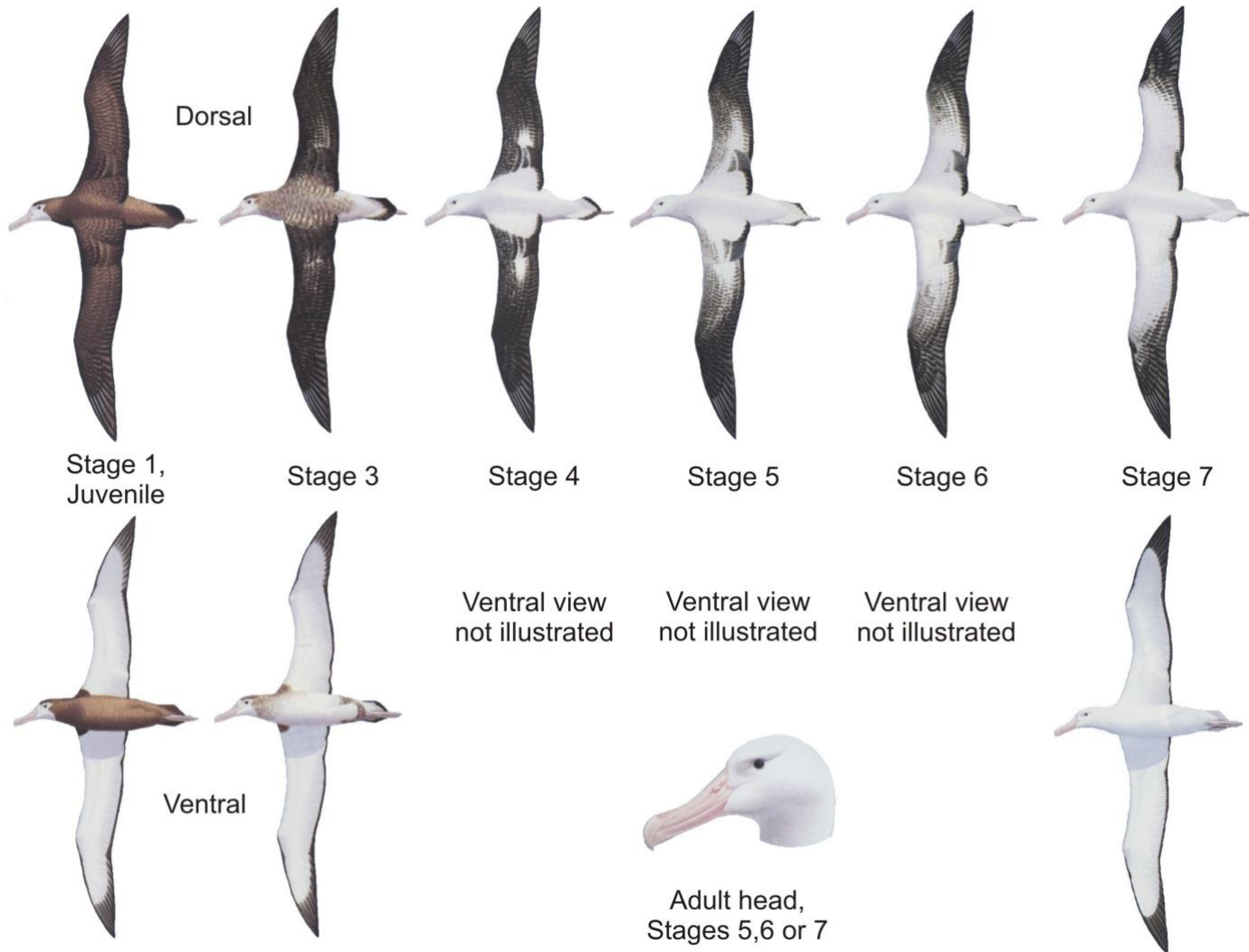


Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans* Species Code.: 042 Band: R
(1 of 4)



Status:

HANZAB treated the species as polytypic with two subspecies *D.e. exulans* and *D.e. chianoptera* and mentioned potentially two additional subspecies breeding on islands of NZ. BirdLife Australia Working List v3 (August 2019) regards the species as monotypic. Clements (August 2019) recognises five subspecies *D.e. exulans* (Snowy Albatross), *D.e. dabbenena* (Tristan), *D.e. antipodensis* (NZ), *D.e. gibsoni* (Gibson’s) and *D.e. amsterdamensis* (Amsterdam).

