

SEABIRDS SIGHTED IN THE WATERS OFF ANGOLA, 1966–1988

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Knowledge of the distribution, seasonal occurrence and abundance of seabirds in waters off Angola remains poor. Dean (2000) summarized all the then-known and published data, among them a number of my own records (Lambert 1967, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1980, 1988, 2001) and those of Brooke (1981).

The annotated list that follows summarizes my published and hitherto unpublished sightings of seabirds in the waters off Angola for 10 years between 1966 and 1988, when I worked as a fisheries biologist on fishing or research vessels. These observations were made over a total of 69 days—37 days outside and 32 days within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ, Fig. 1)—in all months of the year except July. Waters off Angola were traversed when going to or coming from more southerly regions or when steaming from or to ports. Only when passing fishing vessels, especially in the southernmost region, did I have the opportunity to observe concentrations of seabirds; otherwise the numbers seen were mostly small.

I consider sightings made within the EEZ as national Angolan records. Sightings made between the 0° meridian and the western border of the Angolan EEZ are also included for comparative purposes. Most of the positions are noon positions, but for some sightings, exact positions are given.

ANNOTATED LIST

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*—An adult male followed the ship on 6 April 1988 at 16°45'S 9°30'E, and one immature was sighted on 25 September 1966 (Lambert 1971, Brooke 1981).

Northern Royal Albatross *D. sanfordi*—An adult seen on 2 November 1985 is the first record for Angola (Lambert 2001).

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys*—Only one of five birds sighted was an adult (seen on 21 May 1968 at 16°22'S 11°00'E). The northernmost sighting was of an immature on 11 October 1985 at 15°09'S 11°37'E (west-northwest of Namibe).

“Shy” Albatross *T. cauta (sensu lato)*—Two (one immature and one adult) recorded in September 1966 (Lambert 1971, Brooke 1981). Three adults in summer: 2 February 1973 at 17°15'S 11°22'E. On 21 October 1974, 23 birds (14 adults, nine immature) seen from a fishing trawler at 17°05'S 11°25'E followed us for hours northward, with the last disappearing at 16°25'S (northwest of Tiger Peninsula). The exact species are unknown in all cases.

Yellow-nosed Albatross *T. chlororhynchos (sensu lato)*—Only one bird in summer (2 February 1973 at 17°15'S 11°22'E); all the others were seen from the end of May to the beginning of November. The largest concentration was of 110 birds between Cape Frio and Tiger Bay close to a fishing fleet (Lambert 1971). The northernmost

record is of an immature on 2 November 1985 at 14°43'S 11°41'E (northwest of Namibe). Generally more immatures were seen in the north, and north of 16°S almost only immatures were seen. The two species of Yellow-nosed Albatrosses were not distinguished.

Pintado Petrel *Daption capense*—Three records from September 1966 and October 1975 between 16°27'S 11°32'E and 17°05'S 11°25'E (Lambert 1971, Brooke 1981).

Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*—Dean (2000) mentions only one summer record from 1966 (after Lambert 1971, Brooke 1981). A second summer record from 2 February 1973 was of four birds off the mouth of Kunene River at 17°15'S 11°22'E. One Great-winged Petrel followed the ship on 29 May 1968 at 16°22'S 11°08'E (northwest of Tiger Peninsula). Four other sightings made outside the EEZ were from October 1966 and 1972 respectively, between 16°S and 16°30'S and at about 7°45'E.

Soft-plumaged Petrel *P. mollis*—Two birds on 6 August 1966 (Lambert 1971, Dean 2000) are probably the only records for Angola.

