

FIRST SOUTH AMERICAN RECORD OF THE NORTHERN FULMAR *FULMARUS GLACIALIS*

MANUEL MARIN¹, FERNANDO DÍAZ², RODRIGO GONZÁLEZ³, MATIAS GARRIDO⁴ & JOSH BECK⁵

¹Section of Ornithology, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles CA 90007, USA.
Current address: Casilla 15 Melipilla, Chile (mma95@hotmail.com)

²Albatross Birding and Nature Tours, Julio Zegers 4209, Nuñoa, Santiago, Chile

³Santa María 7178, Vitacura, Santiago, Chile

⁴Ibsen #568 G-84, Cerro Delicias, Valparaíso, Chile

⁵1077 Vista Madera Ln, El Cajon, CA, USA

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ABSTRACT

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We report the first record of Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*, a common circumpolar Northern Hemisphere species, for South America. An individual that appeared to be of the Pacific origin was observed in February 2017 in waters off central Chile. The Pacific Ocean population on its post-breeding migration rarely goes farther south than Japan or northwest Mexico. One previous extralimital record occurred in waters off New Zealand a few years earlier.

Key words: Chile, distribution, Northern Fulmar, *Fulmarus glacialis*, vagrant, Southern Hemisphere

The Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* is the most abundant and widespread procellariiform seabird found in the higher latitudes of the northern hemisphere. It has a circumpolar distribution, including both the northern Atlantic and Pacific

oceans (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992, Brooke 2004, Onley & Scofield 2007). In the Pacific region, it winters south to Japan and northwest Mexico, with occasional appearances in the Hawaiian Islands (AOU 1998).

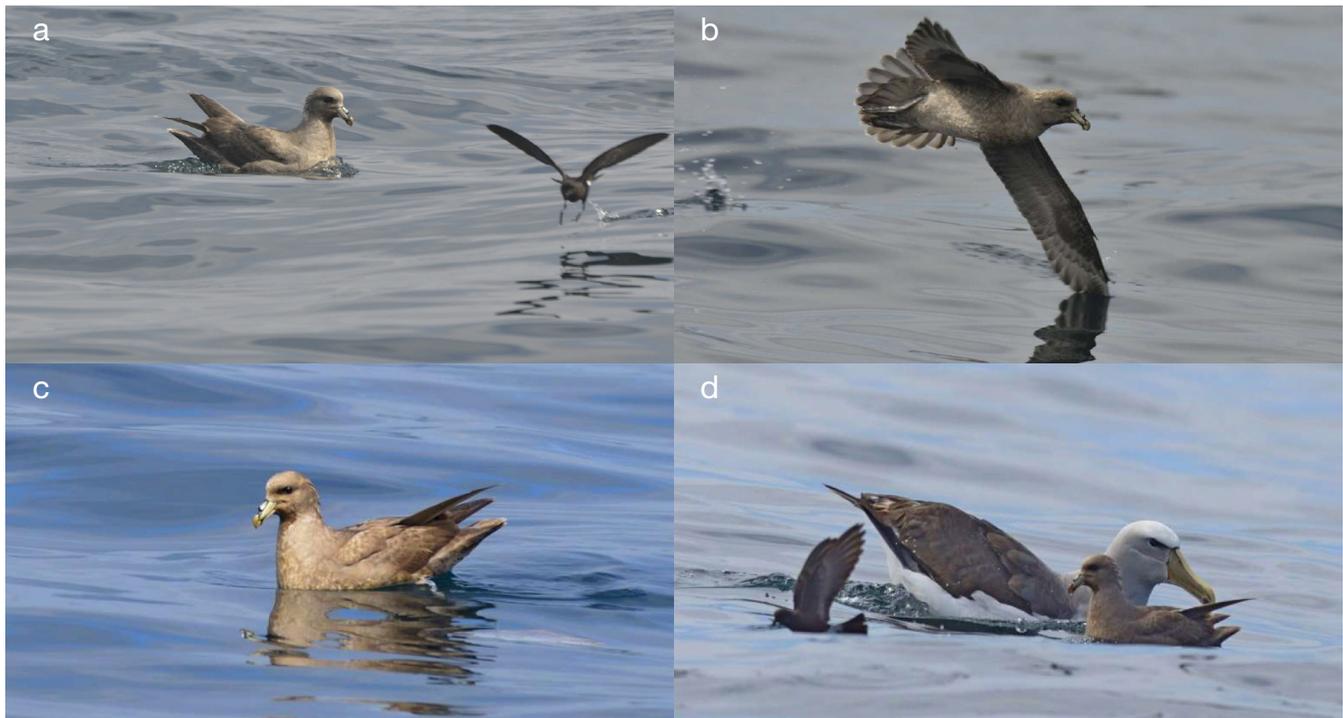


Fig. 1. Photos taken on 11 February 2017 off Valparaíso, Chile, about 17 km from shore. (a) Northern Fulmar to the left and Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*, to the right; (b) Northern Fulmar in flight; (c) Northern Fulmar resting; and (d) Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* in the background, with Northern Fulmar and Wilson's Storm-Petrel in the foreground.

The only Southern Hemisphere record of a Northern Fulmar, as far as we know, is from east of the Snares Islands, New Zealand. The bird was a dark morph photographed by Leon Berard on 9 February 2014 (see Miskelly 2016). No reports exist for South American waters (Remsen *et al.* 2017).

While we were at sea on 11 February 2017, off Valparaíso, Chile, reaching 24.1 km offshore north-northwest of the port, we encountered a Northern Fulmar. The bird was initially resting on the water, attracted by the chum dropped off the boat. We stayed with the bird for about 20–30 min. The bird was found 32°52'S, 71°43'W, about 17 km from the closest shoreline. Initially, the bird passed near the boat very quickly; at first glance, some of us thought that it was an odd-looking *Pterodroma*, as it was very bulky and stocky compared with other birds seen in the area. When the bird made a second pass around the boat, we could take some quick photos. Based on previous experience by some of us in the high latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, we recognized the bird as a Northern Fulmar. Then the bird sat on the water and provided good views; however, it kept some distance away. It had no signs of molt anywhere on the body or wings, as far as we could tell. The bulky head with the bicolor bill—greyish-horn or bluish on the base with the greenish-yellow unguis—were distinctive features. The bird in question was a dark morph (Fig. 1 a–d), and it would correspond to the Pacific subspecies *F. g. rogersii*.

Although this is an exceptional distributional record, and unique for South American waters, it is not unique for the Southern Hemisphere. Three years earlier, an individual Northern Fulmar was encountered in New Zealand waters (see above). Coincidentally, both Southern Hemisphere encounters with this species have been in early February.

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