

1 **Title**

2 **Heart rate and estimated energy expenditure of flapping and gliding in**  
3 **black-browed albatrosses**

4  
5 **Short title**

6 Energy cost of flight in albatrosses

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## SUMMARY

27 Albatrosses are known to expend only a small amount of energy during flight. The  
28 low energy cost of albatross flight has been attributed to energy-efficient gliding  
29 (soaring) with sporadic flapping, although little is known about how much time  
30 and energy albatrosses expend in flapping versus gliding during cruising flight.  
31 Here, we examined the heart rates (used as an instantaneous index of energy  
32 expenditure) and flapping activities of free-ranging black-browed albatrosses  
33 (*Thalassarche melanophrys*) to estimate the energy cost of flapping as well as time  
34 spent in flapping activities. The heart rate of albatrosses during flight (144  
35 beats min<sup>-1</sup>) was similar to that while sitting on the water (150 beats min<sup>-1</sup>). In  
36 contrast, heart rate was much higher during takeoff and landing (*ca.* 200  
37 beats min<sup>-1</sup>). Heart rate during cruising flight was linearly correlated with the  
38 number of wing flaps per minute, suggesting an extra energy burden of flapping.  
39 Albatrosses expend only 4.6% ± 1.4% of their time in flapping during cruising  
40 flight, which was significantly lower than those during and shortly after takeoff  
41 (9.8% ± 3.5%). Flapping activity, which amounted to just 4.6% of the time in flight,  
42 accounted for 13.3% of the total energy expenditure during cruising flight. These  
43 results support the idea that albatrosses achieve energy-efficient flight by reducing  
44 the time spent in flapping activity, which is associated with high energy  
45 expenditure.

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48 **Key words:** black-browed albatross, *Thalassarche melanophrys*, flight, flapping,  
49 gliding, heart rate, energy expenditure, accelerometer.

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## INTRODUCTION

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53 Flapping activity is considered one of the major contributors to energy expenditure  
54 during flight. Hence, many birds try to save energy by reducing the amount of flapping  
55 (Videler, 2005; Tobalske, 2007). Birds employ diverse flight styles, including  
56 intermittent flight, formation flight, and soaring (Rayner, 1977; Pennycuick, 2002;  
57 Weimerskirch et al., 2004). Albatrosses provide a notable example of how birds reduce  
58 energy expenditure during flight, as they have the lowest energy cost of transport by  
59 unit mass and distance of all bird species examined to date (Videler, 2005). Albatrosses  
60 have several features that allow such low-cost flight. The high aspect ratio of their  
61 wings enables prolonged gliding until they lose altitude (Pennycuick, 1982). Moreover,  
62 these birds use a soaring technique that extracts power for flight from ambient wind  
63 over waves during gliding (Pennycuick, 2002; Richardson, 2011).

64 To better understand the efficiency of their low-cost flight, assessing how much  
65 energy and time seabirds expend flapping and gliding during flight is essential, but few  
66 studies have examined this issue. A previous study yielded somewhat surprising results,  
67 as Cape gannet *Morus capensis* showed an increase in heart rate of only 20% during  
68 flapping flight compared with gliding (Ropert-Coudert et al., 2006). More data on  
69 energy cost of flapping for prolonged gliders such as albatrosses would provide new  
70 insight into their unique style of flight. In addition, with the exception of observations  
71 from land and boats (Pennycuick, 1982), there have been few reports regarding the time  
72 spent flapping by albatrosses in the open ocean (Sato et al., 2009). Thus, to understand

73 flight costs under natural conditions, it is necessary to monitor both energy expenditure  
74 and flapping activity simultaneously.

75 The energy expenditure of pelagic seabirds during flight has been estimated using  
76 doubly labelled water and heart rate recording techniques. The doubly labelled water  
77 technique measures the energy expenditure through the turnover of stable oxygen and  
78 hydrogen isotopes in the blood, which reflect metabolic rate. The limitation of this  
79 technique is that it provides only a single energy expenditure value over the entire  
80 monitoring period. Several studies that applied the doubly labelled water technique  
81 simultaneously recorded whether the bird was in flight or on water and estimated the  
82 proportion of time spent in flight to determine the cost of flight (Birt-Friesen et al.,  
83 1987; Shaffer, 2011; Shaffer et al., 2001; Shaffer et al., 2004). Another technique, heart  
84 rate monitoring, measures the heart rate of the bird continuously during flight (Bevan et  
85 al., 1995; Butler et al., 1998; Pelletier et al., 2008). Heart rate can reflect the rate of  
86 oxygen consumption when both the stroke volume of the heart and the extraction of  
87 oxygen by the body tissues change in a systematic fashion (Fick, 1870). Although these  
88 values may change and thus the relationship may not be linear, heart rate is correlated  
89 with the rate of oxygen consumption under most conditions (Butler et al., 2004; Green  
90 et al., 2009; Green, 2011). Thus, once the relationship between heart rate and the rate of  
91 oxygen consumption is established, properly calibrated and validated, heart rate can  
92 serve as a good indicator of energy expenditure. The advantage of this technique is the  
93 fine-scale, temporal resolution of the records.

