

Confirmation of Parkinson's Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni* in the Colombian Pacific

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Presentamos varios registros del *Procellaria parkinsoni* en el Pacífico colombiano, cuya presencia es ampliamente documentada en varias publicaciones pero que no se había confirmado su presencia en Colombia.

Parkinson's Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni* breeds on two islands of northern New Zealand. Its population has been estimated at 5,000 individuals and it is considered a globally Vulnerable species¹. Non-breeders wander over large areas of the Pacific, even reaching the Americas, where the species has been recorded from Mexico to Peru⁵, with largest numbers between 8°N and 14°S, especially in the northern Humboldt Current⁵. Hilty & Brown² suggested the presence of this petrel in the Colombian Pacific, based on records in neighbouring waters^{3,10}, whilst Salaman *et al.*⁶, in reviewing the list of bird species known from Colombia, also presented the species as hypothetical. However, Pitman & Ballance⁵ and Spear & Ainley⁷ provided evidence for its presence in Pacific waters off Colombia.

Here, we present several records of Parkinson's Petrel in Colombian waters and draw attention to another three pelagic bird species that have been recorded in Colombia.

Observations

We visited the Colombian Pacific between the port of Buenaventura and Malpelo Island, in February, March and July 2006, with the aim of conducting marine bird research on the island. This transect is c.260 nautical miles (nm) and takes c.36 hours, following an almost straight course over latitude 4°N. We registered marine mammals and seabirds during these trips, observing, on five occasions, relatively large petrels that were dark brown with a pale-coloured bill, which we identified as Parkinson's Petrel. (1) 15 February 2006 (FAE): one 75 nm from Buenaventura flying south (03°51'N 72°21'W). (2) 13 March 2006 (FAE & GS): 150 nm from the continent, one followed and flew around the boat, and also landed on the water just in front of it (providing good views), where the bird consumed a large dead purple-coloured octopus floating on the surface (03°50'N 76°12'W). (3) 22 March 2006 (FAE & GS): during the whole day, between 150 and 100 nm from the coast, one bird followed the boat distantly, occasionally landing in the wake. Two petrels were present at the end of

the day. (4) 23 March 2006 (CG): three followed the boat, resting behind it (Fig. 1). They fed on small unidentified particles on the surface (03°50'N 79°50'W). (5) 27 June 2006 (RJ, SB & GS): at c.09h00, one flew around the boat and landed on the sea (03°50'N 78°26'W).

Discussion

Our records of Parkinson Petrel were off the continental shelf, where also reported by Spear *et al.*⁵. Although we did not observe the species associating with cetaceans, we did witness consumption of dead octopuses, as reported for other *Procellaria*⁵. It is evident that our records fall within this petrel's expected distribution in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, despite the species not appearing in the Colombian national checklist. We consider that the relative lack of pelagic bird species on the Colombian list is almost solely a reflection of the lack of attention being paid to such species in country⁴, though efforts are underway to change this, with collaborative ventures by some institutions.

It should also be noted that three other species recorded by Spear & Ainley⁷ were also omitted from the Colombian checklist⁶, namely Christmas Island Shearwater *Puffinus nativitatis*, White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta grallaria* and South American Tern *Sterna hirundinacea*. More recently, Spear & Ainley⁸ suggested, via a probability model, that Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* might occur in westernmost Colombian waters, beyond Malpelo, especially in the Northern Hemisphere autumn, albeit at very low densities.

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Figure 1. Parkinson's Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni*, off the Colombian coast, 23 March 2006 (Carolina García)

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