1	Seasonal Changes in the Diet and Feeding Behaviour of a Top								
2	Predator Indicates a Flexible Response to Deteriorating								
3	Oceanographic Conditions								
4									
5	Xavier, J. C. <sup>1,2</sup> , Louzao, M. <sup>3,4</sup> , Thorpe, S. E. <sup>2</sup> , Ward, P. <sup>2</sup> , Hill, C. <sup>2</sup> , Roberts, D. <sup>2</sup> , Croxall, J.								
6	P. <sup>2</sup> and Phillips, R. A. <sup>2</sup>								
7									
8	<sup>1</sup> Institute of Marine Research, Department of Life Sciences, University of Coimbra, 3001-401								
9	Coimbra.								
10									
11	<sup>2</sup> British Antarctic Survey, Natural Environment Research Council, High Cross, Madingley								
12	Road, Cambridge, CB3 0ET, UK.								
13									
14	<sup>3</sup> Centre d'Etudes Biologiques de Chizé, CNRS UPR 1934, 79369 Villiers en Bois, France								
15									
16	<sup>4</sup> Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research-UFZ, Permoserstraße 15, 04318 Leipzig,								
17	Germany								
18									
19	Address for correspondence:								
20	José C. Xavier Institute of Marine Research, Department of Life Sciences, University of								
21	Coimbra, 3001-401 Coimbra.								
22	E-mail: JCCX@cantab.net Phone: +351 936728419								
23									
24									
25									
26									
27									

# 28 Abstract

29 Shifts in the diet of top predators can be linked to changes in environmental conditions. 30 In this study, we tested relationships between environmental variation and seasonal changes in 31 diet of a top predator, the grey-headed albatross Thalassarche chrysostoma, breeding at Bird 32 Island, South Georgia in an austral summer of 1999/2000. Oceanographic conditions in that year around South Georgia were abnormal (i.e. anomalously high sea surface temperature to a relative 33 34 19 year long-term mean). The diet of grey-headed albatrosses showed high seasonal variation, shifting from cephalopods (42.9 % by mass) in late February to Antarctic krill Euphausia 35 36 superba (58.3 %) in late April, and grey-headed albatrosses breeding performance was low 37 (16.8%). This study shows these albatrosses did not manage to find sufficient alternative prev 38 and highlight the risk to top predators if there is an increase in the frequency or severity of food 39 shortages in Antarctic waters. 40 41

#### 43 **INTRODUCTION**

44 Climate processes have a major impact on the structure and function of ecological 45 systems (Stenseth et al. 2002). A wide range of studies have shown links between fluctuations in 46 climate, and changes in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems worldwide (Wuethrich 47 2000; Attrill and Power 2002; Stenseth et al. 2002; Quetin and Ross 2003). In the marine 48 environment, top predators, such as seabirds, have to cope with resources that are patchily-49 distributed and seasonally variable (Brooke 2004; Weimerskirch 2007; Fauchald 2009). For this 50 reason, their ability to adapt to changing environmental constraints has an important influence on 51 their breeding performance and population dynamics (Phillips et al. 1996; Lewis et al. 2006).

52 Adaptation of seabirds and other marine organisms to environmental conditions may be 53 immediate, or show a temporal lag of weeks, seasons, decades or even generations (Reid and 54 Croxall 2001a; Walther et al. 2002; Atkinson et al. 2004). For example, rhinoceros auklets 55 *Cerorhinca monocerata* breeding in Japan respond within days to changes in the food web 56 caused by fluctuations in ocean currents, resulting in a switch in diets from euphausiids to fish 57 (Ito et al. 2009). Other studies have recorded major annual changes in the diets of seabirds in 58 relation to environmental perturbation (Xavier et al. 2003a; Xavier et al. 2003b; Ito et al. 2009; 59 Wang et al. 2009). Indeed, growth rates and survival of offspring of many seabirds and other 60 marine predators are frequently related to the quantity or quality of prey consumed (Croxall et al. 61 1988; Phillips et al. 1996; Boyd et al. 2006).

62 The Southern Ocean is a highly dynamic marine ecosystem, currently showing signs of 63 unusually rapid environmental change (King 1994; Reid and Croxall 2001a; Atkinson et al. 64 2004; Meredith and King 2005). Seabirds are amongst the major consumers in the region (Croxall and Prince 1980). Many species are also threatened by conflict with fisheries 65 66 (competition for the same stocks of prey, or incidental mortality), or predation by introduced mammals (Croxall et al. 1998; Wood et al. 2000; Xavier et al. 2003b; Phillips et al. 2004b; 67 68 Croxall et al. 2012). They are known to feed on a range of prey, including fish, crustaceans, and 69 cephalopods in particular (Xavier et al. 2003a; Xavier et al. 2003b; Xavier and Croxall 2007). 70 However, no detailed study has ever assessed seasonal variation in their diet. In 2000, oceanographic conditions were unusually warm close to South Georgia in March 71

and April, with sea surface temperature higher by up to 1° C compared with the average of the

