

WRECK OF EUROPEAN STORMPETRELS *HYDROBATES PELAGICUS* ON THE EAST LONDON
COAST, SOUTH AFRICA

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On 24 and 25 January 1987 six dead stormpetrels were found at five localities along the East London coast, eastern Cape, South Africa (Table 1). This is the minimum number of birds that may have been involved in the wreck since the birds were found on an *ad hoc* basis by members of the public and no beach patrols were undertaken at that time.

The stormpetrels were found along about 60 km of coastline between Haga Haga and Gulu. The birds were all decomposing and may have died at least a week prior to their being found. Three of them were identified as European Stormpetrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* and from descriptions the others were assumed to be of the same species.

Two of the European Stormpetrels recovered on 25 January 1987 were ringed with British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) rings. The bird recovered at Gonubie was ringed (2177279) as an adult on 16 August 1977 at Mayo, Eire, whereas one of the birds from Bonza Bay was ringed (2322110) as an adult on 26 July 1984 at North Rona, Western Isles, Scotland. It is of interest that another European Stormpetrel was recovered near Cefane (32 48S, 28 08E), between Gonubie and Haga Haga, on 22 January 1981 which had been ringed (2213099) as an adult on 10 August 1978 at St Kilda, Scotland. A

beached specimen was found at East London in July 1912 (Skead 1967). An April 1980 wreck of European Stormpetrels occurred on the Natal coast of South Africa when five BTO-ringed birds were recovered, along with several unringed specimens (Spencer & Hudson 1981, SAFRING records). The European Stormpetrel occurs commonly off the eastern Cape coast between November and May, apparently in greater numbers in some years (Liversidge & Le Gras 1981).

The persons listed in Table 1 are thanked for proving information about the stormpetrels. Mr T.B. Oatley, South African Bird Ringing Unit, supplied information for the ringed birds.

REFERENCES

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- SKEAD, C.J. 1967. Ecology of birds in the eastern Cape Province. *Ostrich Suppl.* 7:1-103.
- SPENCER, R. & HUDSON, R. 1981. Report on bird-ringing for 1980. *Ring. & Migr.* 3:213-256

TABLE 1

DETAILS OF STORMPETRELS WRECKED ON THE EAST LONDON
COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA, JANUARY 1987

Locality	Co-ordinates	Number of birds	Finder
Haga Haga	32 46S, 28 16E	1	K. Barichiev
Gonubie	32 56S, 28 03E	2	K. Buttner
Bonza Bay	32 58S, 27 59E	1	C. J. Vernon
Bonza Bay	32 59S, 27 59E	1	C. Sawyer
Gulu	33 12S, 27 44E	1	B. Gane

20th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, 1990

The 20th International Ornithological Congress will take place in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 2-9 December 1990. The Congress programme will include six plenary lectures, 48 symposia, contributed papers (spoken and poster), workshops, discussion groups and films. There will be a mid-Congress excursion day. Longer excursions are planned to interesting ornithological sites in New Zealand before and after the Congress. In late 1990 New Zealand will also host the 20th World Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation in Hamilton on 21-27 November 1990 and a Pacific Festival of

Nature Films in Dunedin on 27 November - 1 December 1990. Photographic and stamp exhibitions will be held in Christchurch in association with the International Ornithological Congress. Requests for the First Circular, which includes information on the above events, should be sent to:

Dr Ben D. Bell, Secretary-General, 20th International Ornithological Congress, Department of Zoology, Victoria University of Wellington, Private Bag, Wellington, New Zealand.