

Pelagic Trip off Valparaíso, Chile 9th July, 2016



Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*): Photo: Pablo Cáceres.

Guide: Fernando Díaz

Text: Eduardo Navarro.

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When we started two thoughts came wandering in our heads. The first was that on the proposed date the weather forecast was poor....cold, rain, low clouds and strong wind. The second problem was that we did not know if we could sell enough seats on the boat to cover the costs we had agreed with the crew !

To our great pleasure the weather forecast changed giving us a sunny day with a gentle swell and the boat seats were filled in two weeks, even leaving some passengers on the waiting list. Everything indicated that this would become a very good trip.

The boat set sail from the Muelle Prat in at 7:05 am when the dawn light was just showing and when the night lights from the bohemian partygoers in Valparaiso were still shining!



Salvin's Albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*). Photo: Eduardo Navarro.

Sailing out into the bay we soon picked up an escort of Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) and Grey Gulls (*Leucophaeus modestus*) on their way out to sea to feed and these stayed with us for the whole day

As the light strengthened , we found the first Peruvian Diving Petrel-(*Pelecanoides garnoti*), Sooty Shearwaters (*Ardenna grisea*), Black-browed Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*) and a pair of Southern Giant Petrels (*Macronectes giganteus*).



Southern Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*): Photo: Freddy Olivares.

When we started throwing the bait the number of birds multiplied exponentially. many Salvin's Albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*) and White-chinned Petrels (*Procellaria aequinoctalis*) were coming to feed.

When we stopped the boat, after about 13 nautical miles, we counted more than 50 albatross around us, a large number of White-chinned Petrels, some Westland Petrel (*Procellaria westlandica*) and Wilson's Storm-Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*) hovering over the surface of the sea.

The weather was perfect. There was great light for photographing and many birds all around us. All was going well but the best was saved for last as one of the passengers spotted a giant white backed bird fly in.

It was a a Southern Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*)putting on a great display with its 350 cm wingspan and giving great views to all the participants.

Finally, after sprinkling the sea surface with fish oil, especially taken to attract smaller Storm-Petrels, we had the great surprise of the day, a Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche ermita*), showing beautiful adult plumage, which gave the day a final and wonderful flourish before we sailed happily back to port for a well deserved lunch.

Bird List

- Magellanic Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*): 8
- Salvin's Albatross (*Thalassarche salvini*): 60
- Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*): 1
- Black-browed Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*): 100
- Albatros real (*Diomedea epomophora*): 3
- Southern Giant-Petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*): 6
- Northern Giant-Petrel (*Macronectes halli*): 2
- Cape Petrel (*Daption capense*): 60
- White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria equinoctialis*): 150
- Westland Petrel (*Procellaria westlandica*): 5
- Sooty Shearwater (*Ardenna grisea*): 55
- Peruvian Diving-Petrel (*Pelecanoides garnotii*): 15
- Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*): 25
- Peruvian Booby (*Sula variegata*): 12
- Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*): 20
- Red-legged Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax gaimardi*): 2
- Guanay Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax bougainvillii*): 2
- Peruvian Pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*): 25
- Blackish Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ater*): 2
- Gray Gull (*Leucophaeus modestus*): 40
- Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*): 40
- Inca Tern (*Larosterna inca*): 15

Mammals

South American Sea-lion (*Otaria flavescens*): 5

We invite you to check the dates of upcoming trips and reserve your seat at:
www.albatross-birding.com/pelagic-trips-chile