

than average (Bureau of Meteorology records for Kingscote, Kangaroo Island). In other words, during those sparse years, the air temperatures for May to August (the albatross season) were higher than average, and this would appear to have been associated with the presence of albatrosses. In some years, it may also have been related to the quantity of cuttlefish available, which could influence the albatross numbers.

At the time of compiling these notes, Dr Henri Weimerskirch, the French ornithologist responsible for retrapping four of my Black-browed Albatrosses on the Kerguelen Islands, is spending two months at Crozet Island and this may perhaps result in further interesting recoveries of Australian banded birds.

The most abundant and frequently caught albatrosses were the Black-browed Albatross and Shy Albatross. The Black-browed Albatrosses came from islands to the west in the southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and the regularity with which banded birds were recaptured indicates that they were returning to a proven feeding area. All Shy Albatrosses, on the other hand, were from the nearest breeding site to the east, Albatross Island off north-west Tasmania. Eight of these birds were less than one-year old and the others about a year or a little older.

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## THE WANDERER

Two French biologists, Pierre Jouventin and Henri Weimerskirch, working on the Crozet Islands in the southern Indian Ocean have succeeded in placing small transmitters on the Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*, and tracking their foraging movements by satellite (*Nature*, 1990, 343 746–748). They report the movements of five males tracked during the incubation period and two flights of one male feeding a chick. One male moved north-west over the Indian Ocean and covered 5 609 km in a 24-day absence, and another moved east and flew 5 323 km in 24 days. A third bird travelled over 15 200 km in 33 days in a flight which took it east to encircle Heard Island, then south to near Antarctica at about 70° E from where it flew east to 30° E before flying north and north-east back to the Crozet Islands. The average speeds of these

flights were 49.2 to 58.4 km per h and birds flew at speeds of up to 80 km per h. They covered distances of up to 900 km per day. The male feeding a chick flew shorter distances of 381 and 330 km in three days. Details of one flight show the direction of flight and the distances travelled in relation to the prevailing weather systems. Birds flew all day but mostly during daylight; birds did fly at night when there was moonlight. High pressure systems trapped birds for one to seven days. The authors consider that the use of wind as the primary source of energy has enabled the evolution of the largest of flying seabirds; a bird which breeds on the few isolated islands of the Subantarctic and wanders over the whole of the southern seas to feed.

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