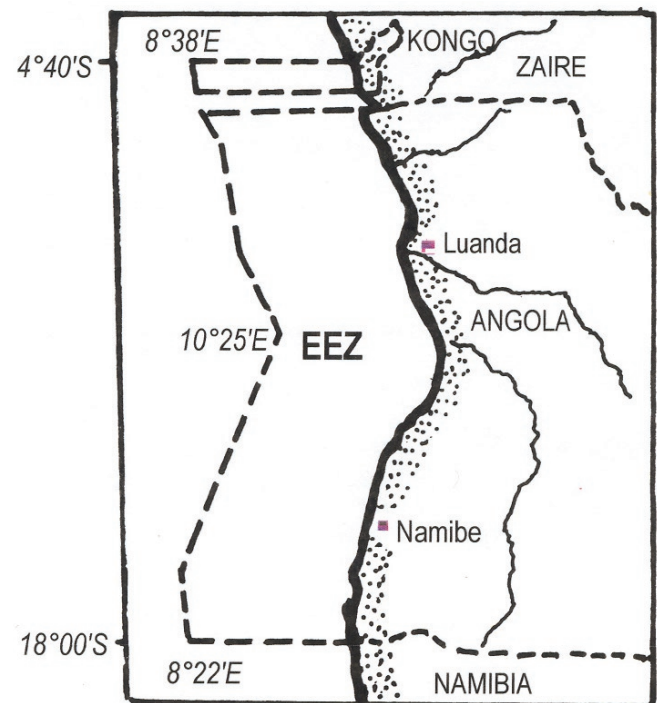


Fig. 1. The position of the Angolan Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The outermost positions are estimated; the distance to the coastline is 200 nautical miles.

Antarctic Prion *Pachyptila desolata*—35 birds sighted on 6 August 1966 (Lambert 1971, Dean 2000) are the only records from inside the EEZ of Angola. One sighting made outside the EEZ was on 5 August 1966 (Lambert 1971).

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*—A single bird was sighted moving to the southwest on 30 April 1986 at 12°37'S 7°29'E, outside the Angolan EEZ.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*—The records outside and within the EEZ were distributed from November to June and in all latitudes off Angola. The largest concentration was of 517 individuals on 29 April 1986 near 11°S 7°30'E. Inshore, I recorded c. 100 Cory's Shearwaters on 2 February 1973 off the Kunene River mouth. Fourteen birds were sighted very close to shore on 24 November 1986 southwest of Luanda at 9°13'S 12°32'E.

Spectacled Petrel *Procellaria conspicillata*—A bird sighted in October 1985 is the first record for Angola (Lambert 2001).

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*—An abundant species off Namibe Province in winter, especially when fishing fleets were operating in the northern part of the Benguela Current (e.g. 500 birds on 24 September 1966 around 16°35'S 11°35'E, and 350 on 21 October 1974). White-chinned Petrels are generally rare in summer. I recorded only four birds on 27 January 1967, but saw 135 on 2 February 1973 close to fishing vessels off the Kunene River mouth. The northernmost birds inside the EEZ followed the ship on 2 November 1985 as far north as 13°31'S 11°48'E. Outside the Benguela Current and the EEZ, the species is rather rare. However, three records were made north of 13°S, and the northernmost was on 4 August 1966 at 9°20'S 1°20'E.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*—Regular off the southern part of Namibe Province (15°S to 17°15'S) from September to November accompanying fishing trawlers, but never very numerous. Greatest number was 55 individuals on 21 October 1974 at 17°05'S 11°25'E. Singletons were seen farther north, with the northernmost three birds directly off Luanda (8°42'S 13°10'E) on 4 November 1985. I have only one summer record (16 birds at 17°15'S 11°25'E on 2 February 1973) and one record from May.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*—Mostly single birds recorded from the end of September to November between 9°30'S and 17°S (Lambert 1971, 1975; Brooke 1981). Seven birds on 21 October 1974 between the positions 16°S 11°15'E and 17°05'S 11°25'E were the greatest numbers seen per day. The birds were migrating south. Only one record is from January (Lambert 1971).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*—Records from outside the EEZ range from March to May and September/October. The birds were distributed over the whole area but always in small numbers (one to 13 per day [Lambert 1971]). Within the EEZ, the species was present in October/November and March/April, but generally rather rare—much rarer than off Namibia. Only twice did I observe larger concentrations. On 24 September 1966, 70 and 50 birds followed the ship at about 16°35'S 11°35'E; and on 24 November 1986, 250 or more birds concentrated themselves around the drifting ship southwest of Luanda at 9°13'S 12°32'E. Only one record is from January, of two individuals seen at 16°29'S 11°32'E on 27 January 1967.

White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*—Recorded outside the EEZ only in October, April and May between 8°S and 13°S.

White-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregatta grallaria*—Three singletons recorded in September/October outside the EEZ (Lambert 2001).

