00E) for only 23 days during this period. Records in this paper were made by the author unless stated otherwise.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

King Penguin

Aptenodytes patagonicus

A single melanistic adult was present at the King Penguin colony at Kildalkey Bay on 8 August 1986. The breast and underflippers were completely black while the yellow areas were black with a tinge of yellow. The rest of the bird was as a normal adult. A second unusually coloured adult King Penguin, an isabelline (pale brown) individual, was present on the beach at Macaroni Bay on 2 November 1986 (Fig. 1).

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF NON-BREEDING SEABIRDS AT THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS,
1947 - MAY 1987

Species	No. of sightings ^a	No. of birds
Chinstrap Penguin <i>Pygoscelis antarctica</i>	2	2
Royal Albatross <i>Diomedea epomophora</i>	1	1
Blackbrowed Albatross <i>D. melanophris</i>	2	4+
Shy Albatross <i>D. cauta</i>	1	1
Southern Giant Petrel (white-phase) <i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	18	24 ^b
Antarctic Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialisoides</i>	16	30+
Antarctic Petrel <i>Thalassoica antarctica</i>	3	3
Pintado petrel ^c <i>Daption capense</i>	many	many
Whiteheaded Petrel <i>Pterodroma lessoni</i>	3	3
Dove Prion <i>Pachyptila desolata</i>	2	18
Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	1	2
Sooty Shearwater <i>Puffinus griseus</i>	1	2
Little Shearwater <i>P. assimilis</i>	3	102+
Wilson's Stormpetrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	3	3
Australasian Gannet <i>Sula serrator</i>	several	1
Grey Phalarope <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	1	2
Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1	2
Lesser Blackbacked Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	1	1
Franklin's Gull <i>L. pipixcan</i>	1	1
Sabine's Gull <i>L. sabini</i>	1	3-7
Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	3	23

- a: Sightings made on different days but that are considered to be of the same individuals have been counted as one record.
- b: White-phase Southern Giant Petrels: the total number of birds involved is an over-estimate since individuals have been sighted over a period of time.
- c: Pintado Petrels are no longer recorded (Cooper 1984).

One unidentified 'flock' of gulls has also been recorded (Williams & Burger 1978).



Figure 1

An isabelline King Penguin at Macaroni Bay, Marion Island, 2 November 1986. Photographed by J.P. Huyser and J.W. Kruger.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF NON-MARINE VAGRANTS AT THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS,
1947 - MAY 1987

Species	No. of sightings ^a	No. of birds
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	15	20
Yellowbilled Egret <i>Egretta intermedia</i>	2	2
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	1	1
Kerguelen Pintail <i>Anas eatoni</i>	1	1
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1	1
Threebanded Plover <i>C. tricollaris</i>	1	1
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	1	1
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	1	1
Common Sandpiper <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	7	8
Greenshank <i>T. nebularia</i>	3	4
Wood Sandpiper <i>T. glareola</i>	1	1
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	1	1
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>C. melanotos</i>	1	1
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	5	8
Cape Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	1	1
Laughing Dove <i>S. senegalensis</i>	3	3
African Cuckoo <i>Cuculus gularis</i>	1	1
European Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	1	2
European Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	15	19
Redbacked Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	1	1
Mountain Chat <i>Oenanthe monticola</i>	1	1
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1	1
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	2	2

a: Sightings made on different days but that are considered to be of the same individuals have been counted as one record.

Additional non-marine vagrants have occurred but were unidentified: one falcon, one falcon/cuckoo, four waders, five doves, and 10 passerines (Burger et al. 1980, Berruti & Schramm 1981, Newton et al. 1983, this paper).



Figure 2

A partially albinistic Macaroni Penguin at Kildalkey Bay, Marion Island, 2 December 1986. Photographed by C.G. Pascoe.

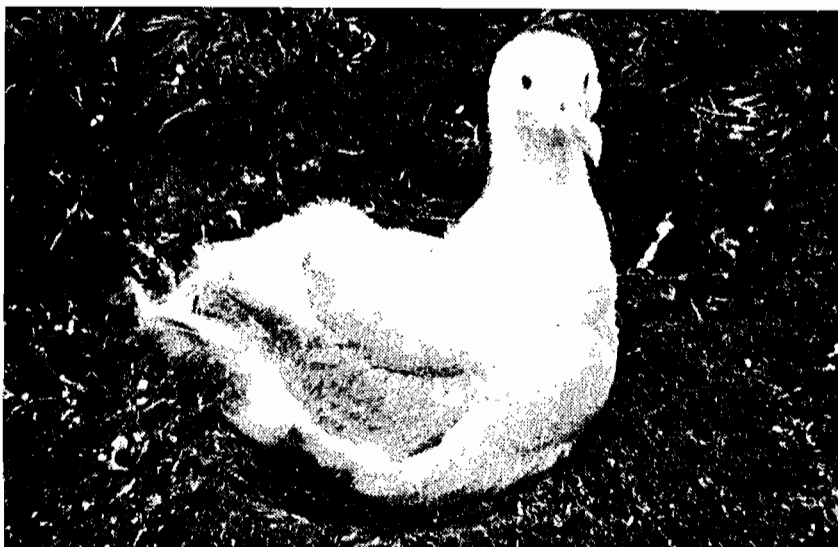


Figure 3

A silver-grey Wandering Albatross chick at Prinsloomeer, Marion Island, 9 October 1986. Photographed by N.A. Gartshore