Morphometrics:

The morphometrics published in HANZAB for live birds are below. Depth of bill is measured from the junction of frontal feathering with the exposed culmen to the lower edge of the mandibular ramus below:

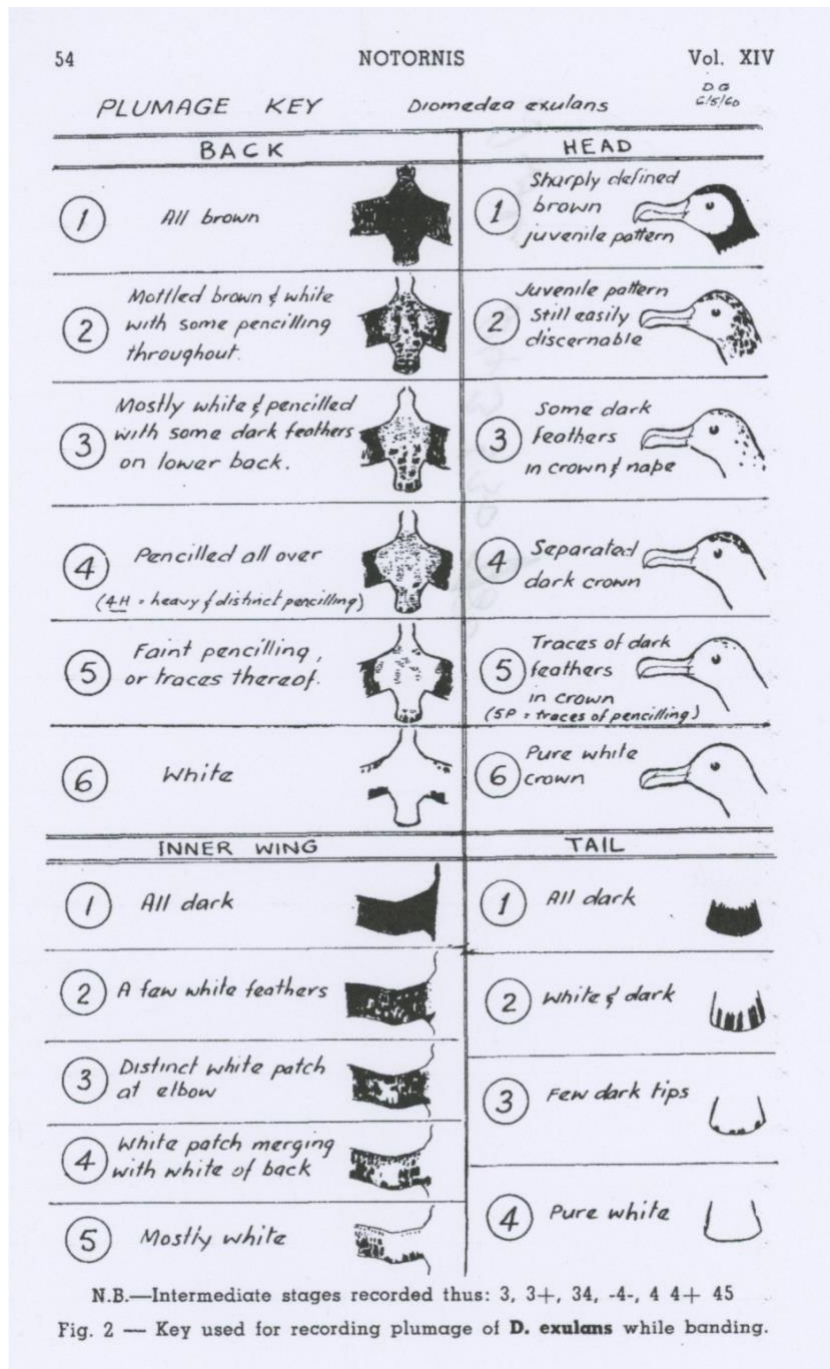
	Males	Females
Wing:	635 – 701 mm	618 – 657 mm
Tail:	201 – 228 mm	193 – 215 mm
Bill (tip to skull):	158 – 181 mm	156 – 166 mm
Bill depth:	34.8 – 40.4 mm	31.1 – 36.7 mm
Tarsus:	123 – 132 mm	117 – 123 mm
Middle Toe:	148 – 172 mm	151 – 169 mm
Weight:	7.350 – 11.907 kg	5.670 – 8.703 kg

Wandering Albatross (2 of 4)

Ageing:

HANZAB included illustrations of six of seven plumage stages (see illustrations above) suggested by Harrison, (1979, 1985, 1985), but these are not distinct plumages defined by different generations of feathers and many intermediates occur. These stages cannot be accurately related to specific ages because of variability in staffelmauser moult sequences, different plumage stage timing between the sexes and also geographically distinct (breeding island) plumages. Except for juveniles and downy young, no two Wandering Albatross look alike. The rate of whitening is not known precisely, nor whether whitening is continuous, interrupted or briefly reversed.

