

Notes

KLEPTOPARASITISM BY KELP GULLS *LARUS DOMINICANUS* OF AFRICAN BLACK OYSTERCATCHERS *HAEMATOPUS MOQUINI*

The Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* is a generalist coastal forager, though few details are known of its foraging strategy (Williams 1977, Brooke & Cooper 1979). This note reports on kleptoparasitism of African Black Oystercatchers *Haematopus moquini* as a foraging technique of Kelp Gulls.

The Kelp Gull is a common species at the islands in Saldanha Bay (Williams 1977) where many individuals forage in the intertidal zone (pers.obs.). At Marcus Island (33 03S, 17 58E), where these observations were made in a small cove, the intertidal zone is characterized by the presence of large beds of Black Mussels *Choromytilus meridionalis* and Ribbed Mussels *Aulacomya ater*.

Gulls foraging on Black Mussel beds obtained mussels in two ways. Either large mussels were pulled away from the substrate and dropped on nearby rocks to break the shells as described by Siegfried (1977) or mussels were obtained by kelptoparasitism of African Black Oystercatchers, which are also predators of mussels (Hockey in press). African Black Oystercatchers do not break the shells open, but sever the posterior adductor muscle thereby allowing the valves to be separated and the flesh to be easily removed (Hockey in press). Kelp Gulls were seen to follow foraging African Black Oystercatchers and wait until the mussel shell had been opened by the latter before stealing the prey. Kelp Gulls were not able to clean the shells as efficiently as do African Black Oystercatchers which frequently returned to the mussels after the shells had been abandoned by the gulls. African Black Oystercatchers feeding on the much smaller Ribbed Mussels were not kleptoparasitized by Kelp Gulls, presumably because Ribbed Mussels are too small for the gulls to clean efficiently. On one occasion a Kelp Gull robbed an African Black Oystercatcher of the holothuroid *Thyone aurea*.

Several pairs of African Black Oystercatchers regularly foraged in the cove on Marcus Island. Although the Black Mussel was the most abundant large invertebrate in the cove, the oystercatchers preyed on a greater diversity of species and fewer Black Mussels than did oystercatchers that defended linear territories elsewhere on the island where a similar range of prey species was available. It appears that African Black Oystercatchers have adapted their foraging strategy to reduce the impact of prey-specific kelptoparasitism by Kelp Gulls.

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THE SCIENTIFIC NAME OF THE COMMON DIVINGPETREL

The first scientific name proposed for the Common Divingpetrel was *Procellaria urinatrix* Gmelin, 1789, *Systema naturae*, vol.1, pt 2, p.560. The species was soon transferred to *Pelecanoides* and it has long been referred to under the combination *Pelecanoides urinatrix* (Gmelin). The specific epithet *urinatrix* is a feminine Latin noun meaning a female diver into water and Gmelin says of it in his original proposal *egregie urinans* (= famous for its diving). The equivalent masculine noun is *urinator* and this may be found in any good classical Latin dictionary.

The formation and use of scientific names in zoology is governed by the provisions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. Article 30 provides that a "name, if an adjective in the nominative singular, must agree in gender with the generic name with which it is at any time combined". This is standard practice in Latin and other inflected languages and applies to adjectives, including participles, but not to nouns or other parts of speech. Generic names are always nouns in the nominative singular.

Jouanin & Mougín (1979), *Check-list of the birds of the World*, ed. 2, vol. 1, p. 120, have changed the name of the Common Divingpetrel to *Pelecanoides urinator*, attributing the name to Gmelin. They appear to have done this because *Pelecanoides* is masculine whereas *Procellaria*, the genus in which *urinatrix* was proposed, is feminine. Since Gmelin's *urinatrix* is not an adjective, as explained above, Jouanin & Mougín's action is incorrect. What they have done is to create an unjustified emendation in terms of Article 33(a)(ii). Their name is an objective junior synonym, *Pelecanoides urinator* Jouanin & Mougín 1979, of *P. urinatrix* (Gmelin) 1789 which remains the valid scientific name of the Common Divingpetrel.

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FOOD OF KELP GULLS *LARUS DOMINICANUS* AT SQUARE POINT,
SOUTH WEST AFRICA

There is a small breeding colony of Kelp Gulls *Larus dominicanus* at Square Point (27 45S, 15 20E) on the coast of South West Africa/Namibia (Shaughnessy & Shaughnessy 1976). During visits to the colony on 30 January 1978, 25 July 1978 and 29 January 1980, food items were picked up from the ground. They are described here to supplement knowledge of the food habits of this gull reviewed by Brooke & Cooper (1979).

On the first visit the following fish remains were collected : vertebrae of a Snoek *Thyrsites atun*; skull and skin of a Galjoen *Coracinus capensis*; skull of a juvenile Kingklip *Xiphiurus capensis*. In addition, pieces of the exoskeleton of Crayfish *Jasus lalandii* and bones, skin and black fur of Cape Fur Seal pups *Arctocephalus pusillus* were found.

