

First record of the Puna Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus jamesi* (Sclater, 1886) (Aves: Phoenicopteridae) for the Atlantic coast of South America

Rafael Antunes Dias^{1*} and João Batista Cardozo²

1 Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Instituto de Biologia, Departamento de Ecologia, Zoologia e Genética, Campus Universitário Capão do Leão, Caixa Postal 354, CEP 96010-900, Pelotas, RS, Brazil.

2 Hotel Parque da Lagoa, Avenida 11 de Abril, 191, CEP 96290000, Tavares, RS, Brazil.

* Corresponding author. E-mail: rafael.dias@ufpel.edu.br

ABSTRACT: We report the first record of the Puna Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus jamesi* (Sclater, 1886) (Aves: Phoenicopteridae) for the Atlantic coast of South America, based on the observation of a single adult bird on an oceanic beach of São José do Norte municipality, Rio Grande do Sul state, southern Brazil, on 30 October 2013. This record is likely attributable to vagrancy and constitutes the first for the Atlantic coast of South America, the second for Brazil and the first for the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

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The Puna Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus jamesi* (Sclater, 1886) (Aves: Phoenicopteridae) inhabits shallow, alkaline and highly saline lakes of the high Andean plateaus of Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina (BirdLife International 2013). It breeds colonially from November to February, usually in the company of other species of South American flamingos, but at comparatively higher (3500–4500 m) sites (Chebez 2008). With the exception of lakes fed by thermal springs, high Andean wetlands freeze from June to September, making them unavailable to Puna Flamingos (Caziani *et al.* 2007). Consequently, part of the population migrates to lowland wetlands during the non-breeding season (Caziani *et al.* 2007). Two lowland sites in Argentina hold regular numbers of this species during the austral winter: Laguna Mar Chiquita, in Cordoba province, and Laguna Melincué, in Santa Fe province (BirdLife International 2013; Cruz *et al.* 2013). The southernmost record of the Puna Flamingo is based on the observation of two individuals on a lake in western Chubut province, Argentina, during the summer (Muñoz and Muñoz 1975). Another exceptional record is of eight young birds, one of which was collected, at Rio Branco, state of Acre, Brazil (Guilherme *et al.* 2005). This constitutes the sole record of the Puna Flamingo for Brazil.

On 30 October 2013, while guiding a group of birdwatchers, JBC observed and photographed a lone flamingo on a sandy oceanic beach approximately 1 km south of the Barra do Estreito (31°51'16" S, 51°43'11" W), São José do Norte municipality, state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. A photograph was deposited at the WikiAves website (Cardozo 2013; Figure 1) and later identified as a Puna Flamingo. The diagnostic large orange yellow mark on the bill, red lores, and orange legs (Narosky and Yzurieta 2003) are clearly visible and allow safe identification (Figure 1). No signs of brown markings, characteristic of young birds (Narosky and Yzurieta 2003), are visible. After being observed, the bird took flight and headed north.

Our record is the first for the Atlantic coast of South America, the second for Brazil and the first for the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Lack of previous records of this conspicuous species in a well-studied region in ornithological terms suggests that our sighting is most likely related to vagrancy than pseudo-vagrancy (*sensu* Gilroy and Lees 2003). Extralimital records of Puna Flamingos have been associated with disorientation due to climatic phenomena (Guilherme *et al.* 2005) or stray individuals following groups of the more abundant and widespread Chilean Flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis* Molina, 1782 into lowlands (Sosa 2003; Lucero 2013).

Nearest sites where the Puna Flamingo has been regularly recorded are Laguna Mar Chiquita and Laguna Melincué, approximately 1000 km to the west of the



FIGURE 1. Puna Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus jamesi* (Sclater, 1886) (Aves: Phoenicopteridae) recorded approximately 1 km south of the Barra do Estreito (31°51'16" S, 51°43'11" W), São José do Norte municipality, state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, on 30 October 2013. Photograph by João Batista Cardozo.

Barra do Estreito. It is likely that this region is the origin of the individual we observed. It is also possible that this individual reached Brazil following Chilean Flamingos, which migrate between breeding sites in western Argentina, including the above mentioned wetlands, and the Atlantic coast of southeastern South America.

The global population of the Puna Flamingo, as well as the number of individuals recorded in lowland sites in Argentina, is increasing (BirdLife International 2013; Cruz 2013). Therefore, we expect that this species will be recorded with more frequency in coastal southern Brazil, and in coastal lagoons and brackish wetlands of neighboring Uruguay and Buenos Aires province, Argentina.

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