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|  <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p> | <p>Fifth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group <i>Florianópolis, Brazil, 9 - 10 May 2019</i></p> <p>Foraging behaviour and habitat use by Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses (<i>Thalassarche carteri</i> breeding at Prince Edward Island)</p> <p><i>A. B. Makhado, R. J. M. Crawford, M. P. Dias, B. M. Dyer, T. Lamont, P. Pistorius, P. G. Ryan, L. Upfold, H. Weimerskirch & R. R. Reisinger</i></p> |
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SUMMARY

Demographic parameters of wild animals are often closely associated with their foraging distribution and behaviour, and understanding these attributes can assist in identifying causes of population changes. The Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche carteri*) is endangered but little information is available on its at-sea distribution and behaviour. It breeds only in French (Iles Amsterdam, St Paul, Kerguelen and Crozet) and South African (Prince Edward Island, PEI) territories in the south-west Indian Ocean, with PEI supporting about 20% of the global population. This study aimed to investigate the at-sea distributions of adult Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses provisioning chicks at PEI and to compare them with distributions of Yellow-nosed Albatrosses breeding at other localities. Using satellite transmitters, we identified two areas that were particularly favoured for foraging. Parents whose partners were brooding small chicks frequently moved north-east of PEI to shallow, productive waters where cold, nutrient-rich water upwells and results in enhanced levels of chlorophyll-a. By contrast, parents with older chicks that could be left unattended often foraged along the Agulhas Bank where eddies and shear forces promote vertical mixing. The at-sea distribution of birds breeding at PEI was located between those reported for Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses breeding at Ile Amsterdam and Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatrosses (*T. chlororhynchos*) breeding at Gough Island, so that birds from these localities may face different threats at sea. Our study is the first to highlight key feeding areas for Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses from PEI and to demonstrate partitioning of foraging grounds by Yellow-nosed Albatrosses from different localities.