

THE BLACKNECKED SWAN *CYGNUS MELANOCORYPHUS* IN ANTARCTICA

J.L. ORGEIRA¹ & O.N. FOGLIATTO²

¹*Instituto Antártico Argentino, Càtedra de Histologia y Embriologia Facultad de Agronomía y Zootecnia, Universidad Nacional de Tucumàn, Pueyrredon 264, CP(4000), San Miguel de Tucumàn, Argentina*

²*Càtedra de Histologia y Embriologia, Facultad de Agronomía y Zootecnia, Universidad Nacional de Tucumàn, La Rioja 343, Tafi Viejo, Tucumàn, Argentina*

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During the 1988/1989 austral summer, while aboard the *Bahia Paraiso* and the *Irizar* of the Argentine Antarctic Institute, we observed two individual Blacknecked Swans *Cygnus melanocoryphus* in the Antarctic Peninsula region. One was observed on 8 January 1989, in Esperanza Bay. The other individual was seen on 2 February 1989 in Bahia Sud, Livingston Island. In addition, Blacknecked Swans were reported to us by people staying at antarctic stations: Brown Station, Paradise Harbour, one individual; San Martin Station, Marguerite Bay, one individual; Forster Harbour, Deception Island, three individuals; Caleta Poter, King George Island, eight individuals and Fildes Strait, one individual.

Additional observations of Blacknecked Swan have been reported in Antarctica during the same period (Lazo & Yañez, 1989, Parmelee & Fraser 1989, Lange & Naumann 1990). Although Lazo & Yañez (1989) claim the first record of Blacknecked Swan in Antarctica, Bennett (1922) had already reported the presence of an individual in Charlotte Bay, South Shetland Islands during summer 1916/1917.

At least 65 records of Blacknecked Swans have now been reported at 17 localities in Antarctica (Fig. 1, Table 1). Some are likely to be resightings of the same birds due to the proximity of dates (e.g. 3 and 4 January 1989, and 13 and 14 January 1989, Table 1).

According to Olrog (1984), in summer the Blacknecked Swan is distributed along the Argentina coastline from the centre up to Tierra del Fuego,

south of Chile and Falkland Islands or Islas Malvinas. In winter it migrates towards northern Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and southern Brazil.

Although we do not know the reason why the Blacknecked Swan occurs in Antarctica, we presume that individuals arrive as vagrants following severe storms that frequently affect the south part of the continent that cause deviations from usual migratory routes. However, when the presence of the Blacknecked Swan in Antarctica was first recorded (Bennett 1922), Argentina was suffering one of the most severe droughts of the century. In 1987 and 1988 another drought occurred in Argentina coinciding with the appearance of Blacknecked Swans in Antarctica. From this fact, we infer that severe droughts should be included among the causal factors of migration.