94 Flapping involves rotation of the wing that causes periodic motion of the body.  
95 Therefore, continuous measurement of body acceleration would allow the determination  
96 of flapping as a periodic signal. Measurements of acceleration are also applicable for  
97 monitoring the activity of free-ranging birds in remote areas (Yoda et al., 2001; Sato et  
98 al., 2008). The main difficulty of this approach is the complexity of the analysis when  
99 processing large amounts of data. However, Sakamoto et al. (2009a) developed  
100 algorithms to generate an ethogram from body acceleration records, which enables  
101 flapping signals to be extracted from acceleration records. Therefore, continuously  
102 recording heart rate and body acceleration with other behavioural parameters using  
103 animal-attached tags would be a promising approach to better understand the flight  
104 performance of birds under natural conditions.

105 In this study, we used electrocardiogram (ECG) recorders and accelerometers  
106 attached to free-ranging black-browed albatrosses (*Thalassarche melanophrys*) to  
107 determine how heart rate varies in relation to flight mode and time spent flapping over  
108 the open ocean. Black-browed albatrosses have been studied extensively, including the  
109 relationship of heart rate to the rate of oxygen consumption and energy expenditure  
110 under natural conditions (Bevan et al., 1994; Bevan et al., 1995). The present study was  
111 performed to assess the energy cost of flight in relation to flapping and to compare the  
112 costs of different activities during a foraging trip. The characteristics of such a  
113 fine-scale time-energy budget should shed light on the flight performance of  
114 albatrosses.

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## MATERIALS AND METHODS

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### Fieldwork

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Fieldwork was conducted at a black-browed albatross breeding colony on Bird Island

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(54°00'S, 38°03'W), South Georgia, in January 2005 and 2009, which corresponded to

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the chick-guarding period. This study was approved by the British Antarctic Survey and

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the University of Cambridge Animal Ethics Board prior to the commencement of

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fieldwork.

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We equipped eight chick-rearing albatrosses at their nest sites; they were weighed

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and equipped with recorders (Table 1). The masses of the birds ranged from 3.05 to

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4.25 kg. Three birds had both an ECG recorder and an accelerometer attached (see

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below), four birds had an accelerometer and an activity recorder attached and one bird

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had only an accelerometer attached. Animal handling times were always <30 min and

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all birds returned to the nest immediately after release before voluntarily departing on a

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foraging trip. Instrumented birds were recaptured after a single foraging trip lasting 3–4

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days; all recorders were retrieved and data were downloaded. The timing of arrival at

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the nest could be easily identified from the acceleration data. Acceleration data recorded

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at the nest were omitted, and only the data during the actual foraging trip were used for

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analysis.

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## Instruments

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137 The ECG recorder (UME-190-ECG; Little Leonardo Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) was 15 mm in  
138 diameter and 73 mm in length, with a mass of 24 g in air, and was used to measure heart  
139 rate (sampling frequency, 128 Hz). The recorder was composed of a data logger and  
140 three disposable electrodes connected to the logger with cables. Two of the electrodes  
141 were placed above and below the central part of the sternum to detect the electric  
142 potential difference, while the third electrode was placed on the back of the bird to act  
143 as a ground wire to reduce electrical noise (Yamamoto et al., 2009). All electrodes were  
144 made of gold-plated safety pins and were placed under the skin. The skin was  
145 disinfected with 70% ethanol prior to electrode attachment. The connecting cables were  
146 buried within the plumage and held in place with waterproof tape. The logger was  
147 attached on the centre of the back of each bird with Tesa tape (Beiersdorf AG, Hamburg,  
148 Germany). Once the ECG recorder was attached, we confirmed the reliability of the  
149 signal recorded using an ECG monitor (HeartMate IEC-11103; Nihon-Koden, Tokyo,  
150 Japan). A start timer was used to delay the onset of recording, so that the ECG recorder  
151 began monitoring 3 or 6 h after deployment to allow for any time spent at the nest and  
152 any potential influence of handling stress (Weimerskirch et al., 2002). Upon removal of  
153 the electrodes when the bird was recaptured, antibiotic ointment (gentamicin;  
154 Schering-Plough, Osaka, Japan) was administered at the electrode insertion points. The  
155 recorded periods during foraging were 7.2 h, 10.5 h and 11.6 h, respectively.

