BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS *THALASSARCHE MELANOPHRYS* FEEDING ON A WILSON'S STORM-PETREL *OCEANITES OCEANICUS*

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Received 4 April 2007, accepted 10 November 2007

The diet of Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys* has been studied at several sub-Antarctic colonies (e.g. Ridoux 1994, Reid *et al.* 1996, Xavier *et al.* 2003) and found to consist mainly of fish, cephalopods and crustaceans. Although this albatross species travels vast distances during the non-breeding season (Croxall & Wood 2002), the types of food taken remain similar, although prey species and percentages tend to vary (Xavier *et al.* 2003, Gandini *et al.* unpubl.). Nevertheless, other prey items—such as seabirds, chiefly Spheniscidae and Pelecanoididae (Cherel & Klages 1997) and terns *Sterna* spp. (Colabuono *et al.* 2006)—have been occasionally taken by albatrosses. Here we report, for the first time, the finding of remains of a Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* in the stomach contents of a Black-browed Albatross.

While carrying out studies on the stomach contents of Black-browed Albatrosses incidentally caught by commercial longline vessels operating at the Patagonian Shelf between 7 October and 6 December 2005, we encountered feathers, a pelvic girdle and a pygostyle tentatively assigned to the family Hydrobatidae. The Black-browed Albatross caught on 18 November at 54°50′S, 58°32′W was an adult female with a wet mass of 3900 g and with wing and culmen lengths of 1060 mm and 118 mm respectively. The stomach of the bird weighed 73.1 g.

To determine the provenance of the sample, we first cleaned and removed all the remaining tissue and then compared the bones with osteologic material held at the Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia." The pelvic bones were identified as those of a Wilson's Storm-Petrel *O. oceanicus* (MACN 68489), thus confirming our hypothesis.

Favero & Silva Rodríguez (2005) recently showed that the Black-browed Albatross and the Wilson's Storm-Petrel occur along the Argentinean Continental Platform throughout the year. Furthermore, the presence of these species is significantly associated at the same foraging grounds (Veit 1995), and both species have been frequently recorded feeding on discards from the Argentine Hake *Merluccius hubbsi* trawl fishery (González-Zevallos & Yorio 2006) and from the Kingclip *Genypterus blacodes* and Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* longline fisheries (Seco Pon *et al.* 2007, Gandini *et al.* unpub. data).

According to Cherel & Klages (1997), 17 bird taxa belonging to the Sphenisciformes and Procellariiformes orders have been found in the stomachs of albatrosses. Although in general, penguins tend to be recorded more frequently, prions *Pachyptila* spp. and diving-petrels *Pelecanoides* spp. also occur in the diet of albatrosses in the Southern Ocean. Thus, the occurrence of small seabirds, such as the Wilson's Storm-Petrel, in the diet of Black-browed Albatrosses is not surprising.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Cecilia Kopuchian and Pablo Tubaro for helping with the osteologic material and to José Xavier, Nicholas Huin and Edward Soldaat for their assistance. Graham Robertson collaborated with helpful bibliography. Mariano Spinedi, Mariano Diez and Gabriela Scioscia provided logistical support. An anonymous referee and the editor greatly improved an earlier draft. Our research was funded by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia Austral, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata and CONICET.

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