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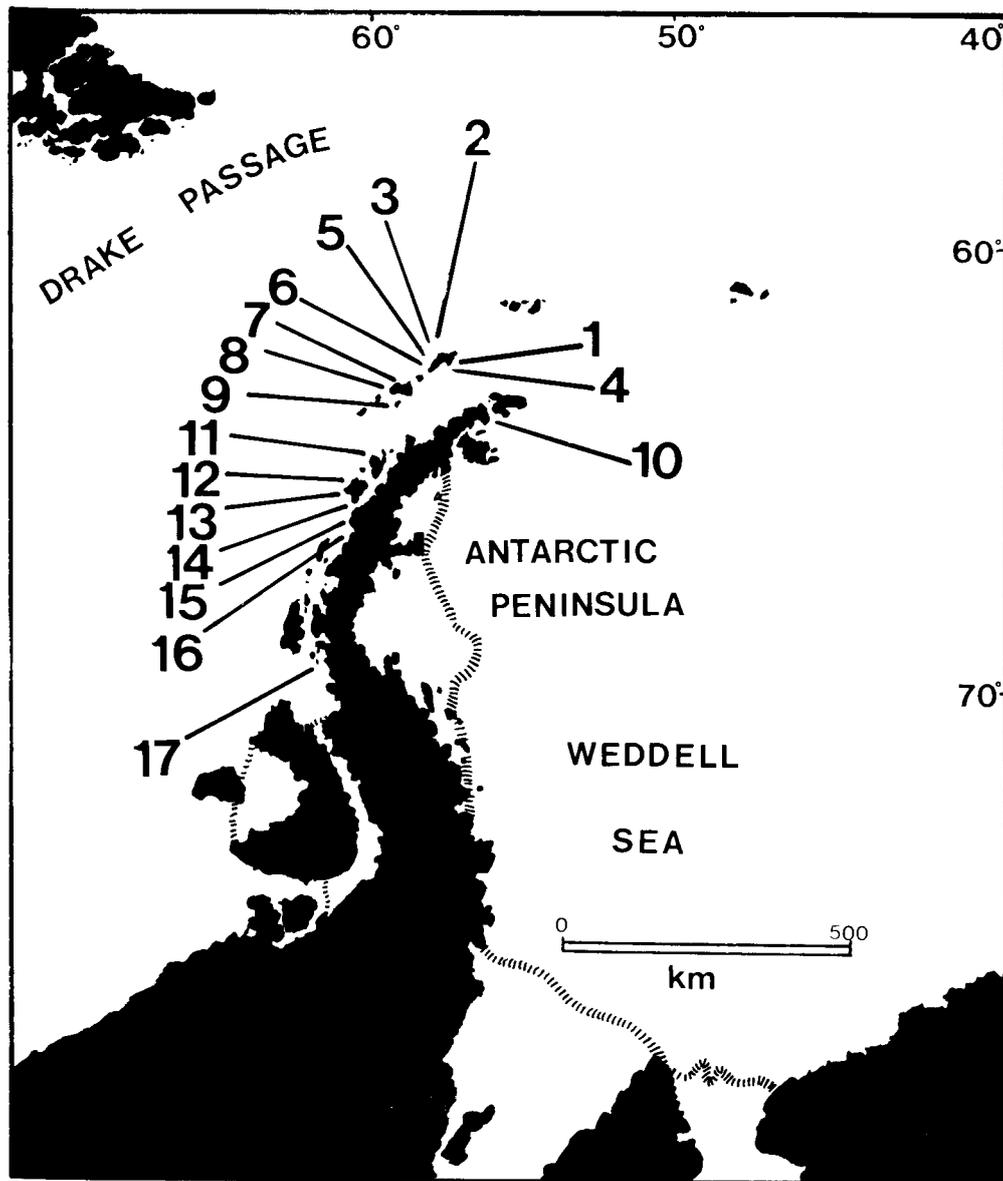


Figure 1

Sightings of Blacknecked Swans *Cygnus melanocoryphus* in Antarctica (see Table 1 for locality details).

