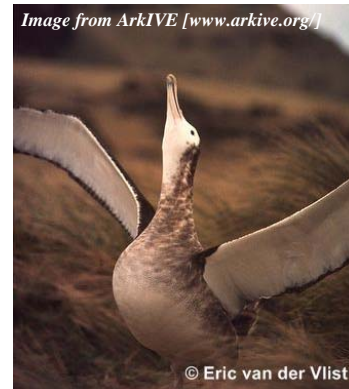


Case study

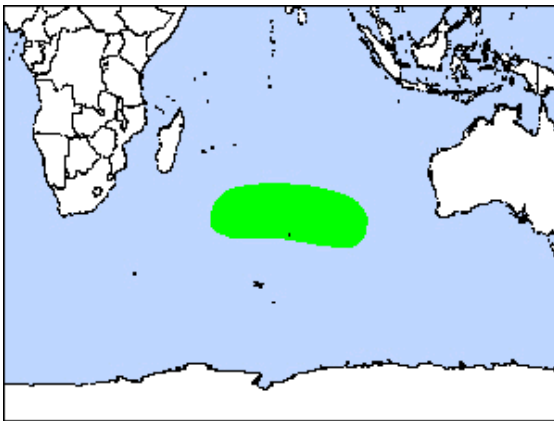
Diomedea amsterdamensis

Species:	<i>Diomedea amsterdamensis</i> Roux, Jouventin, Mouglin, Stahl & Weimerskirch, 1983
Common Name:	Amsterdam Albatross
Class:	AVES
Order:	PROCELLARIIFORMES
Family:	DIOMEDEIDAE



Range:

Diomedea amsterdamensis breeds on the Plateau des Tourbières on Amsterdam Island (French Southern Territories) in the southern Indian Ocean. The total island area is around 55 km², but the plateau where these birds breed has an area of only 800 ha. During the breeding season, birds forage both around Amsterdam Island and up to 2,200 km away in subtropical waters, but non-breeding dispersal is unknown, although possible sightings have been reported from Australia and New Zealand.



Population:

There is a total population of around 130 birds including 80 mature individuals. There are around 18-25 pairs breeding annually, which is an increase since 1984 when the first census was carried out. The population was probably formerly larger than current numbers when the species' range was more extensive over the slopes of the island. However, there has also been increased chick mortality over recent years with a high chance that this will continue into the future (see threats section) therefore the overall population trend is still considered to be declining.

Habitat & Ecology:

The Plateau des Tourbières covers the highest part of Amsterdam in the centre-west of the island. The plateau is

an ancient lava-flow now almost entirely covered with waterlogged peatbog. A number of craters are scattered across the site.

Breeding is biennial (when successful) and is restricted to the central plateau of the island at 500 to 600 m, where only one breeding group is known. The bird's exact diet is unknown, but probably consists of fish, squid and crustaceans.

Threats:

Degradation of breeding sites by introduced cattle has decreased this bird's range and population across the island. Human disturbance is presumably also to blame. Introduced predators are a major threat, particularly feral cats. Interactions with longline fisheries around the island, in the 1970s and early 1980s, could also have contributed to a decline in the population. Today the population is threatened primarily by the potential spread of diseases (avian cholera and *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathidae*) that currently affect the Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche carteri* population 3 km from the colony. Infection risks are very high and increased chick mortality over recent years suggests that the population is already affected.

Conservation Measures:

The Amsterdam Albatross is included in Annex 1 of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). All birds are banded and annual population is census and monitoring is carried out. In 1987, the number of cattle was reduced and a fence erected to seal off part of the island. In 1992, a second fence was erected with the aim of providing complete protection for the high plateau from possible incursions by cattle.

Sources:

BirdLife International 2006. *Diomedea amsterdamensis*. In: IUCN 2006. 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 14 June 2007