73 last 19 years in the region (for example, at 40.5°W 54.5 °S, the sea surface temperature was 74 3.92° C compared with 2.99 ° C for the average) (Xavier et al. 2003b). In April 2000, which is 75 the late chick-rearing period for grey-headed albatrosses, 89% of grey-headed albatrosses fitted with satellite-transmitters (n=9) foraged far from the colony in Antarctic waters than recorded in 76 77 chick-rearing in other years (Wood et al. 2000; Xavier et al. 2003b; Catry et al. 2004; Phillips et 78 al. 2004a); grey-headed albatrosses usually forage north of South Georgia, in Antarctic Polar 79 Frontal Zone/sub-Antarctic waters during their chick-rearing period, feeding mostly on the 80 ommastrephid squid Martialia hyadesi, and on fish, with the consumption of M. hyadesi being 81 positively correlated to high breeding success (Rodhouse et al. 1996; Prince et al. 1999; Xavier 82 et al. 2003a; Xavier et al. 2003b) and also southwest to the Scotia Sea, South Shetlands and 83 Antarctic peninsula regions but the proportion using each areas show strong annual variation 84 (Wood et al. 2000; Xavier et al. 2003b; Phillips et al. 2004a). In 2000, trip duration was 85 unusually long, averaging 13.3 days (range 5-26 days), compared with a mean of 2-3 days typical of the chick-rearing period in other years (Huin et al. 2000; Phillips and Croxall 2003), 86 87 which was reflected in a low breeding success (16, 8%; Xavier et al. 2003a), the sixth worst of 88 the 24 years between 1989 and 2012 for which data are available (British Antarctic Survey, 89 unpublished data) for grey-headed albatrosses breeding at Bird Island. In this study, using a 90 unique dataset for the year 2000, we investigate how a top predator, the grey-headed albatross, 91 copes with seasonal changes in oceanographic conditions by analysing changes in diet 92 composition, and the implications for breeding performance. Therefore, aims of the study were 93 to (1) describe seasonal changes in the diet of grey-headed albatrosses at fine temporal scale 94 (samples collected every 2 weeks) between February and April 2000, and (2) relate changes in diet to sea surface temperature anomalies in alternative foraging areas to examine relationships 95 96 with putative changes in distribution.

97

# 98 MATERIAL AND METHODS

99

# 100 Diet sampling

Food samples (stomach contents) were collected from grey-headed albatross chicks at
Bird Island, South Georgia every 2 weeks from early February to late April, in 2000. Food

sampling was by induced regurgitation after the chick had been fed by the parent, and has no
effect on chick survival or mass at fledging (Phillips 2006). These samples were analyzed on the
same day that they were obtained. The samples were weighed and the overall mass was recorded.
All components were sorted into categories (cephalopods, crustaceans, fish and others; the latter
comprising carrion, penguin feathers, barnacles and jellyfish), and fresh remains weighed
following Cherel et al. (2000) and Xavier et al. (2003a).

Within each component, fresh remains were identified according to Clarke (1986),
Boltovskoy (1999), Xavier et al. (2003b) and Xavier and Cherel (2009) and using reference
collections held at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), UK and at the Institute of Marine
Research (IMAR), PT. Loose beaks were examined along with those extracted from the other
cephalopod remains when determining the species composition and size classes of cephalopods
consumed. The diet data was summarised as frequency of occurrence, proportions by number
and proportions by mass, following Xavier et al. (2003a).

116

## 117 Oceanographic data

118 Sea surface temperature anomalies (SSTa) were obtained from 4 reference locations 119 randomly selected across the study region in known foraging areas of grey-headed albatrosses 120 during chick-rearing (Xavier et al. 2003b; Phillips et al. 2004a); north of the Antarctic Polar Front (45.5° S 35.5° W), South Georgia region (50.5° S 35.5° W), mid Scotia Sea (55.5° S 40.5° 121 122 W) and at the Antarctic Peninsula region (60.5° S 50.5° W) (Figure 1). Annual variation was 123 assessed by comparing SSTa between 1982 and 2000. Weekly sea surface temperature anomalies 124 (SSTa, Reynolds et al., 2002) were obtained from 125 http://iridl.ldeo.columbia.edu/SOURCES/.NOAA/.NCEP/.EMC/.CMB/.GLOBAL/.Reyn Smith 126 OIv2/.weekly/. Absolute dynamic height data, provided by Aviso (Archiving, Validation and 127 Interpretation of Satellite Oceanographic data) (Rio and Hernandez 2004), were overlaid with the 128 average position of the major oceanic fronts in the study region (Subantarctic front, Antarctic 129 Polar Front, Southern Antarctic Circumpolar Current front, Southern Boundary of the Antarctic 130 Circumpolar Current) in order to identify any substantial changes in the positions of these fronts. 131 Values for oceanographic parameters were obtained from the closest date to the diet sampling 132 (range: 0-2 days).

#### 134 Statistical analysis

135 All statistics were carried out using Minitab (Sowers Printing Company, Pennsylvania). 136 We examined relationships between different diet parameters - the frequency of occurrence and 137 estimated mass of cephalopods, crustaceans and fish, and number of each of the main prey 138 species, the ommastrephid squid *Martialia hyadesi*, cranchiid squid *Galiteuthis glacialis*, 139 onychoteuthid squid Kondakovia longimana, lamprey Geotria australis and Antarctic krill 140 Euphausia superba (hereafter referred as krill) - and SSTa obtained from the four reference 141 locations according to the sampling diet dates, by means of Spearman rank correlation 142 coefficient,  $r_s$ . Since multiple tests were performed, we applied the Bonferroni correction (1/ 143 number of correlations carried out for each reference location) and interpreted correlation 144 patterns following Hills (1969). General Linear Models (GLMs) were used to test whether the 145 proportions of the various prey groups in the diet varied significantly across sampling periods. 146 Values are reported as mean ± Standard Error (SE) unless stated otherwise.

147

### 148**RESULTS**

# 149 Seasonal variation in diet composition

150 A total of 120 food samples were collected from grey-headed albatross chicks between 151 early February and late April 2000 (i.e., 20 samples every 2 weeks). Average weight of food 152 samples changed significantly, from  $271 \pm 24.6$  g in early February to  $202 \pm 20.7$  g in late April 153 (ANOVA,  $F_{5,114}=3.1$ , P = 0.01), decreasing throughout the sampling periods (Linear regression, 154  $F_{1,118}=4,86$ , P=0.03, r2=4.0).

