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SHORT NOTE

New record of Salvin's albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*) at the Diego Ramirez Islands, Chile

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Salvin's albatross, *Thalassarche salvini* (formerly *Diomedea cauta salvini*), breeds mainly at the Bounty Islands, New Zealand, with a few pairs at the Crozets (French Sub-Antarctic Is) and Snares Is (Onley & Bartle 1999). The population is highly concentrated (99% at Bounty Is) and is rapidly decreasing: at Bounty Is 76,000 pairs bred in 1978 and only 30,750 in 1998 (BirdLife International 2000). Salvin's albatross is classified as Vulnerable, as a result of its small breeding range (IUCN 2002).

In the non-breeding season, the known distribution of Salvin's albatross is the eastern Pacific Ocean along the coasts of Chile and Peru, principally between 14° and 38° S, and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans (Onley & Bartle 1999). To reach these areas, birds from New Zealand fly east or west from their natal islands (Harrison 1985; BirdLife International 2000). According to Harrison (1985), Salvin's albatross occurs in lesser numbers off South Africa, preferring to wander east from New Zealand across the South Pacific to the west coast of South America. However, C.J.R. Robertson (*in* Croxall & Gales 1998) suggested that the species disperses westward from New Zealand as far as Africa and South America (east coast), with some birds migrating eastward to the continental slopes of Chile and Peru.

Distribution records of seabirds off the southern Chilean coastline are sparse. Murphy (1936) recorded Salvin's albatrosses along the Humboldt Current, between Chilca, Peru (12° 31´S) to Ancud, Chile (41° 52´S); no southerly sightings wererecorded. Dr. Dabbene (quoted in Murphy 1936) has given two records of Salvin's albatrosses from the Magellanic region, but they were "based upon literature" descriptions and Murphy considered

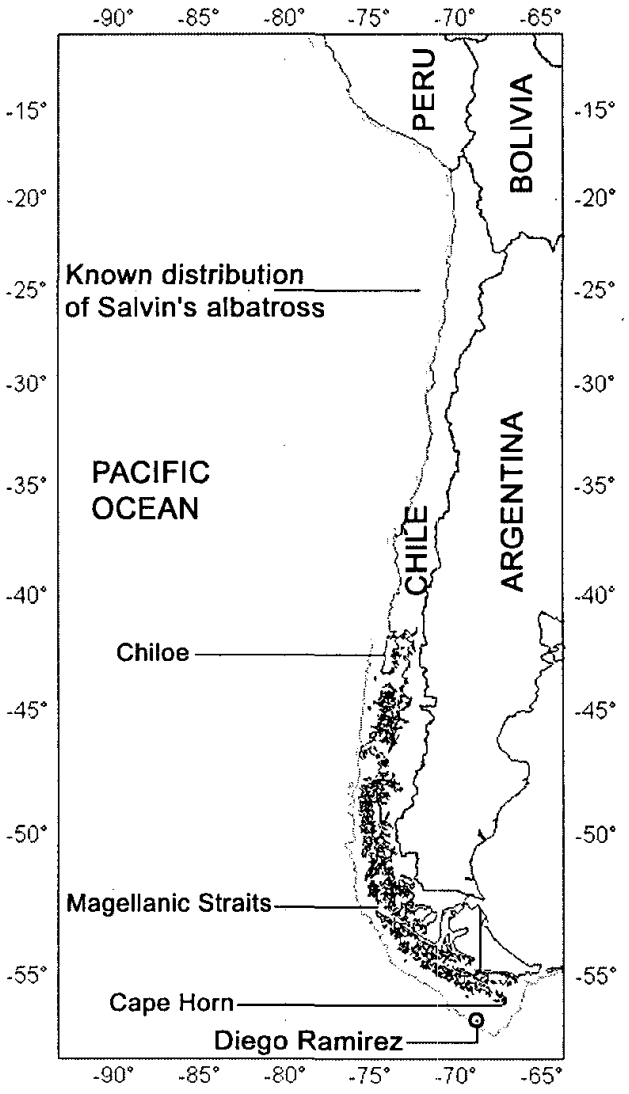

Fig. 1 Location of the Diego Ramirez Islands (56°31´S, 68°44´ W) in relation to the Chilean coast. The 1000 m isobath is shown. The shaded section along the Chilean coast indicates the known distribution of Salvin's albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*) in Chile.