European Storm-Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*—Only a few sightings were made off southern Angola. Two individuals were seen on 2 February 1973, and one on 21 October 1974 among Wilson's Storm-Petrels at c. 17°10'S 11°25'E. A single bird followed the ship on 2 November 1985 at 14°43'S 11°41'E (far northwest of Namibe).

Leach's Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*—Sightings cover all months except June and July, mostly outside and sometimes within the EEZ. Usually the birds were flying alone, and on many days this species was the sole one sighted. Strong southerly migration was noted in early December 1988. On 5 December, over a full day, I counted 60 individuals moving southward northwest and southeast of the noon position (11°39'S 4°49'E). Around fishery vessels this species is very inconspicuous. Seven records (of two to 12 birds) within the EEZ range from October to April fell between 9°S and 17°15'S.

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaeton aethereus*—One record made off Namibe Province in May 1968 is the first for Angola (Lambert 2001).

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaeton lepturus*—One adult seen on 28 April 1986 off Cuanza Sul Province is the first record for Angola (Dean 2000, Lambert 2001). On 25 January 1967, one adult was observed flying to the southeast outside of the EEZ at 8°58'S 5°34'E.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*—Eight individuals were seen within Luanda Bay on 25 November 1986.

Cape Gannet *Morus capensis*—This species was very frequent close to fishing fleets between 16°S and 17°15'S. On 24 September 1966 and 21 October 1974, I counted more than 1000 birds off the Kunene River mouth, up to 70% being adults. Farther north nearly all sightings have been of immatures. Outside the Benguela Current, I saw an immature on 12 October 1966 at 16°S 7°40'E.

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* and Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis*—Regular in Luanda Bay in October and November 1985 and 1986. I did not record them farther out to sea.

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*—Two sightings made in October are the first for Angola (Lambert 2001). Two singletons were sighted far offshore in September 1988 and October 1972.

Subantarctic Skua *Catharacta antarctica*—Some Subantarctic Skuas move northward into Angolan waters when following fishing trawlers. My six records of one to five birds are from the area between 15°09'S and 17°05'S, mostly in September and October, with only two individuals seen on 29 May 1968 at 16°22'S 11°08'E. One bird was recorded far outside the EEZ on 2 May 1986 at 16°54'S 7°43'E.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*—This species was fairly common during migration in October and November along the coast between Luanda and the mouth of the Kunene River, with

25 to 50 birds being recorded per day sometimes. Most were moving southward or were accompanying fishery vessels. Many of the adults retained fully-developed central rectrices at the end of November. Summering birds have been recorded in December (twice outside the EEZ [Summerhayes 1976]) as well as in January and February south of 16°S. Largest numbers seen were 50 individuals on 2 February 1973 at 17°15'S 11°22'E, many moulting. The homeward migration was inconspicuous, one bird on 28 April 1986 at 10°57'S 11°22'E, and 15 at the end of April/beginning of May 1986 far outside the EEZ between 6°45'E and 7°30'E.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*—This species is known as not uncommon off the Angolan coast (Brooke 1971, Dean 2000), but I did not observe it more frequently than the other smaller skua species. However, Arctic Skuas tend to occur close to the coast, as reflected by the numbers sighted near and inside the port of Luanda. My records are mostly from the end of September to the end of November. The greatest number sighted on one day were 22 on 22 October 1974 at 12°20'S 10°24'E. Only one record is from January: five individuals at 16°29'S 10°52'E on 27 January 1967. Five records from October, April and May far west of the Angolan EEZ show that this species crosses the Gulf of Guinea during migration.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*—Probably a regular and a more or less common visitor off the southern part of Angola during migration, less frequent in summer. My records range from the beginning of October to the end of April. Records from 1973/74 are given in Lambert (1975) and cited by Brooke (1981) and Dean (2000). In October/November 1985 and 1986, on six days, I saw single birds or small groups (up to 26 per day) moving south or following the ship between 10°40'S and 15°40'S. One adult with long tail-streamers was recorded on 28 April 1986 at 10°57'S 11°22'E. The tail streamers are rarely visible until November. Outside the EEZ, I have only two records in 37 days (April 1986 and December 1988), but they show that Long-tailed Skuas cross the Gulf of Guinea during migration. Large concentrations were seen off the mouth of the Kunene River in the company of fishing trawlers in water depths ranging from 200 m to 300 m. The specific identity of sightings was confirmed from specimens collected off Namibia in December 1972 (Lambert 1980).

