

AT-SEA RECORDS OF CAPE VERDE
SHEARWATERS *Calonectris edwardsii* IN
BRAZIL

FÁBIO OLMOS

Olmos F. 2002. At-sea records of Cape Verde Shearwaters Calonectris edwardsii in Brazil. Atlantic Seabirds 4(2): 77-80. This note reports several sightings of Cape Verde Shearwaters Calonectris edwardsii off Brazil in an area where they have not been previously reported. Cape Verde Shearwaters were assumed to disperse in the South Atlantic Ocean outside the breeding season, while only several strandings indicated that this species occurred off South America.

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The Cape Verde Shearwater *Calonectris edwardsii* is endemic to the Cape Verde Islands. During the 1990s, its total population was estimated at c. 10,000 pairs (Hazevoet 1994, 1995). Although described as a distinct taxon by Oustalet (1883), it was virtually ignored during much of the 20th century, presumably at least partly due to its alleged lowly status of being 'merely a subspecies' of *C. diomedea*. Recently, renewed attention has been given to its distinctive characters (Hazevoet 1995), which make it relatively easy to identify even at sea (Porter *et al.* 1997). Other *Calonectris* shearwaters breed in the northern Macaronesian islands (*borealis*) and the Mediterranean (*diomedea*) and these are believed to be transequatorial migrants to the western South Atlantic off southern Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, and to South Africa and the Indian Ocean (e.g. Mougin *et al.* 1988, Ristow *et al.* 2000). Migration routes and wintering areas of *edwardsii* are poorly known and it has been suggested that it disperses into the western South Atlantic (Bourne & Curtis 1985). The southernmost observation to date is of three at 38°36'S, 53°30'W, off Argentina (Curtis 1994). Several recoveries of beached birds in Brazil (Lima *et al.* 1997, Petry *et al.* 2000) have supported the view that the taxon's main wintering grounds are to be found in the western South Atlantic off South America. In this note I report on recent at sea observations of *C. edwardsii* off Brazil and also comment on identification of the taxon.

I recorded the first Cape Verde Shearwaters while aboard the RV *Orion*, which was setting bottom long-lines between the coasts of São Paulo and Santa Catarina. Two *Calonectris* shearwaters persistently followed the vessel on 25 March 1995 during the early morning setting, and one was photographed

later the same day at 27°05'S, 46°47'W. Additional records were made aboard the FV *Margus II*, another long-liner then fishing on the Brazilian shelf off Paraná and São Paulo states. In the morning of 27 May 1997, at 25°52'S, 44°36'W, two *Calonectris* shearwaters followed the boat during line setting. They were about the same size or smaller than the four Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis* seen with them, had slim bodies and proportionally long tails, and had noticeably dark bills. During line hauling, about four hours later, another small *Calonectris* (or one of the birds seen before) joined the seabird flock feeding on the discards at 24°47'S, 44°32'W. Depth at this point was 386 m. The following day I again observed a small *Calonectris* attending the boat during line setting. This time one Atlantic Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris [diomedea] borealis* and 32 Great Shearwaters were also following the boat, allowing direct comparisons in size. Likewise Great Shearwaters, the small *Calonectris* sat on the water waiting for bait scraps (the Cory's Shearwater rarely did that), and was seen to lose its food to Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus* twice. The small *Calonectris*, the Cory's and the Great Shearwaters kept with the boat during the entire line hauling. The long-line stretched from 24°07'S, 43°48'W to 24°06'S, 43°44'W, in waters 150 m deep.

Cape Verde Shearwater 28 May 1997 at 24°06'S, 43°44'W Kaapverdische
Pijlstormvogel 28 mei 1997 24°06'ZB, 43°44'WL. (F.Olmos)

Pictures taken of birds seen in 1995 and 1997 show small, slim-bodied *Calonectris* with longish tail, thin bill with a dark point, and uppertail-coverts with white, all consistent with Cape Verde Shearwaters (Porter *et al.* 1997). Similar birds were later seen during a cruise aboard the pelagic long-liner FV *Taihei Maru* operating off the shelf (waters deeper than 2 500 m) of Santa Catarina state. One probable Cape Verde Shearwater passed by the boat on 3 July 2001 at 27°50'S, 45°49'W (water temperature 21.5°C) and later what may have been the same bird was seen at 27°32'S, 46°15'W (water temperature 22.4°C). In both sightings my attention was drawn to the dark dorsal aspect of the bird(s), its slim body and the long tail, both recalling Wedge Tailed-Shearwaters *Puffinus pacificus* I had seen previously in the northern Pacific. Although no size comparison to other seabirds could be made, I believe both sightings refer to Cape Verde Shearwater. Porter *et al.* (1997) also mention the resemblance of Cape Verde Shearwater body shape to Wedge-tailed Shearwaters.

The Brazilian records of Cape Verde Shearwaters suggest that at least some individuals migrate to the same wintering areas as Cory's Shearwaters and Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus*. Further observations made both at-sea and on beach derelicts may well prove Cape Verde Shearwaters to be regular migrants to the South American coast.

C.J. Hazevoet kindly checked the identity of the 1995 bird. Bernard Zonfrillo and Kees Camphuysen made useful suggestions on an earlier draft of this note.

WAARNEMINGEN VAN KAAPVERDISCHE PIJLSTORMVOGELS
CALONECTRIS EDWARDSII VOOR DE KUST VAN BRAZILIË

Het is niet bekend waar Kaapverdische Pijlstormvogels *Calonectris edwardsii* na de broedtijd heen trekken, maar aangenomen wordt dat zij zich over de Zuid-Atlantische Oceaan verspreiden. Er waren verschillende strandingen op de Braziliaanse kust, bekend maar verder waren er geen aanwijzingen waaruit bleek dat deze soort in de kustwateren van Brazilië voorkwam. In deze notitie worden enkele waarnemingen gedocumenteerd van Kaapverdische Pijlstormvogels die zich gedurende enige tijd rond lijnenvissers voor de kust van Brazilië ophielden. Vrijwel alle vogels konden worden gefotografeerd en de determinaties zijn door experts (CJH, BZ) bevestigd. De auteur noemt de kenmerken die de aandacht trokken en welke gebruikt werden bij de identificatie. De gegevens suggereren dat deze soort regelmatig in Brazilië voorkomt.

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