HANZAB also referenced the 'Gibson Code' (GC), a more detailed classification for use by banders with birds in the hand, was developed by Gibson (1967). The key developed by J.D. Gibson (originally published in *Notornis* 17: 47-57) is reproduced below:



Wandering Albatross (3 of 4)

Following is an abridged HANZAB description of the seven *Harrison* described plumage stages, but also with Gibson Code scores:-

Stage 1 (see illustrations):

All juveniles and probably no other ages.

All GC = 1 except for face and throat which is white;

Stage 2 (not illustrated):

This plumage only occurs at sea and has not yet been found among birds on breeding islands. Age of attainment unknown, but probably at 1-2 years because it results from worn and just replaced juvenile plumage. Recorded on 4, 6 and 14yo females recaptured at sea.

Head & neck GC = 1-2;

Upperparts GC = 1;

Tail GC = 1;

Upperwing GC = 2;

Underparts off-white;

Underwing GC = 1.

Stage 3 (see illustrations):

This plumage not recorded on breeding males at S.Georgia, but on 9% of breeding females and on 2x 5yo and 4x 6yo non-breeding females. At Macquarie Is., recorded on 8yo non-breeding male, but not in breeding males and also on 14yo female non-breeder and 13+ yo breeding female.

Head & neck GC = 2-3;

Upperparts GC = 3-4;

Tail GC = 2;

Upperwing GC = 2;

Underparts white with upper breast & flanks vermiculated dark brown at tips of feathers;

Underwing GC = 1;

Stage 4 (see illustration):

At S. Georgia recorded on about 8% of breeding males and 69% of breeding females, but 3x 5yo pre-breeding males had this plumage. On Macquarie Is., this plumage found on 15yo and 16yo breeding males and 2x 14yo non-breeding males and also recorded on 5 of 13 females, including a 16yo non-breeder and 4x breeding birds.

Head & Neck GC = 3-4;

Upperparts GC = 4;

Tail GC = 2-3;

Upperwing GC = 3;

Underparts white with darkly vermiculated at feather tips of upper breast & flanks;

Underwing GC = 1, but no pre-axillary notch.

Stage 5 (see illustration):

At S. Georgia occurs on about 15% of breeding males and 20% of breeding females. At Macquarie Is., recorded on 5 of 17 males, including one 19yo and one at least 2yo, but not recorded in 13x females.

Head & neck: GC = 5-6;

Upperparts GC = 5;

Tail GC = 3;

Upperwing GC = 4-5;

Underparts mostly white;

Underwing GC = 1, but no pre-axillary notch.

Wandering Albatross (4 of 4)

Stage 6 (see illustration):

At S. Georgia occurs in about 23% of breeding males and less than 3% of breeding females. At Macquarie Is., recorded in 37% of males, including one aged at least 21 years, but not recorded in females.

Head & neck GC = 6;
Upperparts GC = 6 as illustrated;
Tail GC = 3;
Upperwing GC = 5;
Underparts mostly white;
Underwing as stages 4 & 5.

Stage 7 (see illustrations):

Probably occurs only in old males. At S. Georgia 43% of breeding males had this plumage and no breeding females showed this plumage. Age of attainment is unknown but probably after first breeding which is about 10 years.

Head & neck GC = 6;
Upperparts GC = 6 as illustrated;
Tail GC = 4;
Upperwing GC = 5;
Underparts white;
Underwing as stages 4, 5 & 6.

Sexing:

Males are generally larger than females in all measurements, but there is a large overlap. Nevertheless, sexing may be possible using a combination of measurements, but this needs confirmation from measurement ranges for both sexes of each subspecies and these are not presently available;

Similar Species:

Southern Royal Albatross *D. epomophora* which is a similar size and some plumage stages are similar (see separate field data sheet), but the most obvious difference, at all ages, is the colour of the tomia of the upper mandible which in *D. exulans* is horn coloured and in *D. epomophora* is black;

Northern Royal Albatross *D. sanfordi* which is considerably smaller than *D. exulans* (see separate field data sheet) and like *D. epomophora* has a black tomia, whereas in *D. exulans* it is horn coloured.