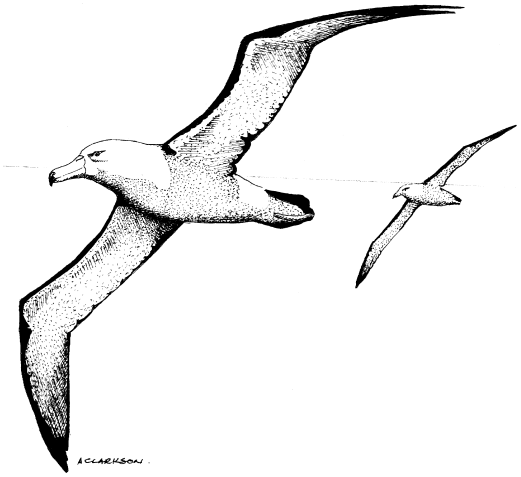
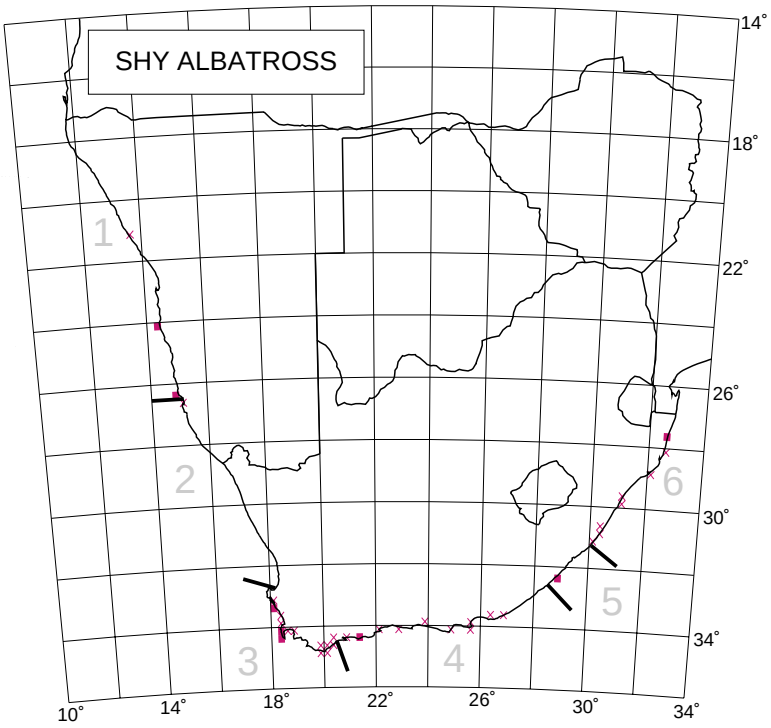




Shy Albatross

Bloubekmalmok

Diomedea cauta

The Shy Albatross is a common nonbreeding visitor. It occurs from Angola to southern Mozambique (Brooke 1981b; Brooke *et al.* 1981), but is most numerous off the west and south coasts. It breeds on islands off Tasmania and New Zealand. There have been claimed sightings of subspecies *D. c. salvini* and *eremita*, but only nominate *cauta* has been recorded with certainty, and most if not all individuals in southern African waters are attributable to the nominate subspecies. Nonbreeding *cauta* disperse through the Indian Ocean to southern Africa; rarely from the Pacific Ocean and western South Atlantic (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Some 70 000 pairs of the nominate subspecies *cauta* breed at the Auckland Islands and at islands off Tasmania (Marchant & Higgins 1990).

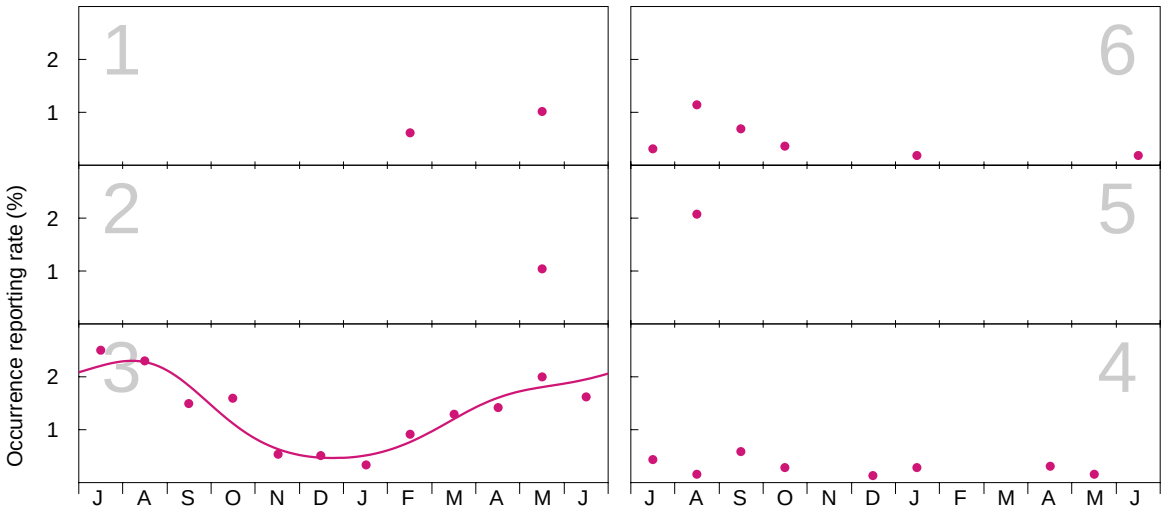
It is virtually restricted to the continental shelf; it is rare in oceanic waters. It attends trawlers where it is the dominant albatross owing to its larger size than other mollymauks. It is the most abundant albatross at trawlers off the eastern Cape Province (Liversidge & Le Gras 1981). However, it is more frequently seen away from trawlers than is the Blackbrowed Albatross *D. melanophris* (Ryan & Moloney 1988), and often joins flocks of shearwaters and petrels feeding on pelagic fish schools (Ryan & Rose 1989). It therefore occurs closer inshore than do other albatrosses, and is the species most often seen from coastal promontories (Berruti & Sinclair 1983).

Recorded in 33 grid cells, 0.7%
Total number of records: 139
Mean reporting rate for range: 1.3%

It occurs throughout the year off the west coast, but is a late-winter (July–September) visitor to KwaZulu-Natal (Cyrus & Robson 1980). Adults are fairly common throughout the year, suggesting that not all adults breed each year. The greatest numbers occur during winter (May–October) (Liversidge & Le Gras 1981; Ryan & Rose 1989).

Small numbers are killed directly or indirectly by commercial fishing operations.

P.G. Ryan



Models of seasonality for Zones. Number of records (top to bottom, left to right):
Occurrence: 3, 1, 101, 16, 1, 17.