155 Regarding diet composition, when all samples were combined, grey-headed albatrosses 156 consumed mainly crustaceans (61 % by mass), followed by fish (19 %) and cephalopods (17%) 157 (Figure 1; see also Xavier et al. 2003a). However, there were considerable changes between sampling periods (Figure 2), including significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of 158 the components (crustaceans, fish and cephalopods;  $\chi^2_{10}$  = 32.0, P < 0.01). Results from the 159 160 GLMs also showed that the proportions by mass of crustaceans ( $F_{5.114}$ = 4.53, P<0.01) and cephalopods ( $F_{5,114}$ = 4.97, P<0.01), but not fish ( $F_{5,114}$ = 1.0, P=0.40), differed significantly 161 162 between sampling periods. Cephalopods increased from < 1 % by mass in early February to 42.9 163 % (and were the most important prey group) in late February, whereas crustaceans were the most

164 consumed prey group in all other periods (Figure 2). There were also considerable changes in

- 165 species composition by number: the sub-Antarctic squid *Martialia hyadesi* was the most
- 166 important cephalopod species in early February, but then declined in importance thereafter, as

167 the proportion of the Antarctic squid species *Galiteuthis glacialis* increased (*K. longimana* was

168 always the most important cephalopod consumed by mass; Figure 3). Within the fish component,

169 *G. australis* was the most important by number in all sampling periods, but by mass *Magnisudis* 

170 *prionosa* was the most consumed fish prey in early February, and then declined in importance, as

171 the proportion of *G. australis* increased (Figure 4). Krill dominated the crustacean component,

- by number (> in all sampling periods) and by mass (> 99 %) in all sampling periods (Figure 2).
- 173

# 174 Oceanographic conditions within the foraging area of breeding grey-headed albatrosses

175 Oceanographic conditions between the north of the Antarctic Polar Front (APF) and the Antarctic Peninsula were unusually warm during some months: SSTa north of the APF was 176 177 warmer (i.e. positive SSTa), for most of the breeding cycle (late incubation to late chick-rearing) 178 of grey-headed albatrosses (Dec. 1999, Jan. - Feb. 2000 and Apr. - May 2000; Figures 1 and 5), 179 than the mean long-term average in the previous 19 years (1982-2000; Figure 5). Further south, 180 around South Georgia, high SSTa values were observed slightly later, between January 2000 and 181 April 2000 (Figure 5). In the mid Scotia Sea, abnormal SSTa was only apparent in April 2000 (Figure 5), and at the Antarctic Peninsula, SSTa was higher from March 2000 to July 2000 182 183 (Figure 5), which corresponds to the late chick-rearing period of grey-headed albatross. 184 Examination of absolute dynamic height data showed that this was due to widespread warming 185 of surface waters rather than shifts in the position of the fronts of the Antarctic Circumpolar 186 Current (ACC). Large-scale surface warming in this region has previously been recorded, most 187 recently in 2009(Venables 2012).

188

# 189 Relationships between prey availability and SSTa

190 There were 2 significant correlations between values for the main diet parameters (i.e. 191 frequency of occurrence and mass of crustaceans, cephalopod and fish; number of items of the 192 most important prey: krill, *Martialia hyadesi*, *Galiteuthis glacialis*, *Kondakovia longimana* and 193 lamprey) and SSTa at each reference location: the number of *G. australis* was

194 positively correlated to SSTa in the South Georgia region (Spearman rank correlation;  $r_s = 0.943$ ;

195 *P*=0.05) and the mass of *M. hyadesi* was positively correlated with SSTa in the mid Scotia Sea

196 (Spearman rank correlation;  $r_s = -0.943$ ; P=0.05) (). No other significant relationships or other

- 197 obvious patterns were evident.
- 198

#### 199 **DISCUSSION**

200 Our study identified significant seasonal changes in the diet of grey-headed albatrosses at 201 South Georgia when confronted by unusual environmental conditions. Based on prey 202 biogeography, the reduction in *Martialia hyadesi* and lamprey, and increase in krill and 203 Galiteuthis glacialis in the diet represent shifts from feeding in the Antarctic Polar Frontal Zone 204 (APFZ) to waters at much higher latitudes. Despite this, breeding success in 2000 was poor 205 (16.8%; Xavier et al. 2003a). In our study, the oceanographic conditions were unusually warm 206 close to South Georgia between January and April 2000, with sea surface temperature warmer by 207 up to 1 °C in comparison with annual data between 1982 and 2000 (see results).

208 Grey-headed albatrosses tracked in April 2000 foraged predominantly in Antarctic 209 waters, mainly on the shelf or shelf-slope waters of the South Orkneys and South Shetlands, and 210 at the Antarctic Peninsula north of Adelaide Island feeding on krill (Xavier et al. 2003a). In 211 contrast, earlier in the season, the diet consisted predominantly by number of the subantarctic 212 squid Martialia hyadesi, which is obtained mainly at the APFZ (Rodhouse et al. 1996). The 213 switch to long trips carries an increased risk that the chick will die of starvation in the interim, 214 and hence breeding success in 2000 was ultimately poor. Previous studies at South Georgia 215 suggest that breeding failure in grey-headed albatrosses is associated with some years in which 216 krill (Croxall et al. 1999) or M. hyadesi (Xavier et al. 2003a) are scarce. This was the case in 217 1994, even though grey-headed albatrosses continued to forage north of South Georgia but fed 218 more on fish and less on squid than usual (Rodhouse et al. 1996; Prince et al. 1999). Together, 219 these results suggest that the key determinant of successful breeding in grey-headed albatrosses 220 is the availability of *M. hyadesi*, hence the significant positive correlation between the proportion 221 of this squid in the diet and breeding success (Xavier et al. 2003a) and SSTa (this study). 222 Feeding only on krill at the Antarctic Peninsula seems not to be a viable alternative, presumably

because it is not sufficiently available/abundant in some years and often requires much longer
foraging trips to Antarctic Peninsula, which reduces overall provisioning rates.