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*—Most numerous in the port of Luanda in October/November 1985 and 1986. Single birds or small groups sometimes followed fishing trawlers. Greatest numbers were 25 individuals on 27 January 1967 at 16°29'S 10°52'E. Most of the birds seen were adults, but in Luanda about 10% were juveniles.

Grey-headed Gull *L. cirrocephalus*—Only regularly sighted in Luanda Bay. On 25 November 1986, 340 birds were counted.

Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*—The first records for Angola were made on October/November 1986 (Lambert 2001).

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*—As Brooke (1981) suggests, all the records including those of 1985/86 are from areas north of the species' main non-breeding range. Sightings range from September to November; only one is from May (two adults [Lambert 1967, 1969, 1971]). Migration commences with adults; the first juveniles follow by the end of October. The northernmost-sighted 10 individuals (seven adults, three juveniles) moved south on 24 November 1986 at 9°13'S 12°32'E. Greatest numbers sighted were 50 adults on 11 October 1985 at 15°09'S 11°37'E. Birds seen in October were

moulting their heads; only one showed the complete breeding head pattern on 17 October 1986 southwest of Namibe. Outside the EEZ, I recorded only a singleton at 7°26'S 9°22'E during October 1974.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*—Regularly seen in Luanda Bay in October and November. On 9 October 1985, 80 birds were seen (adults in non-breeding plumage and juveniles). Small groups or single birds were occasionally seen along the coast south of 10°S. On 22 November 1986, 10 followed the vessel southward, and suddenly a group of 40 individuals descended from altitude and continued their flight together with the other birds over the sea surface. Only one record is from summer, of 22 individuals at 17°15'S 11°22'E (off the mouth of the Kunene River) on 2 February 1973.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* and Royal Tern *S. maxima*—Seen only in small and larger numbers respectively, in Luanda Bay in October and November 1985/1986. The largest concentration seen was of 120 Royal Terns on 25 October 1986.

Common Tern *S. hirundo*—This species was recorded from September to November, usually in small numbers, between 9°S and 17°S. On 15 October 1986, 40 birds were recorded within Luanda Bay. No records from summer and homeward migration, and just one from outside the EEZ, of 12 birds at 16°S 7°40'E on 12 October 1966.

Arctic Tern *S. paradisaea*—The Arctic Tern was much more frequently observed than was the Common Tern, but exclusively during migration. Most commonly recorded from the end of September to the end of November between Luanda (northernmost record) and Tiger Peninsula. Maximum numbers were 360 on 21 October 1974 between 16°S and 17°05'S 11°25'E—most of them moving south in groups. During the northward migration, I recorded three birds at 9°19'S 10°26'E on 27 April 1986 and 40 at 16°22'S 11°08'E inside the EEZ on 29 May 1968. Outside the EEZ, the species was fairly common in September/October as well as in April/May. Single birds sighted in April/May were in breeding plumage.

Sooty Tern *S. fuscata*—Large flocks (sometimes in the hundreds) of Sooty Terns have been sighted in April 1968 and 1986 and once in June 1968 outside the EEZ between 5°S and 12°S and 0°E to 7°30'E. Maximum numbers sighted were 422 birds in six flocks passing the drifting ship at 11°S 7°30'E on 29 April 1986. The previous day, we passed 203 Sooty Terns foraging from 10°57'S 11°22'E to 11°01'S 10°31'E. The first of these positions is at the edge of the Angolan EEZ.

Damara Tern *S. balaenarum*—In October/November 1985/1986, I recorded up to 33 individuals in Luanda Bay. On 21 October 1974, five flew southwards at 17°05'S 11°25'E, and 33 also leisurely moved southwards and foraged around 16°S 11°15'E.

Little Tern *S. albigrons*—One individual seen in October 1988 in the port of Luanda is the first record for Angola (Lambert 2001).

Sandwich Tern *S. sandvicensis*—A common species in Luanda Bay in October and November 1985 and 1986. Maximum numbers seen were 210 birds on 26 November 1986.

White Tern *Gygis alba*—A single bird was seen flying to the northwest outside the EEZ on 30 April 1986 at 12°12'S 7°29'E.

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