On the second visit more fish remains were found as well as beaks of cephalopods. The latter were from octopus (four beaks) and from ommastrephid squid (6).

On the third visit shells of the bivalve mollusc *Donax* sp., cuttlebones of cuttlefish (family Sepiolidae), exoskeletons of Crayfish and bones of Cape Fur Seals were found. The carapace length of the exoskeletons of 16 Crayfish averaged 56,5 mm (standard deviation 5,1; range 49 to 70). The exoskeletons had not been moulted since the carapaces were not split along the ecdysial suture.

The bones, skin and fur of Cape Fur Seals presumably originated in the nearby (200 m distant) colony at Van Reenen Bay where dead pups are frequent in January. Cape Fur Seals occasionally regurgitate food remains in the colony which are then scavenged by Kelp Gulls or Blackbacked Jackals *Canis mesomelas*. Since Cape Fur Seals feed on Crayfish, octopus, squid, cuttlefish, Snoek and Galjoen (Rand 1959), as well as Kingklip (unpubl.obs.), the food remains found in the gull colony may well have originated from the seals. Alternatively, these animals may have been washed up dead on the beach and scavenged, or caught live by the gulls. The last possibility is suggested because Kelp Gulls are known to catch live Crayfish (Berruti *et al.* 1979). Another possible source of the fish is the nets of trawlers, where Kelp Gulls have been seen foraging (Sinclair 1978).

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NEW DATA ON RARELY RECORDED SEABIRDS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Blacknecked Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

A flock of 60 was seen in McDougall Bay, Port Nolloth (29 17S, 16 52E) on 4 March 1977. This is only the third observation of Blacknecked Grebes at sea in South Africa (P. Ryan (1980) *Cormorant* 8: 24-25).

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Rockhopper Penguin

Eudyptes chrysocome

Four records, three new and one old, can be added to the 33 records of this species ashore in South Africa (J. Cooper (1979) *Cormorant* 6: 35-36).

1. Hermanus (34 25S, 19 15E) July 1969. The individual was taken into captivity (A. Westphal (1969) *Mar. Poll. Bull.* (old series) No. 14: 2-7).
2. Die Dam (34 46S, 19 41E). A moulting individual was seen ashore in the first half of February 1980 by K. Roux (pers. comm.). The bird was an adult, since it had long feather tassles. It was photographed but unfortunately the photographs have been stolen. Mr K. Roux (pers. comm.) identified the species by colour of the tassles which were yellow and not orange; he has seen this species at Gough Island.
3. Gerrike Point (34 02S, 22 46E). A moulting adult was taken into captivity on 14 February 1980, moult was completed by 17 February and the bird was released at the same locality on 20 February when it swam off to sea (N.G. Palmer *in litt.*). The individual was photographed (Fig. 1) and can be attributed to the northern subspecies *E. c. moseleyi* on its underflipper markings. Apparently Rockhopper Penguins have been seen in the region previously (N.G. Palmer *in litt.*).
4. Maitland River mouth (33 59S, 25 18E). A moulting individual was taken to the Port Elizabeth Oceanarium on 14 February 1979. It had short head plumes and was therefore not a juvenile. The bird died on 25 February. It is the northern subspecies *moseleyi* (PEM 1321/63) (G.J.B. Ross *in litt.*).

These new records fit the pattern previously shown (J. Cooper *et al.* (1978) *Ostrich* 49: 40-44) : that of predominantly northern subspecies *moseleyi* birds moulting ashore in January-February on the southern and eastern coast of the Cape Province of South Africa. It is interesting to note that Rockhopper Penguins have not yet been seen at sea in southern African waters.

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Macaroni Penguin

Eudyptes chrysolophus

Two records of the Macaroni Penguin exist for southern Africa (J. Cooper (1979) *Cormorant* 6: 36). A third individual was collected alive at Bakoven (33 57S, 18 23E) on 9 April 1980 and taken to the SANCCOB Rescue Station, where I measured and photo-

graphed it. It was a moulting adult weighing 4 250 g. Its exposed culmen was 56,5 mm and its bill depth at the gonys was 22 mm. The bird successfully completed moult and was released from the *S.A. Agulhas* at Marion Island during May 1980. It was flipper banded but has not yet been seen again!

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Southern Giant Petrel
(White phase individuals)

Macronectes giganteus

P.D. Shaughnessy & J.C. Sinclair (1979, *Cormorant* 7: 11-14) list 34 records of white phase Southern Giant Petrels in southern African waters. Two corrections are needed to their table: the Witelbos specimen is no. EL 15259 and not EL 11358; and the Dassen Island sighting of two birds was on 16 May 1977 and not on 16 May 1972 (P.D. Shaughnessy *in litt.*).

G.J.B. Ross (*in litt.*) reports a white phase individual photographed ashore by a Mrs Hoogenhout at Jeffreys Bay (34 03S, 24 56E) in early 1975. E.L. Layard (1869, *Ibis*: 458-460) mentions two white phase individuals then in the South African Museum, but only implies they were collected in southern Africa. Two old mounted specimens still exist in the South African Museum but are unlabelled and no information on them could be traced in accession registers (G. Avery, R.K. Brooke pers.comm.). As such they cannot be accepted as good records and the present tally stands at 35.

