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Tristan Albatross collected in Sicily, Italy, in October 1957

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Soldaat et al (2009) gave an overview of WP occurrences of *Diomedea* albatrosses. One of these records involves an immature male Tristan Albatross *D exulans dabbenena* (a taxon not recognized by Dickinson (2003) who includes it in nominate *D e exulans*) collected at Termini Imerese, Palermo, Sicily, Italy, on 4 October 1957 (Orlando 1958). Soldaat et al (2009) presented an account on how this beached bird was killed. Because of my interest in the occurrence of vagrant birds in the Western Palearctic, I contacted several people in Italy to look into this record in more detail. Bruno Massa brought me in contact with Fabio Lo Valvo who works at Museo di Storia Naturale, Terrasini, Sicily, where the specimen is stored. FLV kindly photographed the specimen for identification and documentation purposes. From the photograph, one can clearly identify the bird as a 'wandering albatross' (*D e exulans*, *D e dabbenena*, *D e amsterdamensis*, *D e antipodensis*, *D e gibsoni*). The combination of a huge pink bill without black line along the cutting edge, white head and underparts, white upperparts with black vermiculations and black wings excludes the 'royal albatrosses' (*D epomophora sanfordi* and *D e epomophora*) which look similar but have, for example, a thin black line along the cutting edge of the bill (cf Onley & Scofield 2007).

Soldaat et al (2009) mentioned the bill size (length 150 mm, width c 39 mm) published in Orlando (1958) as being characteristic for *dabbenena*. Apart from this, the overall smaller size separates it from Wandering Albatross *D e exulans* but does not exclude Antipodean Albatross *D e antipodensis* which is similar in size. However, *antipodensis* is extremely unlikely to occur in the WP because it is distributed mainly in the Pacific Ocean. Separating the 'wandering albatross' taxa, which are often regarded as five separate species (cf Burg & Croxall 2004, Soldaat et al 2009), is very difficult but measurements should lead to the correct taxon. The Sicilian specimen is thus as-



199 Tristan Albatross / Tristanalbatros *Diomedea exulans dabbenena*, immature male (collected at Palermo, Sicily, Italy, on 4 October 1957), Museo di Storia Naturale, Terrasini, Sicily, Italy, February 2008 (Fabio Lo Valvo)

sumed to be *dabbenena*, based on bill measurements. It represents the only record of this taxon in the WP and, to date, the only well-documented record of a *Diomedea* albatross of presumably wild origin in the WP (cf Soldaat et al 2009).

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