156 The accelerometer (M-190-D2GT; Little Leonardo Ltd.) was 15 mm in diameter and  
157 53 mm in length, and had a mass of 18 g in air. It recorded temperature (sampling  
158 frequency, 1 Hz), depth (sampling frequency, 1 Hz) and two-dimensional acceleration  
159 (sampling frequency, 16 or 32 Hz), surging along the longitudinal axis of the birds and  
160 heaving along the dorsoventral axis. Only the heaving axis data were used in this study  
161 as these reliably provide an indication of flapping. The logger was attached to the centre  
162 of the back of the bird with Tesa tape. The recording durations were 23–68 h.

163 The activity recorder (9 g, GLS-Mk3, British Antarctic Survey; Afanasyev, 2004)  
164 was used to measure activity patterns (sitting on water or flying). The activity recorder  
165 was fitted on the tarsus using a plastic leg band. Every 3 s, it recorded whether it was  
166 submerged in seawater or in air, storing the sum of the time that it was submerged in  
167 seawater at the end of each 10-min period. Recorded values ranged between 0 and 200,  
168 such that a value of 0 indicated that the logger was always dry, and 200 indicated that  
169 the logger was always wet. The recording duration covered the entire foraging trip.

170 The total mass of the combination of the recorders was ~1% of the body mass,  
171 which was assumed to be small enough to cause no severe behavioural disruptions (e.g.  
172 Phillips et al., 2003).

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### **Data analysis**

175 Although we had confirmed the reliability of the EGC signal at the attached recorder  
176 (Fig. 1), the baseline of the ECG signal sometimes fluctuated when birds flapped. In the

177 worst case, only the R-wave could be identified in the ECG signal. The frequency of the  
178 fluctuation that was associated with flapping was longer than that of the R-wave in the  
179 ECG signal. Thus, the ECG records were filtered using a purpose-written programme  
180 (IGOR Pro ver. 6.1; WaveMetrics, Lake Oswego, OR, USA) to remove noise caused by  
181 muscular movements. Subsequently, we calculated the heart rate every minute.

182 Behavioural data analysis was performed using IGOR Pro with the programme  
183 package, Ethographer (Sakamoto et al., 2009a). The time series data were categorised  
184 based on the characteristics of the heave acceleration signal to discriminate behavioural  
185 patterns. Heave acceleration is modulated by dynamic motion along the dorsoventral  
186 axis, such as flapping behaviour. We employed the method of Sakamoto et al. (2009a)  
187 to characterise the acceleration signal. Briefly, heave acceleration was converted to a  
188 spectrogram by continuous wavelet transformation using the Morlet mother wavelet  
189 with a non-dimensional frequency of 10 (Fig. 2A). The analysis time bin of the  
190 spectrogram was set to 2 s. The spectrogram was examined at 24 time steps with a  
191 periodicity range of 0.20–5.0 s, which included both flapping and soaring behaviours of  
192 albatrosses (Sato et al., 2009). Twenty-four time steps of examining the periodicity were  
193 confirmed to provide sufficient resolution to describe the motion of the birds. After  
194 generating the spectrogram, those from eight birds were combined and processed by the  
195 *k*-means clustering algorithm to discriminate behavioural patterns. The cluster number  
196 was set to 10, as higher cluster numbers artificially separated highly similar spectra that  
197 represented the same behaviour. The centroids of the clusters indicated the typical

198 behaviour patterns and were represented as the spectra of dynamic motion (Fig. 2B–E).  
199 The 10 generated spectra could be classified into four groups. The first group showed a  
200 high amplitude at *ca.* 0.35 s cycle, which corresponds to flapping frequency (Sato et al.,  
201 2009) and indicates flapping behaviour (Fig. 2B). The second group was characterised  
202 as low amplitude over the entire range of the cycle, indicating stationary behaviour such  
203 as resting on water (Fig. 2C). The third group was characterised as a combination of low  
204 amplitude 0.20–1.0 s cycles and high amplitude 1.0–5.0 s cycles, which corresponded to  
205 soaring behaviour (Fig. 2D) (see Sato et al., 2009). The fourth group showed high  
206 amplitude in all cycle ranges, suggesting strong dynamic movement of the torso,  
207 although actual behaviour could not be identified (Fig. 2E). This type of behaviour  
208 appeared spontaneously and comprised only  $0.17\% \pm 0.15\%$  (mean  $\pm$  s.d.,  $n = 8$ ) of the  
209 recorded time. Thus, we excluded this type of behaviour from further analysis.