225 The onychoteuthid squid Kondakovia longimana was consistently the most important 226 cephalopod consumed by grey-headed albatrosses by mass in all sampling periods (Figure 2). 227 The biology and distribution of K. longimana is still poorly known, although it is known to occur 228 in Antarctic (circumpolar) and APFZ waters (Cherel and Weimerskirch 1999; Xavier et al. 229 1999), potentially mating/spawning on shelf areas (Cherel and Weimerskirch 1999) and be 230 available in the upper strata of the water column (Lu and Williams 1994) potentially accessible 231 live to grey-headed albatrosses throughout their foraging range breeding while breeding in South 232 Georgia (Croxall and Prince 1994; Phillips et al. 2004a; Xavier and Croxall 2007). Despite this 233 squid species occur regularly in the diets of grey-headed albatrosses (Xavier et al. 2003a; Xavier 234 and Cherel 2009), its availability is likely not to in high numbers as K. longimana is the main 235 cephalopod prey by mass in poor breeding success years (Xavier et al. 2003a; this study).

*Galiteuthis glacialis* was the most important cephalopod species in most sampling
periods by number (Figure 3). *G. glacialis* is a typical Antarctic species, being caught all around
the Southern Ocean (Xavier et al. 1999) and found in numerous Antarctic predators (Xavier and
Cherel 2009). Like *K. longimana*, *G. glacialis* is more abundant in the diet of grey-headed
albatrosses by number vin poor breeding success years (Xavier et al. 2003a; this study).

241 The lamprey G. australis, were the main prey in the fish component in grey-headed 242 albatrosses by number in all sampling periods (and by mass, except in early February, in which 243 *M. prionosa* was the most important; Figure 3) and was related to SSTa in the South Georgia 244 region. This agrees with previous studies, in which G. australis dominated the diet of grey-245 headed albatrosses (Xavier et al. 2003a). Unlike K. longimana, G. australis had been the most 246 important fish species in both good and bad breeding years of grey-headed albatrosses (Xavier et al. 2003a), suggesting that G. australis, known to occur in APFZ waters, is a prey regularly and 247 248 consistently available to this predator (Xavier et al. 2003a).

Our study showed correlations between SSTa and *G. australis* and *M. hyadesi* from the diets of grey-headed albatrosses during chick-rearing, suggesting that changes in SSTa may influence albatrosses foraging distribution. This high flexibility in feeding strategies is also apparent in changes typical of the transition between different breeding stages. For example, 253 grey-headed albatrosses breeding at Marion Island are known to forage north of this island 254 during incubation and southwest during chick-rearing (Nel et al. 2001). Similarly, black-browed 255 albatrosses breeding at Bird Island foraged predominantly around and to the northwest of Bird 256 Island during incubation, stayed on the shelf around South Georgia and Shag Rocks during 257 brood-guard, and tended to switch to more southerly Antarctic waters in chick-rearing (Phillips 258 et al. 2004a). Female grey-headed albatrosses from South Georgia forage in the APFZ, and 259 males in the APFZ and also far to the southwest and southeast in Antarctic waters during 260 incubation, and both sexes mainly in the APFZ in brood-guard (Phillips et al. 2004). During 261 chick-rearing, both sexes travel to the APFZ, and also southwest to the Scotia Sea, South 262 Shetlands and Antarctic peninsula regions but the proportion using each areas show strong 263 annual variation (Wood et al. 2000, Xavier et al. 2003a, Phillips et al. 2004, BAS unpublished 264 data). In addition, individual birds that travel first to the APFZ will, if they experience poor 265 feeding success, switch immediately to Antarctic waters without returning to the colony (Catry et al. 2004). It would therefore appear that during chick-rearing, grey-headed albatrosses favour 266 267 waters around, or to the north of South Georgia in the APFZ when environmental conditions are 268 favourable (i.e., SSTa conditions are normal), but, as our seasonal trends in diet indicate, will 269 gradually change their foraging patterns if confronted by challenging environmental conditions, 270 as occurred in 2000.

271 We show that oceanographic conditions were atypically warm across the Scotia Sea 272 (including South Georgia) from September 1999 to May 2000 (Figure 1; Figure 5). Warming 273 anomalies were first observed north of the APF at the end of the austral winter in September 274 1999. Then, warming conditions extended further south, first around the intermediate reference 275 locations and eventually at the Antarctic Peninsula in late May. Typically, in years in terms of 276 both normal oceanographic conditions and good breeding performance (Xavier et al. 2003a), 277 grey-headed albatrosses forage at the APF, usually returning with the sub-Antarctic squid M. 278 hyadesi (Xavier et al. 2003a; Catry et al. 2004). Although M. hyadesi was still present in the diet 279 in March and April 2000, numbers were low (see results). Indeed, another predator of M. 280 hyadesi, the Patagonian toothfish Dissostichus eleginoides that, unlike grey-headed albatrosses 281 forages deep in the water column, also barely fed on M. hyadesi in 2000, indicating that 282 abundance of the latter was uncharacteristically low (Pilling et al. 2001; Xavier et al. 2002). This 283 ties in with the shift between late Feb. and March to other squid, *Galiteuthis glacialis* and 284 Kondakovia longimana, which are typically Antarctic species (Xavier et al. 1999), and to krill. 285 Lamprey, which is a typically subantarctic species, was regularly present in the diet of grey-286 headed albatrosses throughout the whole breeding season (see results), probably consumed 287 during the small proportion of trips to the APFZ (Xavier et al. 2003a). Lamprey distribution may 288 also extend further south in warm years, but this, and indeed many other aspects of the life cycle 289 of oceanic lamprey, including their host and how they become available to albatrosses at South 290 Georgia, are unknown (Potter et al. 1979).