TABLE 1

BLACKNECKED SWAN *CYGNUS MELANOCORYPHUS* SIGHTINGS IN ANTARCTICA ARRANGED IN INCREASING ORDER OF LATITUDE

| Locality | No. | Age | Date | Locality | Source |
|----------|-----|--------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | - | - | Arktowski Strait (62 09S, 58 27W) | Lange & Naumann (1990) |
| 2 | 1 | adult | 13 Jan 1989 | Fildes Strait (62 14S, 59 00W) | D. Gaona & R. Fontana |
| 3 | 11 | - | 27 Jan 1989 | Fildes Peninsula (62 13S, 59 06W) | Lange & Naumann (1990) |
| 4 | 8 | adults | 14 Jan 1989 | Caleta Poter, King George Island (62 15S, 58 41W) | D. Gaona & R. Fontana |
| 5 | 7 | | Jan 1989 | King George Island (62 18S, 58 35W) | Lazo & Yañez (1989) |
| 6 | 2 | | 7 Jan 1989 | Nelson Island (62 19S, 59 15W) | M. Favero |
| 7 | 3 | - | - | Livingston Island (62 27S, 60 47W) | Lange & Naumann (1990) |
| 8 | 3 | | 14-18 Jan Jan 1989 | Livingston Island | Lazo & Yañez (1989) |
| | 1 | adult | 2 Feb 1989 | Bahia Sud, Livingston Island (62 40S, 60 28W) | O. Fogliatto |
| 9 | 1 | adult | 29 Jan 1989 | Deception Island (62 57S, 60 38W) | J. Miller |
| | 4 | | late Jan - early Feb 1989 | Deception Island | Lazo & Yañez (1989) |
| | 3 | adults | 17 Feb 1989 | Forster Harbour, Deception Island (62 59S, 60 41W) | R. del Valle |
| 10 | 1 | adult | 8 Jan 1989 | Esperanza Station, Esperanza Bay (63 24S, 56 59W) | G. Diaz & J.L. Orgeira |
| 11 | 1 | adult | summer 1916-1917 | Charlotte Bay, South Shetland Island (64 33S, 61 39W) | Bennett (1922) |
| 12 | | | Nov 1988 | Palmer Station (64 46S, 64 03W) | Station personnel |
| | 5 | adults | 27 Dec 1988 | Palmer Station | Parmelee & Fraser (1989) |
| | 2 | adults | 4 Jan 1989 | Palmer Station | " |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|--------|-------------|---|---------------|
| | 1 | adult | 20 Jan 1989 | Palmer Station | " |
| | 4 | adults | 23 Feb 1989 | Palmer Station | " |
| 13 | 1 | adult | 6 Feb 1989 | Wiencke Island (64 49S, 63 30W) | " |
| 14 | 1 | adult | 3 Jan 1989 | Brown Station, Paradise Harbour (64 53S, 62 53W) | J. Najle |
| 15 | 1 | adult | 3 Mar 1989 | Antarctic Peninsula (64 54S, 62 52W) | E. Carriazo |
| 16 | | | Feb 1989 | Antarctic Peninsula (65 11S, 64 10W) | D. Stonehouse |
| 17 | 1 | adult | 2 Feb 1989 | San Martin Station, Marguerite Bay (68 08S, 67 04W) | H. Gordillo |

King George Island (Südshetland-Inseln, Antarktis). *Beitr. Vogelkd.* 36: 165-170.

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RECORDS WANTED OF VAGRANT BIRDS IN SEYCHELLES

Over 210 species of birds have been identified in the Republic of Seychelles, which also includes the coral limestone atolls of the Amirantes, Providence, Farquhar and Aldabra groups. Apart from a few species now extinct, some 65 of these breed (notably seabirds and mainly either endemic or introduced landbirds), and the rest are regular migrants (mostly waders and more seabirds), rare migrants or vagrants. Some of the last are annual; others are of particular interest as the only records for the whole of the Afro-Malagasy region. There has been no systematic attempt to assess these reports and as visitors to Seychelles increase, casual collection is becoming more difficult.

A Records Committee has therefore been established to collate data on birds in Seychelles. It will assess and publish records of vagrants, as well

as monitoring the populations of breeding species and migrants, with the ultimate aim of producing a full check-list. It is hoped that this will, in turn, lead to greater local appreciation of the importance of bird conservation. The members are Ian Bullock, Chris Feare, James Ferguson-Lees (Chairperson), David Fisher, Ron Gerlach, John Phillips, and Adrian Skerrett (Secretary). Two live in Seychelles, two more are former island reserve wardens, and the other three have all spent much time there.

We need past and present observations of any species that have been reported less than annually. Lists of records of which we are aware are available from A. Skerrett, P.O. Box 336, Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles, to which address we ask that all observations and supporting evidence be sent.