

Short Communication

A record of the sub-Antarctic fur seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis* in Angola

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Two individuals of the sub-Antarctic fur seal, *Arctocephalus tropicalis*, one of which was photographed, were seen on the beach 1 km south of the mouth of the Kwanza River, Angola, on 2 October 1983. This record represents a northerly extension by some 2 700 km of the previously recorded range. The nearest breeding colony is at Tristan da Cunha about 4 000 km south-west of this sighting.

Twee individue van die sub-Antarktiese pelsrob, *Arctocephalus tropicalis*, een waarvan afgeneem is, is op 2 Oktober 1983 op die strand 1 km suid van die mond van die Kwanzarivier, Angola, gewaar. Met hierdie waarneming word die verspreidingsgebied tevore opgeteken, met ongeveer 2 700 km noordwaarts uitgebrei. Die naaste teelkolonie is by Tristan da Cunha, sowat 4 000 km suidwes van hierdie waarneming.

Two fur seals, of which one was positively identified as an adult male sub-Antarctic fur seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis*, were recorded on the beach about 1 km south of the mouth of the Kwanza River, Angola (9°20'S/13°09'E) on 2 October 1983. Both animals moved into the sea after becoming aware of our presence and were last seen swimming together in a northerly direction. Fishermen reported encountering seals (species unidentified) as far north as Barro de Dande (8°30'S/13°20'E).

The identification was made on the basis of the buff-coloured face, chest and throat and the crest of black guard hairs (Figure 1).

The breeding sites of *A. tropicalis* are situated on temperate islands north of the Antarctic Convergence. The main colonies are Gough Island (the largest colony), Amsterdam, Marion and Prince Edward Islands. In addition, it breeds on Tristan da Cunha and St Paul and Crozet Islands (Bester 1980, 1984; Kerley 1983, 1984). The nearest colony to the Kwanza River is that at Tristan da Cunha, some 4000 km distant.

The most northerly records so far published refer to a specimen in southern Brazil at 32°49'S in 1976 (Castello & Pinedo 1977), and several on the west coast of southern Africa



Figure 1 The adult male *Arctocephalus tropicalis* photographed on the beach near the mouth of the Kwanza River, Angola.

in the vicinity of Cape Town (33°55'S) from 1974–79, while on the east coast there was one at Richards Bay (28°47'S) in 1977 (Shaughnessy & Ross 1980). This record therefore represents a considerable northerly extension of the previously recorded range by some 2700 km. This species was hunted to the verge of extinction in the 19th century and has made a remarkable recovery since then (Bester 1980; Kerley 1983, 1984). It will be interesting to see whether the increasing size of the population leads to more records of apparently extra-limital distribution.

The seals at Barro de Dande are likely to be *A. pusillus*, which has been recorded as far north as 11°19'S on the coast of Angola (da Franca 1967). The most northerly breeding colony of this species is at Cape Cross (21°27'S), (Shaughnessy 1982).

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