291 Changes in the diet of grey-headed albatrosses in this study were highly correlated with 292 environmental conditions. The proportions of crustaceans and fish by mass, as well as the 293 number of several squid species, were significantly related to SSTa. Temperature anomalies in 294 the South Pacific sector of the Southern Ocean are propagated via the ACC into the South 295 Atlantic on time scales of more than 1 year, whereas atmospheric processes related to ENSO and 296 the Southern Annular Mode have a direct influence on shorter time scales (<6 months) (Murphy 297 et al. 2007a). These changes in SSTa across the South Atlantic sector are related to the 298 recruitment and dispersal of krill (Murphy et al. 2007a). The density and distribution of krill has 299 exhibited dramatic spatial and temporal fluctuations in the southwest Atlantic, where > 50 % of 300 krill in the Southern Ocean are concentrated, and has declined since the 1970s (Atkinson et al. 301 2004). This oceanographically driven variation in krill population dynamics and abundance has 302 affected dependent predators, including some seabirds and marine mammal predators (Croxall et 303 al. 1999; Reid and Croxall 2001b). In our study, we demonstrate that there was a shift in the diet 304 of grey-headed albatrosses, which may be related to a functional link between the oceanographic 305 conditions and abundance/availability of krill, fish and squid, that affected the breeding 306 performance of albatrosses, reducing their chick survival. Such propagating anomalies, mediated 307 through physical and trophic interactions, are likely to be an increasingly important component 308 of variation in ocean ecosystems in the light of predicted anthropogenic climatic change.

The close examination of the diet of grey-headed albatrosses provided a good insight into seasonal variation (Table 1). Although there was little change in the species composition of the crustacean components, and krill tended to dominate, the fish and cephalopod components of the diet changed significantly (Table 1). Furthermore, within these components, the importance of

- 313 particular species, changed considerably, with G. glacialis (by number) and G. australis (by
- 314 mass) increasing over time over time (Figures 3 and 4). These changes would not have been
- 315 identified if only looking at the overall diet (i.e., if all samples had been pooled). Overall, this
- 316 study clearly demonstrates how top predators may respond in years when environmental
- 317 conditions are unfavourable. Despite this flexibility, breeding success was poor, which from a
- 318 conservation perspective is of particular concern for the study species, the grey-headed albatross,
- 319 given that the South Georgia population is the largest in the world, and breeds in a hotspot of
- 320 environmental variability (Murphy et al. 2007b; Murphy et al. 2007c).
- 321

322 Acknowledgements. We thank Bird Island staff especially Simon Berrow, Richard Humpidge,

- 323 Nik Aspey and Mark Jessop for help in collecting the samples, Simon Berrow and Robert Taylor
- 324 for useful discussions on the field protocol, Rachael Shreeve for valuable advice on crustacean
- 325 identification and Filipe Ceia, Jaime Ramos and Vitor Paiva for statistical discussions. We are
- 326 particularly grateful to Paul Rodhouse and Phil Trathan for their advice through the project. This
- 327 research was initially evaluated by an ethical committee and it was supported by the Ministry of
- 328 Science and Technology, Portugal (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia; FCT) and by the
- 329 British Antarctic Survey, UK. J.X. was funded by FCT and M.L. was funded by a Marie Curie
- 330 Individual Fellowship (PIEF-GA-2008-220063) and Juan de la Cierva postdoctoral programme
- 331 (JCI-2010-07639, *Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación*). The altimeter products were produced
- 332 by Ssalto/Duacs and distributed by Aviso, with support from Cnes
- 333 (http://www.aviso.oceanobs.com/duacs/).
- 334

# 335 **REFERENCES**

- Atkinson A, Siegel V, Pakhomov EA, Rothery P (2004) Long-term decline in krill stock and
   increase in salps within the Southern Ocean. Nature 432: 100-103
- Attrill MJ, Power M (2002) Climatic influence on a marine fish assemblage. Nature 417: 275 278
- Boyd IL, Wanless S, Camphusysen CJ (2006) Top predators in marine ecosystems: their role in
   monitoring and management. Cambridge University Press
- 342 Brooke ML (2004) Albatrosses and petrels across the world. Oxford University Press
- Catry P, Phillips RA, Phalan B, Silk JRD, Croxall JP (2004) Foraging strategies of grey-headed
   albatrosses *Thalassarche chrysostoma*: integration of movements, activity and feeding
   events. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 280: 261-273

346 Cherel Y, Weimerskirch H (1999) Spawning cycle of onychoteuthid squids in the southern 347 Indian Ocean: new information from seabird predators. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 188: 93-104 348 Cherel Y, Weimerskirch H, Trouve C (2000) Food and feeding ecology of the neritic-slope 349 forager black- browed albatross and its relationships with commercial fisheries in 350 Kerguelen waters. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 207: 183-199 351 Clarke MR (1986) A handbook for the identification of cephalopod beaks. Clarendon Press, 352 Oxford 353 Croxall JP, Butchart SHM, Lascelles B, Stattersfield AJ, Sullivan B, Symes A, Taylor P (2012) 354 Seabird conservation status, threats and priority actions: a global assessment. Birdlife 355 Conserv Int 22: 1-34 356 Croxall JP, McCann TS, Prince PA, Rothery P (1988) Reproductive performance of seabirds and 357 seals at South Georgia and Signy Island, South Orkney Islands, 1976-1987: implications 358 for Southern Ocean monitoring studies. In: Sahrhage D (ed) Antarctic Ocean and 359 Resources Variability. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, pp 261-285 Croxall JP, Prince PA (1980) Food, feeding ecology and ecological segregation of seabirds at 360 361 South Georgia. Biol J Linn Soc 14: 103-131 362 Croxall JP, Prince PA (1994) Dead or alive, night or day: how do albatrosses catch squid? 363 Antarct Sci 6: 155-162 364 Croxall JP, Prince PA, Rothery P, Wood AG (1998) Population changes in albatrosses at South 365 Georgia. In: Robertson G, Gales R (eds) Albatross Biology and Conservation. Surrey Beatty & Sons, Chipping Norton, Australia, pp 69-83 366 367 Croxall JP, Reid K, Prince PA (1999) Diet, provisioning and productivity responses of marine predators to differences in availability of Antarctic krill. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 177: 115-131 368 369 Fauchald P (2009) Spatial interaction between seabirds and prey: review and synthesis. Mar Ecol 370 Prog Ser 391: 139-151 Hills M (1969) On looking at large correlation matrices. Biometrika 56: 249-253 371 372 Huin N, Prince PA, Briggs DR (2000) Chick provisioning rates and growth in black-browed 373 albatross Diomedea melanophris and grey-headed albatross D. chrysostoma at Bird 374 Island, South Georgia. Ibis 142: 550-565 375 Ito M, Minami H, Tanaka Y, Watanuki Y (2009) Seasonal and inter-annual oceanographic 376 changes induce diet switching in a piscivorous seabird. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 393: 273-284 377 King JC (1994) Recent climate variability in the vicinity of the Antarctic Peninsula. Int J 378 Climatol 14: 357-369 379 Lewis S, Grémillet D, Daunt F, Ryan P, Crawford RJM, Wanless S (2006) Using behavioural 380 variables to identify proximate causes of population change in a seabird. Oecologia 147: 381 606-614 382 Lu CC, Williams R (1994) Kondakovia longimana Filippova, 1972 (Cephalopoda: 383 Onychoteuthidae) from the Indian Ocean sector of the Southern Ocean. Antarct Sci 6: 384 231-234 Meredith MP, King JC (2005) Rapid climate change in the ocean west of the Antarctic Peninsula 385 during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Geophys Res Lett 32: L19604 386 Murphy EJ, Trathan PN, Watkins JL, Reid K, Meredith MP, Forcada J, Thorpe SE, Johnston 387 388 NM, Rothery P (2007a) Climatically driven fluctuations in Southern Ocean ecosystems. 389 Proc. R. Soc. B 274: 3057-3067

