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Notes on some Brazilian seabirds

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In the last decade we have accumulated some observations on Brazilian seabirds, based mainly on specimens deposited on beaches by bad weather. In addition, study of the little seabird material available in Brazilian ornithological collections surprisingly has revealed a number of misidentifications, some of them already absorbed into the South American ornithological literature. Thus, it seems to be necessary to clear up the existing mistakes and also to comment on the new data obtained. For specimens in Brazilian ornithological collections we have used the initials MN (Museu Nacional) and MZUSP (Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paula) with the respective catalogue number of each institution.

GREY-HEADED ALBATROSS *Diomedea chrysostoma*

In Brazil recorded only off the coast between São Paula and Santa Catarina (24°–27°S—*fide* Sick 1979). However, we obtained a specimen (MN 33293) from Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro (c. 23°S) in September 1983.

GREAT-WINGED PETREL *Pterodroma macroptera*

Blake (1977) noted that South American records of this species are erroneously credited to *Pterodroma brevirostris* in many works (Pinto 1938, 1964, 1978, Meyer de Schauensee 1966, etc). Apart from sight records, the occurrence of the Great-winged Petrel in Brazil seems to be based on 2 skins from Santos, coastal São Paulo (c. 24°S; *fide* Pinto 1938, Meyer de

Schauensee 1966, 1982, Blake 1977). A re-examination of both specimens (MZUSP 11118 and 13003) revealed that they are actually *Puffinus griseus*. Thus, the range of the Great-winged Petrel in Brazilian waters seems to be reduced to sparse sight records off the coast between Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, and off Rio Grande do Norte (*fide* Watson *et al.* 1971).

BLUE PETREL *Halobaena caerulea*

In South America this species is recorded as a common seasonal visitor in the Cape Horn area (Blake 1977), and casual off the coast of Peru (Meeth & Meeth *in* Harrison 1983), Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, north to around 30°S, during the austral winter (Murphy 1936, Meyer de Schauensee 1982, Harrison 1983). It has not hitherto been recorded from Brazil. We obtained 2 specimens (MN 33355, 33356) from Buzios, Cabo Frio (c. 23°S) in July 1984. Both birds were stranded on the beach, still alive, by the strong SW winds that blow along the SE Brazilian coast during the winter.

DOVE PRION *Pachyptila desolata*

In Brazil recorded only from Santos, São Paulo (*fide* Pinto 1938, 1964, 1978, Meyer de Schauensee 1982). We obtained specimens of this prion respectively from Praia do Cassino (MN 33352), county of Rio Grande, Rio Grande do Sul (c. 32°S) in June 1982, and from Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro (MN 33357) in July 1984. In both cases, the birds were deposited on the beach during storms, together with a great number of Slender-billed Prion *Pachyptila belcheri*. Such mortality can be very heavy; we recorded corpses of *Pachyptila* along a stretch of c. 180 km of coast, from Buzios to Rio de Janeiro, within a period of 4 days in July 1984.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

Recorded by Belton (1973) from Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil; also occurs on the coasts of São Paulo (see the note on *Pterodroma macroptera* above) and in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, from where we obtained 2 specimens (MN 33279 and 33358) in July 1983 and 1984.

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma castro*

The occurrence of this species in South America is apparently based on a single specimen (MZUSP 13804) from Angra dos Reis (c. 23°S), Rio de Janeiro (*fide* Pinto 1938, 1964, 1978, Blake 1977). However, a re-examination of this skin revealed that it is in fact *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The same mistake was noted by Watson (*in* Meyer de Schauensee 1966) for the supposed *O. castro* recorded from the Amazonas mouth (Snethlage 1914). The occurrence of *O. castro* in South American waters is possible, but apparently there are no substantiated records which support its inclusion in the Brazilian avifauna.

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD *Phaethon aethereus*

In Brazil this species nests on islands off the coast, such as Fernando de Noronha and Abrolhos, southern Bahia (c. 18°S), and has also been recorded off the coast of Maranhão (Pinto 1978). In March 1984 we recorded an adult on the coast of Cabo Frio, Rio de Janeiro. This appears to be the most southerly record known for this species in the Atlantic.

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata*

Nests on islands off the Brazilian coast (Fernando de Noronha, Atol das Rocas, Abrolhos) and is recorded along the coast of Amapá south to the mouth

of the Amazonas. We saw 2 individuals in Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro, in April 1977. Mainly pelagic, this species is evidently accidental in such southern waters, since it has not been observed again in Rio de Janeiro in subsequent years.

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Mouth size in *Macrodipteryx* and other African nightjars

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In seeking diagnostic characters for satisfactory identification of the nightjar species of Africa and its islands, I recently (Jackson 1984a) measured various features of a substantial number of nightjar specimens. It soon became apparent that there was little point in measuring the culmen of a nightjar and that a more meaningful measurement would be that of the tomium. Tomium measurements proved to be much less variable than culmen measurements, the coefficient of variability (c. of v.), i.e. the standard deviation as a percentage of the mean (Mayr et al. 1953), ranging from only 3.6 to 6.7 for the tomium as opposed to 7.5 to 14.8 for the culmen. The standard bill measurement for nightjars should therefore be tomium rather than culmen.

The measurement of the gape (c. of v. 5.3 to 12.0) also proved to be extremely useful, for the product of these 2 parameters (tomium x gape) provides a rough measure of the overall size of the mouth when wide open, or, in more practical terms, of the area of aerial scoop available for capturing prey. Using the mean measurements in Jackson (1984a) it is immediately apparent that the 2 *Macrodipteryx* species have remarkably small mouths, the tomium x



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