210 Next, we identified whether a bird was in flight or on water based on the time series  
211 sequence of the categorised behaviour groups. A flying bird should show flapping or  
212 gliding behaviour (the first or third behaviour group), whereas a bird sitting on water  
213 should show resting behaviour (the second behaviour group). As the spectrogram bins  
214 were 2 s, the categorised behaviours represented motion for 2 s. Considering a 1-min  
215 block for a behaviour sequence, the major parts of the sequences were characterised by  
216 a continuous record of resting behaviour (Fig. 2C) ( $21.1\% \pm 9.1\%$  of the entire time;  
217 mean  $\pm$  s.d.,  $n = 8$ ) or a complete lack of resting behaviour ( $46.6\% \pm 11.6\%$  of the entire  
218 time;  $n = 8$ ). The combination of both types of behaviour comprised  $67.6\% \pm 6.0\%$  ( $n =$

219 8) of the time. A bird was defined as sitting on water when a 1-min block showed  
220 resting behaviour of >20 s. The other part was defined as the bird in flight.

221 Behavioural discrimination by the method of Sakamoto et al. (2009a) is a relatively  
222 new technique and our data allowed the method to be validated. For this, we compared  
223 the activity patterns of every 10-min block determined by both heave acceleration and  
224 the activity logger from the four birds equipped with both recorders. In the case of the  
225 activity recorder, a flight bout was defined as a 10-min block, during each of which the  
226 bird spent >570 s (95% of the time) in a dry condition, and a wet bout was defined for  
227 the remaining time. A flight bout for heave acceleration was defined as a continuous  
228 sequence of a 1-min block of flight for 10 min, and a wet bout was defined as the  
229 remaining time. Although measurement by both methods may result in error and noise,  
230 the activity patterns determined by both methods coincided well ( $96.2\% \pm 1.3\%$ ; mean  
231  $\pm$  s.d.,  $n = 4$ ). Thus, we assumed that discrimination using heave acceleration would be  
232 reliable.

233 The heart rate increases for 15–20 min at takeoff and landing in wandering  
234 albatrosses (*Diomedea exulans*) (Weimerskirch et al., 2000). We discriminated the  
235 takeoff and landing phases from the steady-state phase. Ten minutes from the onset of  
236 flight was defined as takeoff and 10 min from the onset of sitting on water was defined  
237 as landing. In cases in which the duration of flight or sitting on water was less than 10  
238 min, the whole period was included in the takeoff or landing phase.

239 As is shown in Fig. 2A, the intensity of heave acceleration on the torso caused by  
240 flapping was always similar. On the other hand, since a flap took 0.35 s and albatrosses  
241 flapped several times in one session, the time spent flapping in each spectrogram bin (2  
242 s) was variable. When a bird spent an equal amount of time flapping and gliding, the  
243 derived amplitude in the spectrogram would be half the amplitude for the period of full  
244 flapping activity. In Fig. 2B, the amplitudes of the dominant cycles of the spectra for  
245 flapping were 3.1 (spectrum 0) and 1.6 m s<sup>-2</sup> (spectrum 1), respectively. This difference  
246 seemed to be derived from the duration of flapping in each spectrogram bin. The bird  
247 spent 2 s flapping at the moment of spectrum 0, whereas it spent 1 s flapping at the  
248 moment of spectrum 1. Thus, we calculated the time spent flapping every minute as the  
249 number of time points that were assigned to spectrum 0 or 1.

250 To examine the relationship between heart rate and activity, activity phase and time  
251 spent flapping during flight were determined for each 1-min block. Then we assigned  
252 mean heart rate values to continuous 1-min blocks of activity. We examined the  
253 relationship between heart rate and time spent flapping on the data points derived from  
254 each 1-min block within the time series.

