

SHORT NOTE

Records of juvenile northern giant petrels (*Macronectes halli*) in Peruvian seas

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Northern giant petrels (*Macronectes halli*) have a circumpolar distribution in the Southern Hemisphere, ranging from the pack ice northward to about 55°S, with occasional sightings as far north as 25°S. It breeds from Jul to Feb at several subantarctic islands, including the Prince Edward, Marion, Crozet, Kerguelen, Macquarie, Chatham, Stewart, Auckland, Antipodes, and Campbell groups (Harrison 1983).

Chick-rearing ends in early Mar almost every year (Harrison 1983; Voisin 1989). Northern giant petrels fledge in March (Patterson & Hunter 2000), after which juvenile *M. halli* disperse widely at sea, reaching the coasts of Africa and Australia (Harrison 1983). They typically spend several years at sea before returning to their natal colonies and eventually breeding, but the dispersal and movements at sea of this bird are poorly known (Voisin 1989, 1990). At least some may circle Antarctica, and some venture northwards along the coasts of eastern Australia and southern South America, or to South Africa (Voisin 1990). Sightings have been documented in the Humboldt Current (37°S) in February (Weimerskirch *et al.* 1985). There have been other sightings farther north on the east coast of South America (Hunter 1984)

I report here on observations (supported by photographs) of juvenile northern giant petrels made during a visit the central and southern Peruvian coast (Pachacamac Island 12°18' S 76°54' W to Punta Coles 17°2' S 71°22' W) during Jul-Aug 2004 while I was engaged in censuses of Humboldt penguins (*Spheniscus humboldti*) and marine otters (*Lontra felina*).

At sea, it is difficult to separate the southern (*M. giganteus*) and northern (*M. halli*) giant petrels, unless they are observed in good conditions. The best discriminating criteria are bill colour and plumage pattern (Voisin & Teixeira 1998). Juveniles of both

species fledge with identical blackish plumage, which later fades to brown; at this stage juveniles of both two species have developed the adult bill colour, and are readily separated (Voisin 1976; Harrison 1983). The bills of the birds I observed had the red tips characteristic of the northern giant petrel.

I observed this species 3 times during the study (7 juveniles in total). The 1st observation was on 6 Jul 2004 at 1200 h (local time) on Punta San Juan (15°04' S 75°09' W), where 3 juvenile *M. halli* c.400 m offshore were observed from land. On 12 Jul 2004, 3 more juvenile *M. halli* were observed from a boat, 2 km offshore near Ilo Harbor (17°42' S 71°22' W) at 1100 h (Fig. 1). The 3rd record was of 1 juvenile sighted on 7 Aug 2004 near La Vieja I (14°16' S 76°11' W); it was observed from a boat 8 km offshore. The locations of these sightings are shown in Fig. 2.

This species is typically sighted closer inshore as compared to the more pelagic *M. giganteus*. However, as with that species, adult male and female *M. halli* exhibit a clearly-defined spatial segregation in their foraging ranges (González-Solís *et al.* 2000a, b). One indication for this is that Shaughnessy and Voisin caught only 2 *M. giganteus* out of 44 giant petrels near Lüderitz, on the Namibian coast, in 1977 (Shaughnessy & Voisin 1981). However, the habits of juveniles of both giant petrels are unrecorded. My observations were made near the coast and there are no reports of this petrel from any of the offshore IMARPE (Peruvian Marine Research Institute) cruises, which were 5-100 nm offshore (Jahncke *et al.* 1998a, b).

There are some other sightings of juvenile *M. halli* from coastal South America. Voisin (1990) reported 4 juveniles recovered in Chile (25°S) that had been banded on Crozet and Kerguelen Is (southern Indian Ocean). Saubidet *et al.* (2001) reported 1 juvenile at Mar del Plata (38°S) in Apr 2000. This bird had been banded in Jan 2000 on Macquarie I (subantarctic southwest Pacific). I am



Fig 1 Three juvenile northern giant petrels (*Macronectes halli*), near Ilo Harbor, Peru, 12 Jul 2004: inset indicates proximity to coast.

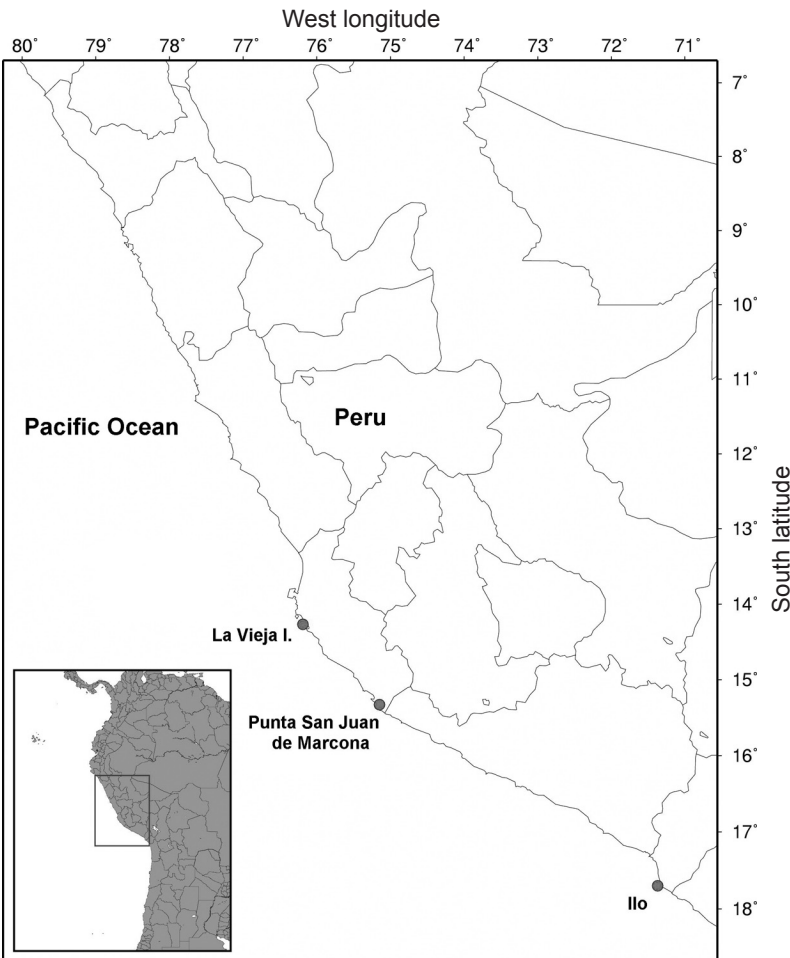


Fig. 2 Location of records of juvenile northern giant petrels (*Macronectes halli*) near the Peruvian coast in Jul-Aug 2004.

unaware of any previous published reports of *M. halli* from Peruvian waters.

Immature northern giant petrels undertake long and poorly-documented movements (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Fishermen based in Ilo Harbor have reported hunting giant petrels, so the *M. halli* may occur commonly in Peruvian waters than published records suggest. Because of the general lack of information about the movement of *M. halli* in South America, surveys are required to give a clearer understanding of its local population size, its distribution, and – especially in view of the reports of hunting – the conservation needs for this species.

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