390	Murphy EJ, Trathan PN, Watkins JL, Reid K, Meredith MP, Forcada J, Thorpe SE, Johnston
391	NM, Rothery P (2007b) Climatically driven fluctuations in Southern Ocean ecosystems.
392	Proc R Soc B 274: 3057-3067
393	Murphy EJ, Watkins JL, Trathan PN, Reid K, Meredith MP, Thorpe SE, Johnston NM, Clarke
394	A, Tarling GA, Collins MA, Forcada J, Shreeve RS, Atkinson A, Korb R, Whitehouse
395	MJ, Ward P, Rodhouse PG, Enderlein P, Hirst AG, Martin AR, Hill SL, Staniland IJ,
396	Pond DW, Briggs DR, Cunningham NJ, Fleming AH (2007c) Spatial and temporal
397	operation of the Scotia Sea ecosystem: a review of large-scale links in a krill centred food
398	web. Phil Trans R Soc B 362: 113-148
399	Nel DC, Lutjeharms JRE, Pakhomov EA, Ansorge IJ, Ryan PG, Klages NTW (2001)
400	Exploitation of mesoscale oceanographic features by grey-headed albatross Thalassarche
401	chrysostoma in the southern Indian Ocean. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 217: 15-26
402	Phillips RA (2006) Efficacy and effects of diet sampling of albatross chicks. Emu 106: 305-308
403	Phillips RA, Caldow RWG, Furness RW (1996) The influence of food availability on the
404	breeding effort and reproductive success of Arctic skuas Stercorarius parasiticus. Ibis
405	138: 410-419
406	Phillips RA, Croxall JP (2003) Control of provisioning in grey-headed albatrosses: do adults
407	respond to chick condition? . Can J Zool 81: 111-116
408	Phillips RA, Silk JRD, Phalan B, Catry P, Croxall JP (2004a) Seasonal sexual segregation in two
409	Thalassarche albatross species: competitive exclusion, reproductive role specialization or
410	foraging niche divergence? Proc R Soc Lond B 271: 1283-1291
411	Phillips RA, Silk JRD, Phalan B, Catry P, Croxall JP (2004b) Seasonal sexual segregation in two
412	Thalassarche albatross species: competitive exclusion, reproductive role specialization or
413	foraging niche divergence? Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B 271: 1283-1291
414	Pilling GM, Purves MG, Daw TM, Agnew DA, Xavier JC (2001) The stomach contents of
415	Patagonian toothfish around South Georgia (South Atlantic). J Fish Biol 59: 1370-1384
416	Potter IC, Prince PA, Croxall JP (1979) Data on the adult marine and migratory phases in the life
417	cycle of the southern hemisphere lamprey, Geotria australis Gray. Env Biol Fish 4: 65-
418	69
419	Prince PA, Weimerskirch H, Wood AG, Croxall JP (1999) Areas and scales of interactions
420	between albatrosses and the marine environment: species, populations and sexes. In:
421	Adams NJ, Slotow RH (eds) Proceedings of 22nd Ornithological Congress, Durban,
422	August 1998. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg, pp 2001-2020
423	Quetin LB, Ross RM (2003) Episodic recruitment in Antarctic krill Euphausia superba in the
424	Palmer LTER study region. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 259: 185-200
425	Reid K, Croxall JP (2001a) Environmental response of upper trophic-level predators reveals a
426	system change in an Antarctic marine ecosystem. Proc Roy Soc Lond B 268: 377-384
427	Reid K, Croxall JP (2001b) Environmental response of upper trophic-level predators reveals a
428	system change in an Antarctic marine ecosystem. Proceedings of the Royal Society of
429	London Series B-Biological Sciences 268: 377-384
430	Rio M-H, Hernandez F (2004) A mean dynamic topography computed over the world ocean
431	from altimetry, in situ measurements, and a geoid model. J Geophys Res 109: 12032
432	Rodhouse PG, Prince PA, Trathan PN, Hatfield EMC, Watkins JL, Bone DG, Murphy EJ, White
433	MG (1996) Cephalopods and mesoscale oceanography at the Antarctic Polar Front:

- 434 satellite tracked predators locate pelagic trophic interactions. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 136: 37435 50
- 436 Stenseth NC, Ottersen G, Hurrell JW, Chan KS, Lima M (2002) Ecological effects of climate
   437 fluctuations. Science 297: 1292-1296
- 438 Venables (2012) Fronts and habitat zones in the Scotia sea. Deep-Sea Res II 59-60: 14-24
- Walther GR, Post E, Convey P, Menzel A, Pearmesan C, Beebee TJC, Fromentin JM, Guldberg
  OH, Bairlein F (2002) Ecological responses to recent climate change. Nature 416: 389395
- Wang SW, Iverson SJ, Springer AM, Hatch SA (2009) Spatial and temporal diet segregation in
  northern fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* breeding in Alaska: insights from fatty acid
  signatures. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 377: 299-307
- Weimerskirch H (2007) Are seabirds foraging for unpredictable resources? Deep-Sea Res II 54:
  211-223
- Wood AG, Naef-Daenzer B, Prince PA, Croxall JP (2000) Quantifying habitat use in satellitetracked pelagic seabirds: application of kernel estimation to albatross locations. J Avian
  Biol 31: 278-286
- 450 Wuethrich B (2000) How climate change alters rhthms of the wild. Science 287: 793-795
- 451 Xavier JC, Cherel Y (2009) Cephalopod beak guide for the Southern Ocean. British Antarctic
   452 Survey
- 453 Xavier JC, Croxall JP (2007) Predator-prey interactions: why do larger albatrosses feed on
   454 bigger squid? J Zool Lond 271: 408-417
- 455 Xavier JC, Croxall JP, Reid K (2003a) Inter-annual variation in the diet of two albatross species
   456 breeding at South Georgia: implications for breeding performance. Ibis 145: 593-610
- 457 Xavier JC, Croxall JP, Trathan PN, Wood AG (2003b) Feeding strategies and diets of breeding
   458 grey-headed and wandering albatrosses at South Georgia. Mar Biol 143: 221-232
- 459 Xavier JC, Rodhouse PG, Purves MG, Daw TM, Arata J, Pilling GM (2002) Distribution of
   460 cephalopods recorded in the diet of Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*)
   461 around South Georgia. Polar Biol 25: 323-330
- 462 Xavier JC, Rodhouse PG, Trathan PN, Wood AG (1999) A Geographical Information System
  463 (GIS) atlas of cephalopod distribution in the Southern Ocean. Antarctic Science 11: 61464 62
- 465
- 466

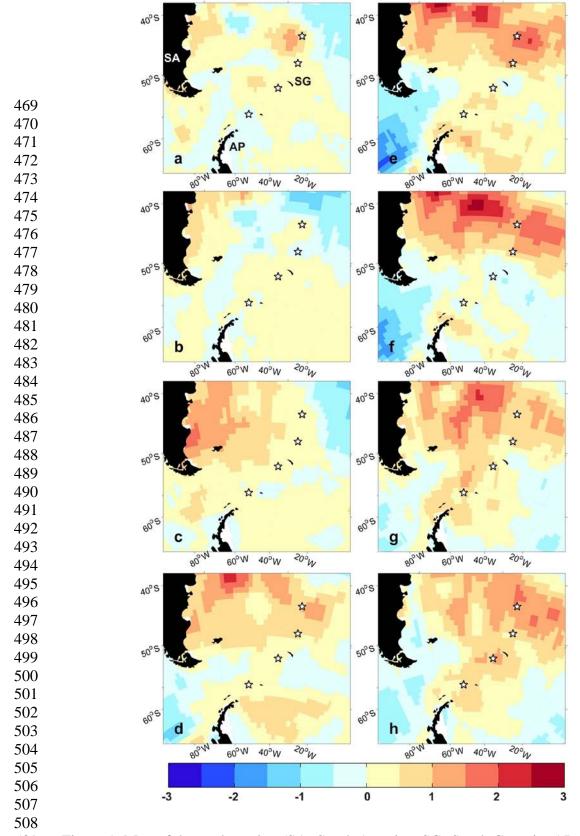
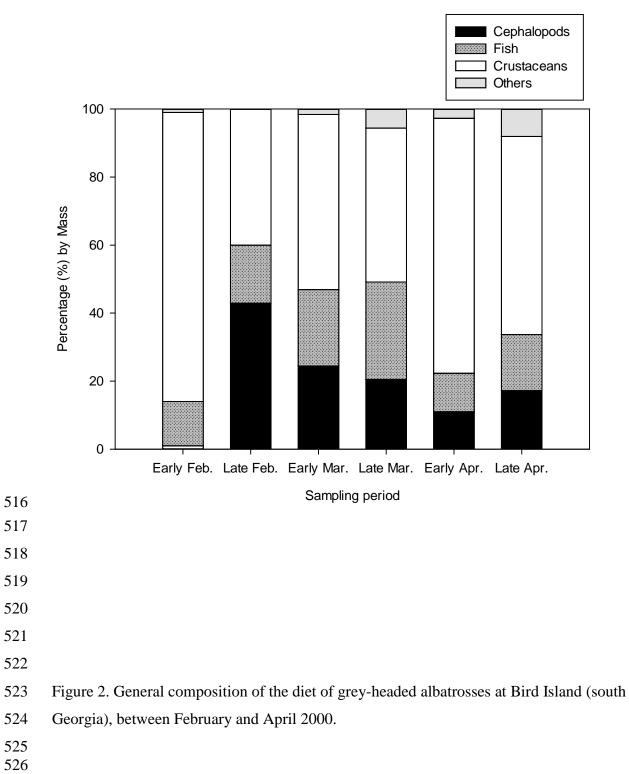
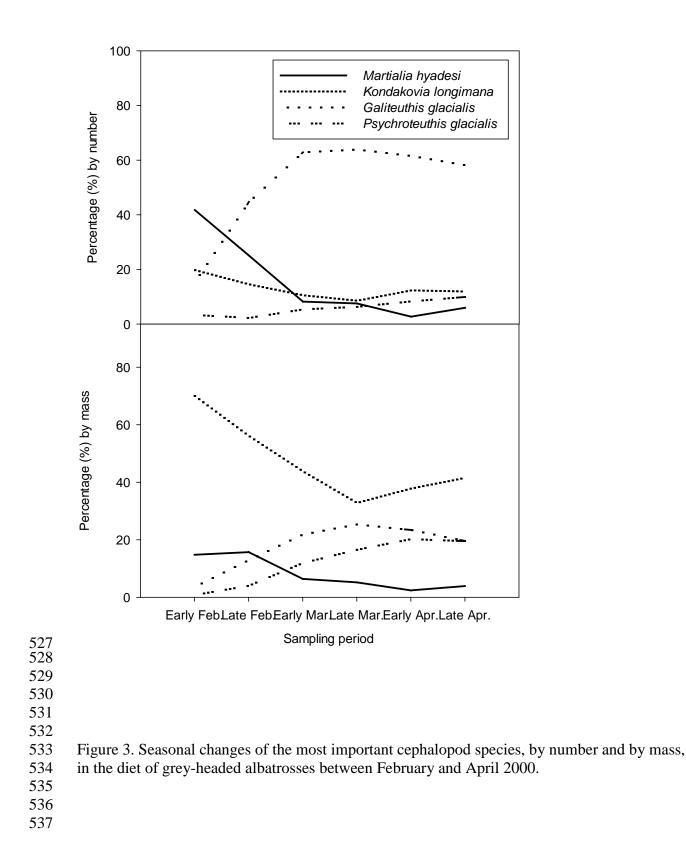
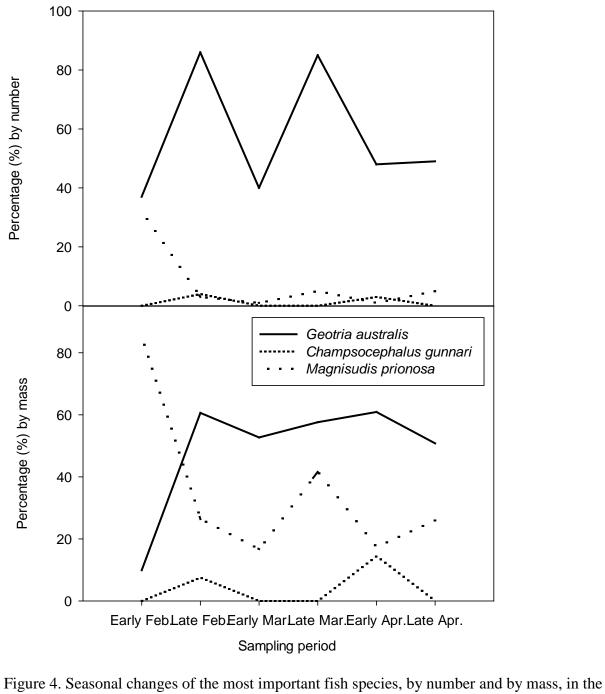