255 To avoid problems with pseudoreplication by repeated measurements from  
256 individual birds, linear mixed models using restricted maximum likelihood were used to  
257 estimate heart rate among the activity phases and the influence of flapping on heart rate.  
258 Bird identity was considered a random factor. We used R 2.14.2 (R Development Core  
259 Team, 2012) with the lmer function in R package lme4 for model fitting (Bates et al.,

260 2011), and 95% confidence intervals (CI) and  $P$ -values of each parameter were obtained  
261 from 10,000 Markov chain Monte Carlo runs using the `pvals.fnc` function in R package  
262 `languageR` (Baayen, 2011). To compare the time spent flapping between takeoff and  
263 cruising flight, we used a paired  $t$ -test. In all analyses,  $P < 0.05$  was taken to indicate  
264 statistical significance.

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## RESULTS

268 A typical trace of the time spent flapping and heart rate during a foraging trip are shown  
269 in Fig. 3. Heart rate was generally stable and low when a bird stayed on the water or  
270 flew for a long period of time, whereas heart rate increased during and shortly after  
271 takeoff and landing. During flight, the increase in heart rate was associated with  
272 flapping.

273 The estimated heart rates varied among different bird activities: 218 beats  $\text{min}^{-1}$   
274 (95% CI, 157–286) for takeoff, 144 beats  $\text{min}^{-1}$  (95% CI, 118–173) for cruising flight,  
275 195 beats  $\text{min}^{-1}$  (95% CI, 145–243) for landing and 150 beats  $\text{min}^{-1}$  (95% CI, 117–184)  
276 for sitting on water (Table 1, Fig. 4). The heart rates during takeoff and landing were  
277 significantly higher than those during steady phases: during cruising flight (95% CI of  
278 the difference, 63–77,  $P < 0.001$ ) and on water (95% CI of the difference, 42–53,  $P <$   
279 0.001). Although heart rate increased significantly with increasing time spent flapping  
280 during takeoff (Fig. 5A; 95% CI of the slope, 3.0–5.0,  $P < 0.01$ ), the relationship was

281 not strong (95% CI of the intercept, 115–262). The major portion of the variation  
282 seemed to coincide with periods of high heart rate, implying that both flapping and  
283 other factors led to increased heart rates. In contrast, heart rate during cruising flight  
284 was linearly correlated with time spent flapping (Fig. 5B; 95% CI of the slope, 3.1–3.5;  
285 95% CI of the intercept, 100–169,  $P < 0.01$  for both). The estimated regression equation  
286 was:

$$287 \quad f_H = 3.278T_f + 131.8 \quad (1),$$

288 where  $f_H$  is heart rate in beats  $\text{min}^{-1}$  and  $T_f$  is time spent flapping in  $\text{s min}^{-1}$ . When a bird  
289 did not flap (i.e., gliding), its estimated heart rate was  $131.8 \pm 2.8$  beats  $\text{min}^{-1}$  (mean  $\pm$   
290 s.e.m.).

291 The time budget was calculated for birds at sea (Table 1). Birds spent  $60.7\% \pm$   
292  $12.2\%$  (mean  $\pm$  s.d.,  $n = 8$ ) of their time flying (including both takeoff and cruising  
293 flight phases) and  $39.3\% \pm 12.2\%$  sitting on water. Takeoff represented  $11.7\% \pm 2.9\%$   
294 of the time budget, whereas  $49.1\% \pm 13.8\%$  of time was spent during cruising flight.  
295 Note that the takeoff phase included the whole flight period if flight continued for less  
296 than 10 min. Time spent flapping was calculated as the proportion of flapping time to  
297 total flying time. Flapping during cruising flight accounted for  $4.6\% \pm 1.4\%$  of the  
298 flying time (range 1.7–5.7%), and was significantly lower than that during takeoff  
299 ( $9.8\% \pm 3.5\%$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ).

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## DISCUSSION

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303 We have provided the first continuous recording of flapping activity during albatross  
304 flight across the open ocean with simultaneous measurement of heart rate. During  
305 cruising flight, the heart rate of black-browed albatrosses was almost the same as that  
306 while sitting on water, whereas heart rates during takeoff and landing were much higher  
307 (Table 1, Figs. 3, 4), indicating that the locomotion of flying was energetically similar  
308 to remaining on the sea surface. This finding was consistent with those of other studies  
309 that measured heart rate in free-ranging black-browed albatrosses and wandering  
310 albatrosses (Bevan et al., 1995; Weimerskirch et al., 2000). In addition, Shaffer et al.  
311 (2001) estimated the field metabolic rate of wandering albatrosses using the doubly  
312 labelled water method and concluded that the number of takeoffs and landings  
313 explained the greatest proportion of variation in energy expenditure during a foraging  
314 trip. Black-browed albatrosses may sometimes feed on food scraps left by marine  
315 predators such as killer whales (*Orcinus orca*; Sakamoto et al., 2009b). While foraging,  
316 albatrosses follow predators and repeatedly land on the sea surface. In this study, heart  
317 rate during and shortly after landing was higher than when sitting on water. The high  
318 heart rate during and shortly after landing might have been due to feeding activity.  
319 Therefore, it seems reasonable that landing and takeoff, although energetically  
320 expensive, are essential parts of foraging (Green et al., 2009).