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Redtailed Tropicbird

Phaethon rubricauda

A.L. Batchelor (1979, *Cormorant* 7: 21-23) details 12 records of this species in southern African waters, some referring to more than one individual. He overlooked a record of an individual seen on the coast at Noetsie (34 27S, 20 44E) in ?December 1976 (J. Michler (1977) *Cape Bird Club Newsletter* 127: 4 and pers. comm.). J.A. Hofmeyr (1980, *Promerops* 143: 3) gives further information on an individual sighted at Cape Hangklip and reported by Batchelor (1979).

Two new records may be of the same individual: sightings of single birds were made on 20 April 1980 at Kommetjie (34 08S, 18 19E) by B. Ryan (1980, *Promerops* 145: 5) and at the Strandfontein Sewage Works (34 05S, 18 31E) on 22 April 1980 (B. Ryan (1980) *Promerops* 145: 5). The Kommetjie record is the first for the west coast of southern Africa in the Atlantic Ocean; all other southern African records are from the Indian Ocean (Batchelor 1979 and this note).

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Whitetailed Tropicbird

Phaethon lepturus

A.L. Batchelor (1979, *Cormorant* 7: 21-23) listed six records of this species in southern African waters. An overlooked reference was of an individual assumed to be this species that attempted to land on a ship at 30 26S, 14 40E in the Atlantic

Ocean (N.B.J. Stapleton (1977) *Sea Swallow* 26: 38-40).

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It is recommended that the following citation method should be followed when referring to these records : Baron, S. 1980. Blacknecked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*. In: New data on rarely recorded seabirds in southern Africa. *Cormorant* 8: 101
Records are requested of rare seabirds in southern African waters which have already been reviewed (see *Cormorant* 8: 34). The above style should be followed.

Editor

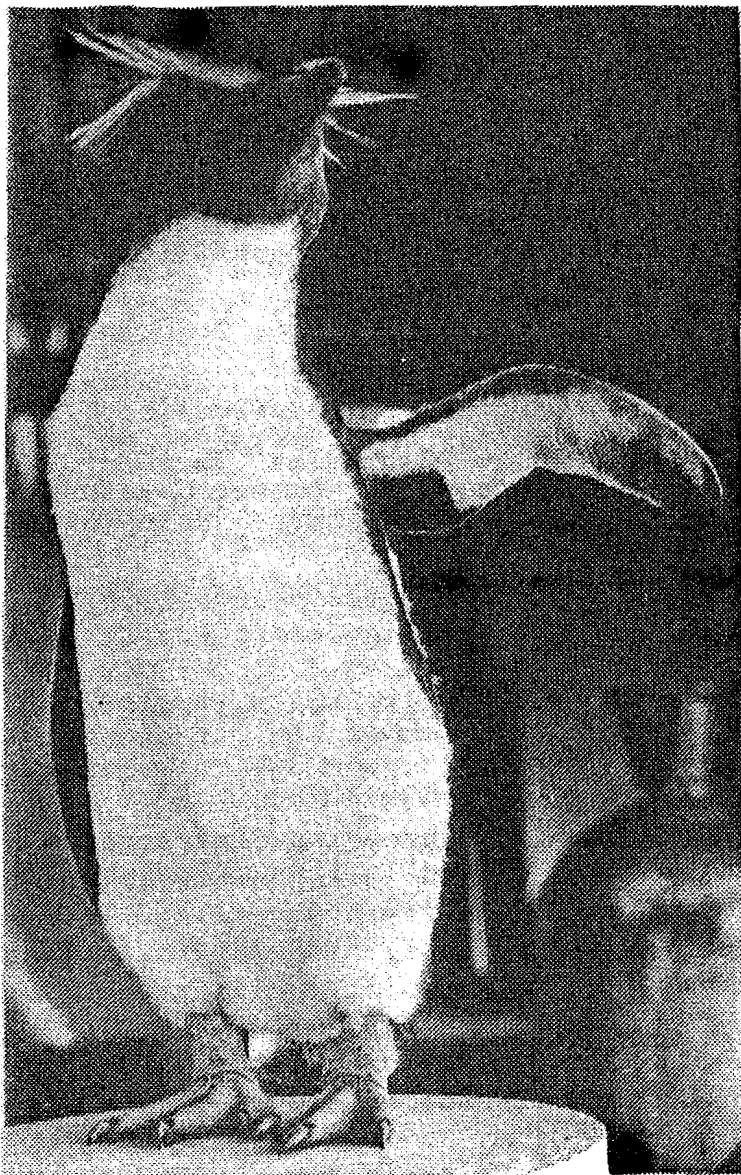


Figure 1

Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chrysocome moseleyi* captured ashore
at Gerrike Point, South Africa, 18 February 1980.

Photographed by N.G. Palmer