Figure 1. Map of the study region (SA- South America; SG- South Georgia; AP – Antarctic
Peninsula), locations of the 4 reference locations (Star symbols) and oceanographic conditions
(monthly mean sea surface temperature anomaly (°C) relative to 1971-2000 mean) between
September 1999 (A) to April 2000 (H). Contour lines are plotted and labelled every 0.5 °C,

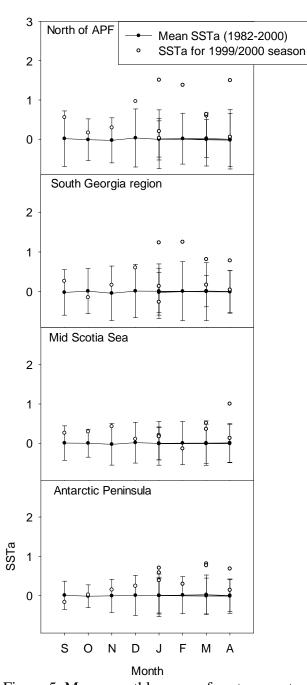
513 anomalies <0 °C have dashed lines, anomalies  $\ge 0$  °C have solid lines.







diet of grey-headed albatrosses between February and April 2000.



543 544

Figure 5. Mean monthly sea surface temperatures anomalies (SSTa) between 1982- 2000 at 4 randomly-selected reference locations (black symbols) in the study area: north of the Antarctic 545 546 Polar Front (45.5° S 35.5° W), South Georgia region (50.5° S 35.5° W), mid Scotia Sea (55.5° S

- $40.5^{\circ}$  W) and Antarctic Peninsula ( $60.5^{\circ}$  S  $50.5^{\circ}$  W). White symbols are values for the 547
- 1999/2000 season. The values are given mean  $\pm$  SD. 548

Table 1. Seasonal variation in the diet of grey-headed albatrosses from Bird Island, South Georgia in 2000. (n= number of samples; F (%) = Frequency of occurrence; N (%) = percentage of number of individuals (in parentheses there are the raw values); M (%) = percentage of the proportion by mass). Only prey that represented  $\geq$  5 % by mass in the diet were included.

	Early February (n=20) F (%)	Late February (n=20) F (%)	Early March (n=20) F (%)	Late March (n=20) F (%)	Early April (n=20) F (%)	Late April (n=20)	Overall		
								N (%)	M (%)
Species							F (%)		
CEPHALOPODS									17±3
Alluroteuthis antarcticus	5	30	20	50	40	40	31	(58) 3	5.2
Galiteuthis glacialis	35	100	95	85	85	60	77	(1218) 57	19.4
Kondakovia longimana	40	90	85	65	80	55	69	(256)12	44.5
Martialia hyadesi	25	80	45	60	30	20	43	(251) 12	7.7
Psychroteuthis glacialis	15	25	45	40	45	45	36	(129) 6	12.9
Gonatus antarcticus	15	70	50	45	20	25	38	(82) 4	3.3
Moroteuthis knipovitchi	5	35	25	20	15	15	19	(129) 2	4.0
FISH									19±3
Geotria australis	15	75	70	65	60	35	47	(403) 62	49.3
Champsocephalus gunnari	0	5	0	0	10	0	3	(10) 2	3.7
Magnisudis prionosa	20	15	5	15	5	5	11	(27) 4	36.7
CRUSTACEANS									61±4
Euphausia superba	100	70	100	85	95	80	89	>99	99.6
OTHERS									3±1