321 The heart rate of black-browed albatrosses was stable during gliding, suggesting that  
322 activities other than flapping do not require substantial additional energy during cruising

323 flight (Fig. 5). In contrast, note that the increase in heart rate was only weakly related to  
324 flapping activity within 10 min from takeoff. In some cases, continuous flapping during  
325 takeoff would increase the heart rate, and the heart rate might remain high for a few  
326 minutes, which would result in a weak relationship with instantaneous flapping activity.  
327 Moreover, the variety of environmental conditions during takeoff might contribute to  
328 the large variation in heart rate during takeoff (e.g. condition of wind or water surface).  
329 However, according to the dorsoventral acceleration record, the heart rate increased  
330 occasionally even when the bird seemed to take off without running and started to glide  
331 immediately, indicating that the birds were performing some activity that did not appear  
332 in movement of the torso. Albatrosses are believed to lock their shoulder joints during  
333 flight (Pennycuick, 1982; Meyers and Stakebake, 2005). After the wing is moved  
334 forward to a fully protracted position, it is then resistant to being raised above the  
335 horizontal position. This mechanism is thought to reduce or eliminate the energy to  
336 strain the muscle for extending the wing, although it is unclear when albatrosses begin  
337 to apply the shoulder lock mechanism after takeoff. Thus, if albatrosses did not lock  
338 their wing at the beginning of the flight to adjust their flight mode to the ambient  
339 environment conditions, some energy may be used to keep the wing in the proper  
340 position (Baudinette and Schmidt-Nielsen, 1974; Goldspink et al., 1978). This energy  
341 consumption could explain the increased heart rate during takeoff, and would cause the  
342 weak relationship between heart rate and time spent flapping (Fig. 5A). Additional

343 studies are required to determine why heart rate increased even when the albatrosses'  
344 torsos did not move.

345 Black-browed albatrosses flapped for  $4.6\% \pm 1.4\%$  of the time during cruising flight.  
346 This proportion was consistent with previous observations from land and boats  
347 (Pennycuick, 1982) and was much lower than observations for red-footed boobies (*Sula*  
348 *sula*) in the open ocean (31.4–44.6%; Weimerskirch et al., 2005). The results of the  
349 present study indicate that flapping activity explains a major part of the heart rate  
350 increase during cruising flight (Fig. 5B). Flapping for 50% of the time during cruising  
351 flight ( $30 \text{ s min}^{-1}$ ) would account for a 75% increase in heart rate relative to the level  
352 during gliding. Although flight styles are different, these results are in contrast with  
353 those for Cape gannets. Gannets routinely alternate between flapping and gliding in  
354 flight (Ropert-Coudert et al., 2004). When gannets continue flapping flight for more  
355 than 1 min (i.e. flapping for 100% of time in flight), the elevation of heart rate from the  
356 level of gliding phase is only 20%, possibly due to the change in stroke volume in  
357 response to flight conditions (Ropert-Coudert et al., 2006).

358 The relationship between heart rate and the rate of oxygen consumption has been  
359 determined for black-browed albatrosses walking on a treadmill (Bevan et al., 1994,  
360 1995). The derived equation was:

361 
$$\dot{V}_{O_2} = 0.00466f_H^{1.61} \quad (r^2 = 0.79) \quad (2),$$

362 where  $\dot{V}_{O_2}$  is the rate of oxygen consumption in  $\text{mL min}^{-1} \text{ kg}^{-1}$  and  $f_H$  is heart rate in  
363  $\text{beats min}^{-1}$ . Assuming that 1 mL  $O_2$  has an energy equivalent of 20.112 J (Bevan et al.,

