

SECOND RECORD OF A LAYSAN ALBATROSS *DIOMEDEA IMMUTABILIS* IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

J.-P. ROUX

*Sea Fisheries, P.O. Box 394, Lüderitz 9000, South West Africa/Namibia**Received 8 February 1988, accepted 24 March 1988*

On 8 December 1984, while carrying out seabird counts from the bridge of the M.S. *Marion Dufresne* en route from Reunion Island to the Iles Crozet, I noticed a unusual mollymawk at 35 25S, 53 21E. The bird was flying approximately 800 m behind the ship when first seen at 14h20 local time (10h20 GMT). It accompanied the ship for 45 minutes at distances varying from 40 m to more than one kilometre and was observed continuously using 10x40 binoculars, during which time sketches and notes were made. It was identified as a Laysan Albatross *Diomedea immutabilis* on the basis of underwing, back plumage pattern, face and bill colouration at close range (Harrison 1983a,b). The dark carpal patch on the left underwing was slightly more extensive than the one on the right, almost reaching the black trailing edge. The bird was last seen at 15h05 (11h05 GMT) at 35 34S, 53 20E.

At 15h00, the sea temperature was 18,4°C and air temperature 19,0°C. The wind and sea were moderate and other birds present around the ship included one Wandering Albatross *D. exulans*, three Whitechinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis*, two Greatwinged Petrels *Pterodroma macroptera*, two Softplumaged Petrels *P. mollis*, one Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*, three

Wilson's Stormpetrels *Oceanites oceanicus* and one immature Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata*.

The normal range of the Laysan Albatross is in the Pacific Ocean (Harrison 1983a) north of about latitude 15N (Kenyon & Rice 1958). This is the second record of a Laysan Albatross in the southwestern Indian Ocean (Fig. 1) after a sighting of this species in April 1983 between 37 01S, 21 42E and 38 14S, 23 11E (Harrison 1983b).

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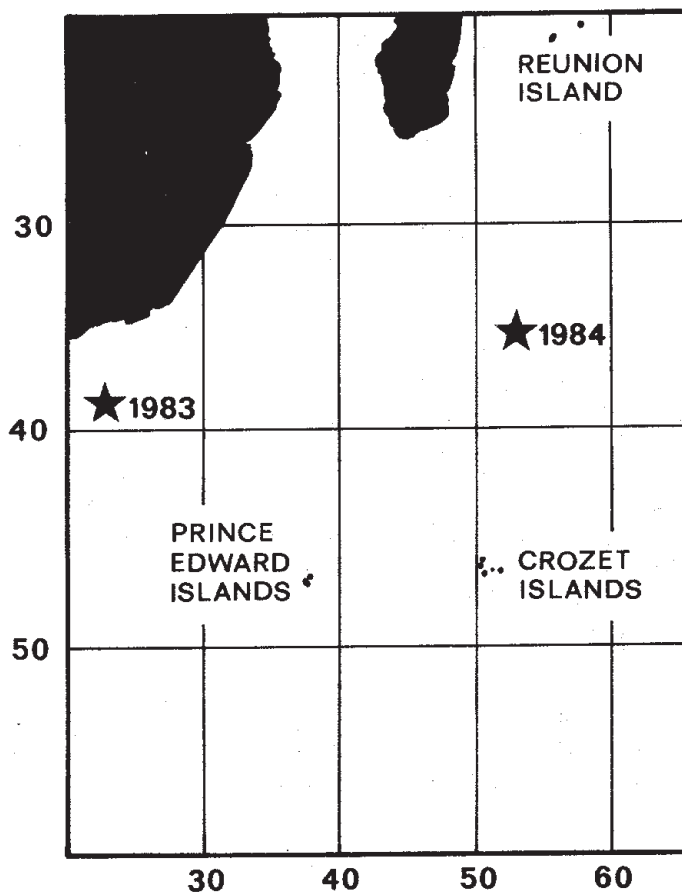


Figure 1

The southwestern Indian Ocean showing the position of the two Laysan Albatross *Diomedea immutabilis* sightings in 1983 (Harrison 1983b) and 1984.