Rockhopper Penguin

Eudyptes chrysocome

A single bird was seen on the sea off Sealer's Beach on 28 June 1986, an unusual winter record.

Macaroni Penguin

E. chrysolophus

A partially albinistic adult bird was seen at the Macaroni Penguin colony at Kildalkey Bay on 8 November 1986 by M.-C. Franken and again on 2 December 1986 when it was photographed (Fig. 2). The bird was white from the neck down with a brown wash to the upperside of the flippers and a small area on the lower back. The face and head plumes were normally coloured.

Wandering Albatross

Diomedea exulans

A chick was first seen on 31 August 1986 moulting into a silver-grey plumage, as opposed to the normal brown plumage, at Prinsloomeer (J. Cooper & R.P. Scofield) and was photographed on 9 October 1986 (Fig. 3). The bird later fledged successfully.

Southern Giant Petrel (white phase)

Macronectes giganteus

Twelve sightings were made (Table 3).

Antarctic Fulmar

Fulmarus glacialisoides

Antarctic Fulmars are frequently recorded from the M.V.S.A. *Agulhas* within a days sailing of the Prince Edward Islands (FitzPatrick Institute unpubl. data). All records listed here are of birds seen offshore from the islands. Birds were recorded on nine dates covering 24+ birds with an additional three corpses being found ashore (Table 4).

Antarctic Petrel

Thalassoica antarctica

A single bird followed the M.V. *S.A. Agulhas* for about 20 minutes on 28 August 1984 when the ship was about four hours sailing time west of Marion (P.G. Ryan). A single wing was found on Boulder Beach on 23 September 1984. The wing was desiccated and it is possible that it was washed ashore (S. Hunter).

Whiteheaded Petrel

Pterodroma lessoni

A bird, described as of this species, was brought down by spotlight on the escarpment above Rook's Bay on 9 November 1986 (M.C. Franken & Q.R. Coetzee).

Wilson's Stormpetrel

Oceanites oceanicus

Single birds were seen on 2 May 1986 and 18 April 1987 in Transvaal Cove (N.A. Gartshore & S. Hunter).

TABLE 3

RECORDS OF WHITE-PHASE SOUTHERN GIANT PETRELS *Macronectes giganteus* AT THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS, DECEMBER 1983 - MAY 1987

Date	Locality	Number	Activity	Observers
9 - 10 Jun 1984	Kildalkey Bay	1	feeding on King Penguin chicks	S. Hunter
20 Jul 1984	Kildalkey Bay	1	feeding on King Penguin chicks	"
2 Aug 1984	Kildalkey Bay	1	feeding on King Penguin chicks	"
31 Aug 1984	Golden Gate,	2	holding nest sites	"
	Prince Edward Island			
19 - 20 May 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	sitting on sea / sitting above King Penguin colony	N.A. Gartshore
3 - 4 Jun 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	sitting on sea / sitting above King Penguin colony	"
2 Jul 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	flying around the area	"
18 Jul 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	flying around the area	"
8 - 9 Jul 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	sitting on sea / flying around the area	"
19 Oct 1986	Macaroni Bay	1	flying along the coast	"
11 Nov 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	feeding in the Macaroni Penguin colony	"
5 May 1987	Transvaal Cove	1	flying offshore	"

TABLE 4

RECORDS OF ANTARCTIC FULMARS *Fulmarus glacialisoides* AT THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDS,

DECEMBER 1983 - MAY 1987

Date	Locality	Number	Activity	Observers
31 May 1984	Duiker's Point	1	flying offshore	S. Hunter
13 Jun 1984	Rook's Bay	1	flying offshore	"
"	La Grange Kop	2	flying offshore	"
31 Aug 1984	East Cape,	1	flying offshore	"
	Prince Edward Is.			
11 Nov 1984	Swartkop Point	1	single wing of a long dead bird found	"
10 Sep 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	flying offshore	N.A. Gartshore
23 Sep 1986	Kildalkey Bay	14+	birds seen in the bay and flying offshore between 05h45 and 15h30. A minimum of 14 different birds seen	"
24 Sep 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	flying offshore	"
25 Sep 1986	Archway Bay	1	flying offshore	"
8 Oct 1986	Kildalkey Bay	1	flying offshore	"
10 Oct 1986	Near Repetto's Hill	1	pair of wings	"
13 Dec 1986	Duiker's Point	1	flying offshore	"
"	Archway Bay	1	rotting corpse	P.A. Bartlett

