

Chinstrap Penguin in continental South America

Arnold Small

THE CHINSTRAP PENGUIN (*Pygoscelis antarctica*) is one of three penguin species whose breeding range is confined almost entirely to the Antarctic ecosystem. The other two species, Emperor Penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*) and Adélie Penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) breed exclusively within the Antarctic ecosystem which may roughly be delineated by the Antarctic Convergence corresponding approximately with the 55°S. parallel. There is some evidence that the Chinstrap Penguin is apparently increasing its numbers and spreading northward from its center of distribution in the American sector of continental Antarctica (Watson, 1975). The major breeding areas of this species include South Georgia, South Sandwich, South Orkney and South Shetland Islands; on the Antarctic Peninsula south to Anvers Island; and on Bouvet, Heard, Balleny and Peter Islands. (*Ibid.*, p. 74).

Extralimital observations include the Falkland Islands east of southern South America. There are at least three records from the Falklands (Woods, 1975) but none listed for continental South America (Meyer de Schauensee, 1982).

On December 29, 1981, *M/S World Discoverer* was fortunate enough to be able to discharge staff and some passengers on Cape Horn Island, Chile. Normally, the legendary stormy seas in this area make such landings impossible. As

ornithologist on this voyage, I was eager to undertake some bird observations on this little known island. Virtually the first



bird seen upon stepping ashore was an adult Chinstrap Penguin (see photo). The bird appeared to be healthy and was alert



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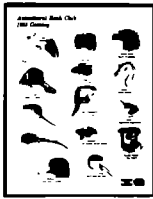
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and unafraid. This observation constitutes the first known appearance of this penguin in continental South America and obviously represents also the first record for Chile.

DURING THE TWO-HOUR stay on the island, I had an opportunity to observe some of the other species inhabiting the island. Cape Horn Island, Chile is a low, rolling, hilly island vegetated mostly with grasses, ferns, mosses and low shrubs on the moor-like slopes and hollows. Deep ravines are densely forested with *Nothofagus* (Antarctic Beech) and these trees appear to be wind-sheared virtually level with the grasses by the terrific winds for which this area is famous. Most of the following species were observed on the moors, in the shrubs or along the rocky beach: Rock [Magellan] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*), Blue-eyed Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*), Kelp Goose (*Chloephaga hybrida*), Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), Blackish Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ater*), Rufous-chested Dotterel (*Zonibyx [Charadrius]*

modestus), Great [Chilean] Skua (*Catharacta [skua] chilensis*), Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*), South American Tern (*Sterna hirundinacea*), Short-billed Miner (*Geositta antarctica*), Dark-bellied Cinclodes (*Cinclodes patagonicus*), Gray-flanked Cinclodes (*Cinclodes oustaleti*), Dark-faced Ground-tyrant (*Muscisaxicola macloviana*), Correndera Pipit (*Anthus correndera*), Austral Thrush (*Turdus falcklandii*), Rufous-colored Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*), Yellow-bridled Finch (*Melanodera xanthogramma*), and Black-chinned Siskin (*Spinus [Carduelis] barbatus*).

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