

SHORT NOTE

A Chatham Island Mollymawk off the Peruvian coast

During the *Southern Cross* expedition organised by Mr & Mrs Black, who sailed their yacht from Europe to New Zealand in 1987-88, I was able to study seabirds on the route between Iquique (Chile) and the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador). Among the observations of many seabird species that are normal in this part of the ocean, the sighting of a Chatham Island Mollymawk (*Diomedea cauta eremita*) off the Peruvian coast seems most interesting.

On the morning of 22 July 1988, we were sailing about 165 nautical miles off Chiclayo, North Peru, (07°54' S, 82°21' W). At 1100 hrs, a grey-headed mollymawk with blackish wings and white underparts followed our vessel for a few minutes. When the bird approached to less than 100 m, I could see that it had a straw-coloured bill with a dark tip on both mandibles, very different from other White-capped Mollymawks (*Diomedea cauta* subsp.) observed previously. With this feature, the identification of the bird as a Chatham Island Mollymawk is straightforward. A picture of the bird was sent to Peter Harper of Canterbury University, New Zealand, who confirmed the identification. Harper & Kinsky (1978) and Harrison (1987) supposed that this mollymawk remains in the waters near its nesting site, Chatham Island, New Zealand, and Marchant & Higgins (1990) recorded that it ranges to the central South Pacific. However, considering this record, some individuals clearly range further. Knowing the distribution and wandering habits of other species of mollymawk, this first record of the Chatham Island Mollymawk off the South American Pacific coast may not be too surprising.

LITERATURE CITED

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