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

One individual was seen on board the M.V. *S.A. Agulhas* en route to Marion on 17-18 April 1986 (N.J. Adams, N.A. Gartshore, S. Jackson & B.P. Watkins) with one bird around the base at Marion Island on 20 April, possibly the same individual. Further records were of three on Goney Plain on 13 May 1986 with a single bird in the same area on 25 May and 5 June 1986. Other single birds were near the base on 1 June 1986 (A. Moore), and 20 March 1987.

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

A single bird was present at Trypot from 12 - 15 August 1986. The bird showed characteristics of the North American race *hudsonicus*. (S.L. Chown & N.A. Gartshore).

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Two birds were first seen near the Fault on 6 November 1986 and then again regularly until 12 November. The last record was of a single bird on 23 November 1986 in the same area (S. Hunter & N.A. Gartshore).

Common Sandpiper

Tringa hypoleucos

A single bird was present at Bullard Beach on 13 & 14 September 1984 (P.G. Ryan).

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos

A single bird was seen at Sealer's Beach on 18 November 1986 (S. Hunter) and again the following day (S.L. Chown & N.A. Gartshore).

Lesser Blackbacked Gull

Larus fuscus

A first-summer bird was present with Kelp Gulls *L. dominicanus* at Prinsloomeer on 10 October 1986. The bird was not located again after this date (S. Hunter & N.A. Gartshore).

Laughing Dove

Streptopelia senegalensis

A single bird (probably the same individual) was seen around Skua Ridge and the Van Den Boogaard River on 2 (M.C. Franken), 10 (N.A. Gartshore) and 11 (S. Hunter) January 1987.

European Swallow

Hirundo rustica

A single specimen was collected on 9 May 1987 (S. Hunter). An unidentified swallow (possibly a European Swallow) was seen on 25 May 1986 flying over the base (S.L. Chown).

Redbacked Shrike

Lanius collurio

A single male was seen at Trypot Beach on 12 April 1984 (N.J. Adams).

Mountain Chat

Oenanthe monticola

A single bird at Trypot Beach between 2 - 5 June 1986. From the description it was almost certainly this species (N.A. Gartshore & S.L. Chown).

Unidentified birds

A falcon / cuckoo-like bird near the Fault on 1 December 1986 (M.C.Franken & C.G.Pascoe).

A snipe-like bird at Long Ridge on 19 December 1986. (I.DalGLISH).

A sparrow-like bird at Kildalkey on 7 November 1986. (I. DalGLISH & Q.R.Coetzee).

DISCUSSION

To date, totals of 20 species of non-breeding seabirds and 24 identified species of vagrant non-marine birds have been recorded at the Prince Edward Islands.

Non-breeding seabirds are almost certainly under-recorded at the Prince Edward Islands. Eight new species were identified during seawatches (Sinclair 1981). Should regular watches be undertaken more records would probably be added to these lists.

The origins of the landbirds recorded during this update, including the Lesser Blackbacked Gull as a landbird, can be broken down into three categories. Three are resident African species, Cattle Egret, Mountain Chat and Laughing Dove; five are Palaearctic migrants, Lesser Blackbacked Gull, Common Sandpiper, Greenshank, Redbacked Shrike and European Swallow; and the remaining two provide the main discussion.

The Pectoral Sandpiper breeds in Siberia and North America and winters in South America with small numbers in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. Vagrants are regularly recorded in the western Palaearctic and have been recorded in southern and eastern Africa, the Falklands and South Georgia (Hayman et al. 1986). The *hudsonicus* race of the Whimbrel breeds in Alaska and northern Canada, migrating to the southern U.S.A. and to South America during the winter. Vagrants of this race have been recorded from Australasia, the Falklands, Greenland, western Europe and west Africa. (Hayman et al. 1986). Although the origins of these two species, eastern Palaearctic/Nearctic for the Pectoral Sandpiper and the Nearctic for the Whimbrel, add a new category to the Marion non-marine vagrants no firm conclusion can be drawn as to whether they arrived directly, being blown off their migration routes or by another route, i.e. via Europe.

Breaking down the 1983-1987 non-marine vagrants by monthly sightings, the general pattern follows that previously shown (Newton et al. 1983). There is a peak during April/May and again in November to January. The record of a Whimbrel is the first non-marine vagrant record for August and to date no records exist for July.

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