364 1995), the estimated energy expenditure values from the present study were  $9.09 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$   
365 (takeoff),  $4.66 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$  (cruising flight),  $7.60 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$  (landing) and  $4.98 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$  (on  
366 water). By combining measurements of energy expenditure and time spent performing  
367 each activity, it is possible to estimate the energy required for a bird flying or sitting on  
368 water. On average, albatrosses spend 11.7% of each day performing takeoffs and 49.1%  
369 in cruising flight. In other words, takeoff accounted for 19.2% of flying time whereas  
370 cruising flight represented 80.8%. Therefore, the estimated energy expenditure for a  
371 flying bird would be  $5.51 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$  ( $= 9.09 \text{ W kg}^{-1} \times 19.2\% + 4.66 \text{ W kg}^{-1} \times 80.8\%$ ). In  
372 the same way,  $5.62 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$  would be required for a bird sitting on water (the period  
373 including both landing and on water phases). Our estimates are comparable with  
374 previous energy expenditure estimates that were created using the same relationship for  
375 this species when flying ( $6.21 \pm 0.24 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$ ; mean  $\pm$  s.e.m.) and when on the water  
376 ( $5.77 \pm 0.41 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$ ) (Bevan et al., 1995). Note that the error calculated as the standard  
377 error of the mean may be an underestimate in this context (Green et al., 2011) because  
378 the standard error of the mean ignores the error associated with variation in the  
379 relationship between heart rate and the rate of oxygen consumption.

380 The estimated energy expenditure during gliding was  $4.04 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$ , which was 1.7  
381 times the energy expenditure when on the nest ( $2.42 \pm 0.17 \text{ W kg}^{-1}$ ; Bevan et al., 1995).  
382 The average additional energy expenditure for flapping could be estimated as the  
383 difference between the energy required for gliding and the average cruising flight.  
384 During cruising flight, albatrosses spent 4.6% of the time flapping and expended 4.66

385 W kg<sup>-1</sup> on average. Therefore, 13.3% (0.62 W kg<sup>-1</sup>) of the total energy spent during  
386 cruising flight would be expended for flapping.

387 As the number of flaps per minute was linearly correlated with heart rate during  
388 cruising flight, it was possible to estimate the energy expenditure for a flap. The  
389 difference in energy expenditure between a bird gliding and flapping for 10% of the  
390 time in cruising flight was 1.02 W kg<sup>-1</sup>, which was equivalent to 60.9 J min<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>.  
391 When the bird spent 10% of the time flapping, the bird flapped 17.1 times for 1 min  
392 because a single flap took 0.35 s. Therefore, albatrosses would expend 3.56 J kg<sup>-1</sup> flap<sup>-1</sup>  
393 in addition to the energy required for gliding. Note that this estimation does not take  
394 into account the variance in flap style or wind condition during flight, which may have a  
395 significant influence on the energy expenditure for flapping. Although this was a rough  
396 estimate, it is of interest to compare with the values of 5.0 J kg<sup>-1</sup> stride<sup>-1</sup> for trotting  
397 terrestrial mammals and 2.39 J kg<sup>-1</sup> stroke<sup>-1</sup> for swimming seals (Heglund and Taylor,  
398 1988; Kram and Taylor, 1990; Williams et al., 2004).

399 With respect to flight speed, the energy expenditure in general may be independent  
400 of ground speed during flight (Bevan et al., 1995). Albatrosses mainly move by soaring,  
401 which seemed to require a constant rate of oxygen consumption regardless of flight  
402 speed (Fig. 4B). However, when facing a head wind, wandering albatrosses fly at a low  
403 speed with a high heart rate, presumably because they spend more time flapping  
404 (Weimerskirch et al., 2000). Although 4.6% of the time during cruising flight was spent

405 on flapping, flapping could contribute to flight speed under certain conditions.  
406 Additional studies are needed to clarify this relationship.

407 In conclusion, we showed that flapping accounted for the major portion of the  
408 variation in energy expenditure during cruising flight. Black-browed albatrosses flapped  
409 for 4.6% of the time during cruising flight, but expended 13.3% of their energy for  
410 flapping, which supports the idea that birds perform energy-efficient cruising flight by  
411 reducing flapping activity, which requires high energy expenditures.

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421

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540 **Figure Legends**

541 Fig. 1. Representative electrocardiogram of black-browed albatross. Peaks in the trace  
542 indicate R-waves.

543

544 Fig. 2. Behavioural discrimination by the body acceleration signal from black-browed  
545 albatrosses and the discrete behaviour spectra. (A) Heave acceleration (black line, top)  
546 was converted into a spectrogram (middle) by continuous wavelet transformation. Ten  
547 discrete behaviours assigned to each time point were determined by the spectrogram  
548 characteristics (bottom part). In the trace, the bird took off at 12:18 and continued to fly.  
549 The large amplitude in the spectrogram at takeoff indicates flapping activity and was  
550 assigned a behavioural element of 0 and 1. The spectra of the behaviour indicate (B)  
551 flapping, (C) resting on water, (D) soaring and (E) strong dynamic movement. The  
552 numbers on the spectra correspond to the behaviour identification indicated at the  
553 bottom of Fig. 2A.

