

THIRD SPECIMEN RECORD OF THE ANTARCTIC PETREL *THALASSOICA ANTARCTICA*

FOR AFRICA

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The first specimen record of the Antarctic Petrel *Thalassoica antarctica* for Africa was shot from a trawler on the continental shelf (c. 34 00S, 26 15E) south of Algoa Bay, eastern Cape Province, South Africa, on 7 September 1965 and is preserved as a study skin in the East London Museum (Courtenay-Latimer & Quicquelberge 1966). The first beached bird was found on the Atlantic coast (c. 33 10S, 18 03E) south of Saldanha Bay, western Cape Province, on 28 July 1984 by an African Seabird Group beach patrol (Avery 1989, Hockey *et al.* 1989, Ryan *et al.* 1989, Ryan & Rose 1989). It was not separately reported and the authors cited above have provided either insufficient or incorrect details. A second beached bird was found by PIC at Milnerton (33 52S, 18 29E), Table Bay, Cape Town, on 8 May 1990. It was in fresh plumage and its measurements were: wing 230, culmen 37, tarsus 46 mm. Both beached specimens are preserved in the comparative avian osteology collection of the South African Museum, Cape Town.

All breeding sites of the Antarctic Petrel lie south of 65S and it does not normally occur north of 50S (Watson 1971, Jouanin & Mougine 1979). The most northerly record of a vagrant known to Watson (1971, citing Courtenay-Latimer & Quicquelberge 1966) is from 33 13S, 99 27E which is essentially the same latitude as that of the south of Saldanha Bay record. Modern Australian records have been from no farther north than 35S (Blakers *et al.* 1984). The Antarctic Petrel appears to be one of several Southern Ocean species which only come as far north as South Africa in certain years, for reasons still to be elucidated (Ryan *et al.* 1989). In

corroboration of this view, the May 1990 record is supported by finding three Kerguelen Petrels *Pterodroma brevirostris* and three Slenderbilled Prions *Pachyptila belcheri*, two dominant species of these southerly irruptions (Ryan *et al.* 1989), on the beach north of Yzerfontein (33 20S, 18 09E) on the regular July 1990 patrol by the African Seabird Group.

The similarity in the English names, Antarctic Petrel and Antarctic Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* has led to confusion in the literature. In their bibliography Cooper & Brooke (1981) have transferred to the Antarctic Petrel certain published references to the Antarctic Fulmar, including Loomis (1918), Dabbene (1921, 1923), Sclater (1924) and Maclure (1952). These authors do not in fact give records of the Antarctic Petrel in South African waters. More seriously, Newman (1982) has also fallen into the same confusion though it is implicitly corrected in Newman (1983).

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