

GULLS AND TERNS — FAMILY LARIDAE

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*

Of the ocean birds that migrate from the southern hemisphere to the North Pacific for the austral winter, the South Polar Skua comes the farthest, for it nests around the coasts of Antarctica. Off San Diego County it is a rare migrant, recorded in both spring and fall.

Migration: The South Polar Skua has been recorded off San Diego most frequently in spring, from 5 May (1987, one at Tanner Bank 100 miles off shore, R. R. Veit, AB 41:488, 1987) to 4 June (1983, R. E. Webster, AB 37:1027, 1983). In most cases just a single individual was seen in a full day's boat trip, but four were counted 20 May 1978 (AB 32:1055, 1978). Fall records extend from 12 August (1961, AFN 15:493, 1961) to 14 October (1971, Cortez Bank, Jehl 1973), except for the one from shore, the only specimen,



Photo by Joseph R. Jehl, Jr.

picked up at Silver Strand State Beach (T9) 23 November 1975 (AB 31:376, 1977, CSULB 4785). The only fall record of more than one individual was of two off San Diego 7 September 1991 (G. McCaskie, AB 46:149, 1992).