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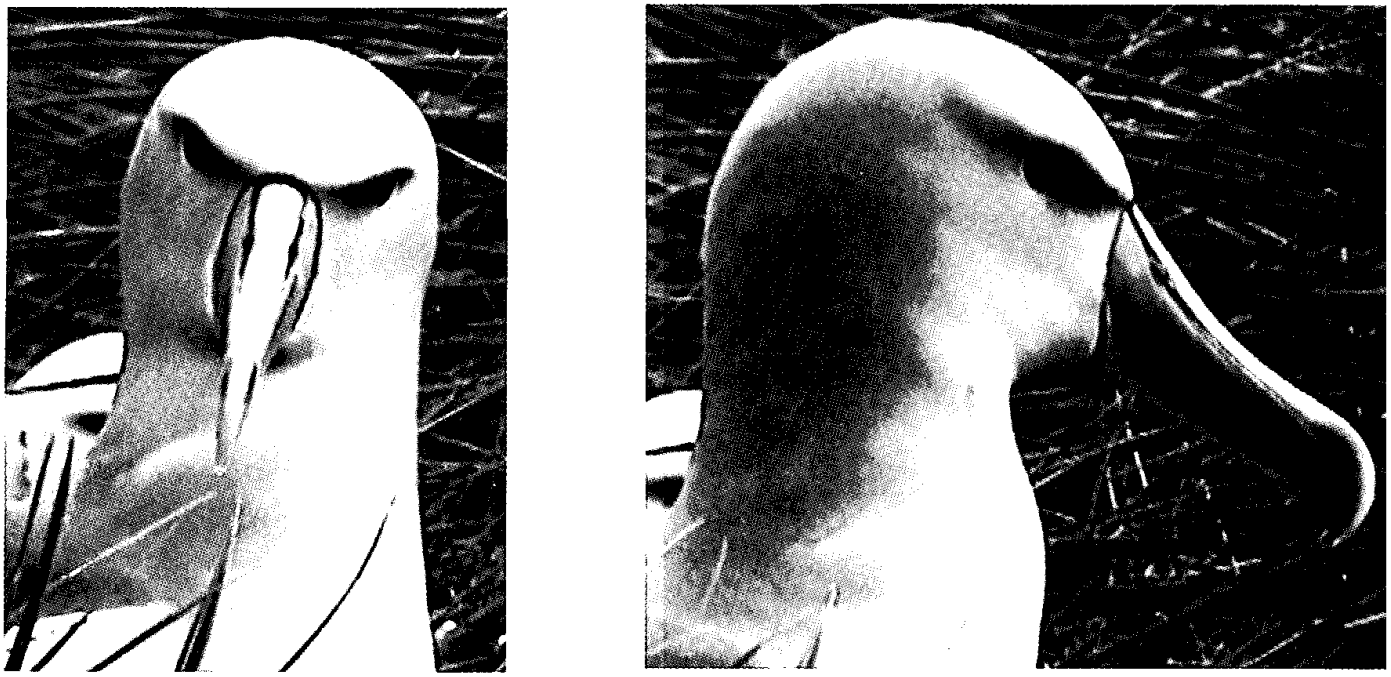

Fig. 2 Salvin's albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*) at Gonzalo Island on 23 Nov 2001.

them not to be reliable. Jehl (1973) reported that Salvin's albatross was common in Chilean coastal waters during autumn, from Arauco Gulf (38°S) to Chañaral Island (27°S), with the southerly record at Chiloe Island (42°S). Similarly, no Salvin's albatrosses were recorded by Brown *et al.* (1975) during the austral summer south to the Chiloe Island.

Several others expeditions to the Cape Horn region did not record Salvin's albatrosses (Clark *et al.* 1992; Linkowski & Rembiszewski 1978). The species was not recorded by Schlatter & Riveros (1997) during their 3-month-long expedition to the Diego Ramirez Is (56°31´S, 68°44´W), which lie 112 km southwest of Cape Horn, in the summer of 1980/81.

On 23 Nov 2001, I sighted a Salvin's albatross at Gonzalo Is, which is part of the Diego Ramirez Is, Chile (Fig. 1). The sighting was made opportunistically while conducting ecological research on albatrosses during the summers (November-March) of 1999/2000 to 2001/02. Only 1 Salvin's albatross was sighted. The characteristics that identified the bird as a Salvin's albatross, using descriptions by Onley & Bartle (1999), were: grey head and neck, with a lighter forehead, a narrow dark supra-orbital stripe, the upper culminicorn and lower parts of the bill pale yellow and sides blackish-yellow. An orange line was distinguishable at the base of mandible (Fig. 2). The blackish-yellow on the lateral sides of the bill indicates that the albatross was an older juvenile or subadult. The Salvin's albatross was noticed resting between the rockhopper penguin (*Eudyptes chrysocome*) and black-browed albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*) nests on a tussock slope at Gonzalo Island.

To my knowledge this is the 1st record of the Salvin's albatross in the Diego Ramirez/Cape Horn region. Its presence there is significant, because it indicates that the species has a wider distribution along the Chilean coast than was previously thought. Off-shore observations of seabird distribution in southern Chile are scarce and most have been made in the inland channels (Jehl 1973; Brown *et al.* 1975; Clark 1988). However, Salvin's albatross is distributed mainly along the continental slopes in Chilean waters (Spear *et al.* 1995), so its absence from check lists is not surprising. Further observations off the southern Chilean coast are necessary to determine the prevalence of this and other albatross species in this area.

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Keywords Salvin's albatross; *Thalassarche salvini*; dispersal; non-breeding distribution; southern Chile; Cape Horn

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SHORT NOTE

Red-billed gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*) feeding on seeds in a debris slick, Great Island, Three Kings, northern New Zealand

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During a visit in February 2001 to Great Is of the Three Kings group, several thousand seeds were found deposited on shoreline rocks in North West Bay. All seed deposits were associated exclusively with red-billed gull (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*) resting, roosting, and nesting sites, and were predominantly concentrated on flat areas and crevices of rocks. Seed also formed the bulk of all fresh red-billed gull droppings examined (n = 75).

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Species composition of samples from the seed deposits was identified using field notes and Webb & Simpson (2001). About 90% (n = 179) were puka (*Meryta sinclairii*), intermixed with *c.* 10% *Coprosma macrocarpa* sensu stricto, and <1% of ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*, probably var. *decumbens*) and taupata (*Coprosma repens*).

Both puka and *Coprosma macrocarpa* s.s. are endemic to the Three Kings Is (Eagle 1986; Cameron & de Lange 2000) and are moderately common on all of the islands (pers. obs). Puka is the dominant canopy species on South-West Is and