

Pied Shags have also begun nesting in two of the radiata pine trees on the Boulder Bank about 4 km from Haulashore Island, and 11 nests were counted there on 4 November 1991.

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### SHORT NOTE

#### A Wandering Albatross with abnormal underwing plumage

During December 1988, the CSIRO research vessel *Franklin* was working in the subtropical convergence zone in the southern Tasman Sea between Tasmania and the South Island of New Zealand.

On the morning of 12 December in position 43°30' S 160°35' E, some 284 nautical miles (526 km) WNW from Dusky Sound, about 25 Wandering Albatrosses (*Diomedea exulans*) were following and accompanying the ship. One of these was seen by NGC to have abnormal underwing markings. This bird stayed near the ship for about an hour, and after much effort MJC obtained several photographs.

The upperparts of the bird including the bill appeared to be normal, being consistent with Wandering Albatross plumage stage 4, illustrated by Harrison (1983a). The underwings were abnormal, being white with symmetrical black markings very similar to the pattern of a lightly marked Laysan Albatross (*D. immutabilis*), as shown in photographs in Farrand (1983) and Fisher & Fisher (1972). The black marking was slightly less extensive than shown in Harrison's (1983a) drawing, more central on the inner wing and not nearly so intense as on the bird in the photograph in Harrison (1987).

The proportions and size of the bird seemed the same as for other nearby Wandering Albatrosses. The underwing had normal dark tips but the black trailing edge was wider than usual. The leading edge of the underwing had

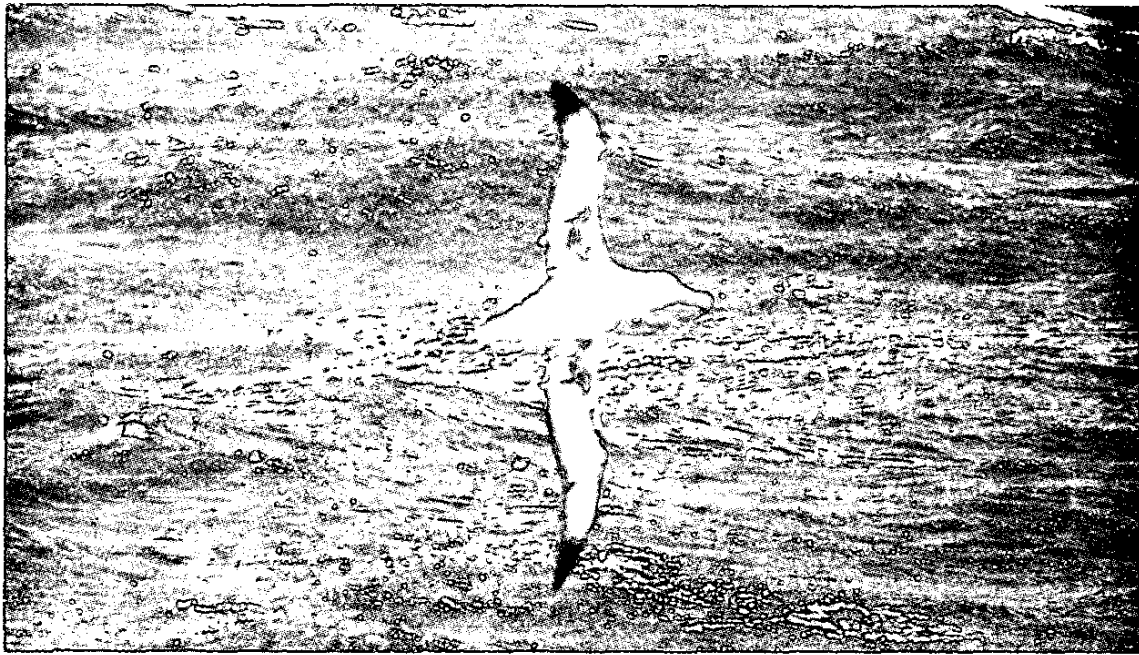


FIGURE 1 — Wandering Albatross with abnormal underwing markings

Photo: M.J. Carter

a black margin from tip to carpal joint. There was a black line from the carpal joint across the underwing towards the centre of the axillary that widened to an irregular black patch at the elbow.

The marking appeared to be natural plumage rather than the result of moult or staining from oil or other contaminant. We have both seen many hundreds of Wandering Albatrosses, but no others with similar aberrant plumage.

There are two well-authenticated records of Laysan Albatrosses in the south Indian Ocean (Harrison 1983b and Roux 1988). This observation illustrates the necessity of seeing all plumage features when considering sight records of long-distance vagrants.

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