

RECORDS OF ALBATROSSES IN THE KAMCHATKA WATERS OF THE SEA OF OKHOTSK

During registration trawlings held within the framework of Federal State Unitary Enterprise KamchatNIRO aboard Stern Medium Refrigerator Trawler “Professor Probatov” from July 02 till August 23, 2005 in the eastern part of the Sea of Okhotsk we were concurrently taking sight on the sea birds, primarily for the purpose of registration of the rare albatross species. The vessel was conducting registration bottom trawlings along the sections perpendicular to isobaths and spaced at intervals of 15-25 miles. The main area of work included the shelf zone with depths from 15 to 200 m between 51°15' and 57°25' N. Several additional trawlings were held on the continental slope in the area 53–55° N within the depth range from 201 to 560 m and in the southern part of the Shelikhov Bay over the depths 45–134 m. Three species of North Pacific albatrosses were registered.

Short-tailed albatross *Diomedea albatrus*. 5 sightings of the birds of this species were registered.

July 26, coordinates 56°18' N, 155°28' E, depth 50–70 m. A juvenile bird (at the age of 2-3 years) was clinging to the vessel going adrift from 4:00 p.m. till nightfall. The bird never came closer than 15-20 m to the vessel and was feeding on the discarded fish together with other sea birds. July 31, coordinates 53°18' N, 154°40' E, depth over 200 m. At the daytime a juvenile bird was shortly seen on the wing during the vessel's transfer from one trawling station to another. August 15, 08:35 a.m., coordinates 54°55' N, 153°55' E, depth 522–525 m. A juvenile bird was noted in the course of trawl deployment.

August 15, 4:15 p.m., coordinates 55°01' N, 154°30' E, depth 246 m. After hauling in the trawl an adult bird was seen astern on the water for 3-5 minutes and then dropped out from sight. In the course of the vessel's moving to the next trawling position (54°45' N, 153°51' E, depth 512–513 m) from 5:30 till 7:30 p.m. two birds in adult plumage were keeping astern. They followed the vessel at the distance of 200-300 m together with fulmars *Fulmaru glacialis* and seagulls *Larus* sp.

August 21, 08:55 – 10:00 a.m., coordinates 54°33' N, 154°00' E, depth 542 m. After hauling in the trawl a juvenile (about 3 years old) and an adult bird were seen astern on the water. Together with other sea birds they were feeding on the offal discharged into the water from the vessel.

Laysan albatross *Diomedea immutabilis*.

From 2 to 18 birds were seen during each trawling from August 15 till August 23 in the area between 53 и 55° N on the continental slope (300-580 m). On the whole, the number of Laysan albatrosses was increasing seaward over the large depths and decreasing at the shorter distances from the shore.

Black-footed albatross *Diomedea nigripes*.

Single birds were registered three times: on August 15 at 09:05 a.m. (coordinates 54°57' N, 153°54' E, depth 522–525 m), on August 15 at 04:15–05:00 p.m. (coordinates 55°01' N, 154°30' E, depth 246 m) and on August 21 at 08:55–10:00 a.m. (coordinates 54°33' N, 154°00' E, depth 542 m).

All three albatross species were sticking mainly to the central part of the study area, outside the shelf zone (the area of continental slope, the Swan trench). This may be related to the fact that during this period trawl fishing, net fishing and bottom long-line fishing of black halibut were taking place there, resulting in presence of fish processing offal. Only small-size vessels of Small Fishing Seiner type not engaged in the fish processing were fishing closer to the shore, on the shelf, and this may be the reason why there were almost no albatrosses in the shelf zone.

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<http://www.terrakamchatka.org/bird.htm>