red within the proximity of their birthsites seems to suggest that on Marion Island, orientation to their birthsite after weaning does not seem necessary and is possibly learnt later in the seal's life.

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The status of seabirds at Prince Edward Island

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Evidence of breeding of storm petrel and burrowing petrel species at Prince Edward Island (46°38'S, 37°57'E) is given, including the first positive breeding record of black-bellied storm petrel Fregetta tropica, *at this island group. Further records of white-phase southern giant petrel* Macronectes giganteus, *and revised population assessments of the yellow-nosed* Diomedea chlororhynchos *and grey-headed* D. chrysostoma, *albatrosses are given.*

Bewys van die broei van stormswawel en grawende stormvoël soorte by Prins Edward-eiland (46°38'S, 37°57'O) is gelewer, insluitend die eerste positief broei rekord van die swartpens stormswawel Fregetta tropica, *by die eilande. Verder verslae van witgestalte suidelike nellie* Macronectes giganteus, *en hersiende bevolkings begrotinge van die geelbek-malmok* Diomedea chlororhynchos *en gryskop-malmok* D. chrysostoma, *is gelewer.*

Introduction

The Prince Edward Group of islands (46°54'S, 37°45'E) consists of two main islands, Prince Edward and Marion, and a few small stacks. The populations of surface-breeding species at Marion and Prince Edward islands have been censused (Williams *et al.* 1979). However, the status of burrowing petrels is not as clear, particularly for Prince Edward Island, where the breeding of a number of species has yet to be confirmed. Differences in species composition of burrowing petrels breeding at the two islands may exist, because introduced populations of feral cats *Felis catus* and house mice *Mus musculus* exist at Marion Island. Cats kill adults and chicks of petrels (Van Aarde 1977, Williams 1978) while house mice might eat eggs and chicks of the smaller species. Furthermore, the two islands differ physiographically, so perhaps affecting nest-site availability. This report summarises evidence for breeding in storm petrels and burrowing petrels at Prince Edward Island, and presents new census data for two albatross species, and further records of the occurrence of white phase southern giant petrels *Macronectes giganteus.*

Methods

Prince Edward Island is uninhabited, and parties landed by boat undertook field expeditions in April and September 1979. Specific searches were made for burrowing petrels during these two visits, which did not coincide with the egg and chick stages of most burrowing petrels. Estimates of the numbers of birds in mixed colonies of yellow-nosed (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*) and grey-headed (*D. chrysostoma*) albatrosses were made in September.

Results

Chicks of great-winged petrels *Pterodroma m. macroptera* and grey petrels *Procellaria cinerea* were found in September. Adult birds were found in burrows in April and September, and some fully-fledged young grey petrels started leaving their nests in mid-September.

A desiccated carcass of a nestling black-bellied storm petrel *Fregetta tropica* was found on a nest in September. Numerous similar freshly-lined nests were found nearby, among or under rocks, in an extensive area of old, vegetated, black basaltic lava flows. This is the first definite breeding record of this species at the Prince Edward islands. Adult birds were common in September 1979. Thus, the breeding season at Prince Edward Island may be almost two months earlier than at Signy Island in the Antarctic zone (Beck & Brown 1971).

Adult Salvin's prions *Pachyptila vittata salvini* and Kerguelen petrels *Pterodroma brevirostris* were found in burrows in April and September. Adult blue petrels *Halobaena caerulea*, soft-plumaged petrels *Pterodroma mollis*, white-chinned petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis*, grey-backed storm petrels *Garrodia nereis* and common diving petrels *Pelecanoides urinatrix exsul* were found or heard in burrows in September. A few fairy prions *Pachyptila turtur* were seen entering a cave in September. It is reasonable to assume that all these species breed at Prince Edward Island. There are still, however, no records of eggs or chicks of grey-backed storm petrels at the Prince Edward islands.

South Georgian diving petrels *Pelecanoides georgicus* were not found breeding, the September visit being too early. We also failed to find any burrows of this species at Marion Island in September. The bird's breeding season commences in October at South Georgia (Payne & Prince 1979), and nesting burrows, dug into unstable scoria, become obstructed and obscured afterwards. Even so, we found a few old burrows probably of this species on McAll Kop. Van Zinderen Bakker Jnr (1971) suggested that South Georgian diving petrels nested on the plateau. Most diving petrels captured in 1973-79 at Marion Island were South Georgian diving petrels.

Common diving petrels have not been reported as breeding at Marion Island since 1951-52 (Rand 1954). This species may have been extirpated by the feral cats at Marion, while it was found commonly on Prince Edward Island during September.

A white-phase southern giant petrel *Macronectes giganteus* was found on 16 September 1979 at a breeding colony near Golden Gate, Prince Edward Island. The bird apparently had a dark-phase mate, and was occupying a nest site. During September 1980 two white-phase birds were seen in the same area, one copulating with a dark-phase bird. At Marion Island a single white-phase bird was seen offshore at Transvaal Cove on 8 December 1979, and 21 January 1980, and at the macaroni penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus* colony at Bullard on 21 January and 18 February 1980. There are four previous records of white-phase southern giant petrel at the Prince Edward islands (Williams & Burger 1978).

The total number of both yellow-nosed and grey-headed albatrosses were estimated from ground counts in September when eggs had not been laid and few females of either species were present. The total number of pairs of yellow-nosed and grey-headed albatrosses breeding annually at Prince Edward Island is now estimated at 7 000 and 1 500 pairs, respectively, compared to the 5 000 and 870 pairs respectively estimated by Williams *et al.* (1979).

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