554

555 Fig. 3. Representative flapping activity and heart rate trace. The bottom part shows  
556 whether the bird was in flight or on water. The bird performed successive takeoffs and  
557 landings several times and then took off at 06:25 for a prolonged flight.

558

559 Fig. 4. Heart rate frequency distribution of black-browed albatrosses (A) at takeoff, (B)  
560 during cruising flight, (C) at landing and (D) sitting on water (three birds pooled).

561 During cruising flight, heart rate is indicated by grey (when gliding) and white (when  
562 flapping more than once in a minute).

563

564 Fig. 5. Variation in heart rate in relation to time spent flapping (A) at takeoff and (B)  
565 during cruising flight. As the flapping frequency was constant (0.35 s for a flap), time  
566 spent flapping is converted into the number of flaps. Individuals are discriminated by  
567 different markers ( $n = 3$ ).

568

569

570

571 Table 1. Body masses, heart rates and time budget at sea of individual black-browed  
572 albatrosses. Year is the year when the birds were instrumented. The recorders used  
573 included an electrocardiogram recorder (ECG), accelerometer (Heave) and activity  
574 logger (Activity). Heart rates were calculated every minute and classified into activity  
575 phases (see Materials and methods for definitions). The cruising flight phase for heart  
576 rate was divided into flapping and gliding phases. When calculating the heart rate, the  
577 flapping phase was identified when the bird flapped more than once in a minute. During  
578 the flapping phase, birds spent 8.3%–16.3% of the time flapping on average (14–28  
579 flaps  $\text{min}^{-1}$ ). Times spend in each activity are represented as the percentages of the  
580 whole period at sea. Time spend flapping indicates the percentage of time spent flapping  
581 when a bird is flying.

582

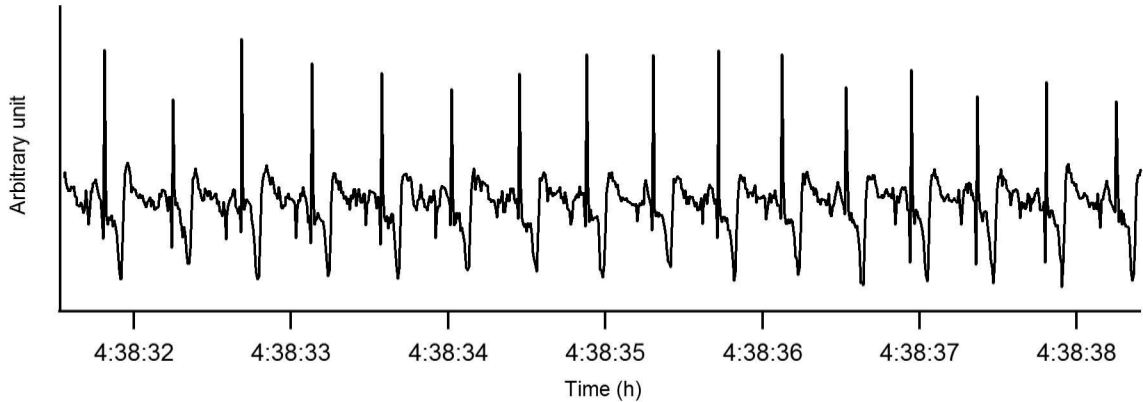
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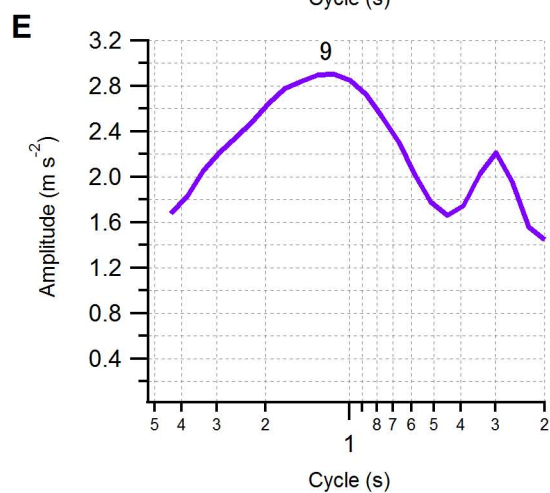
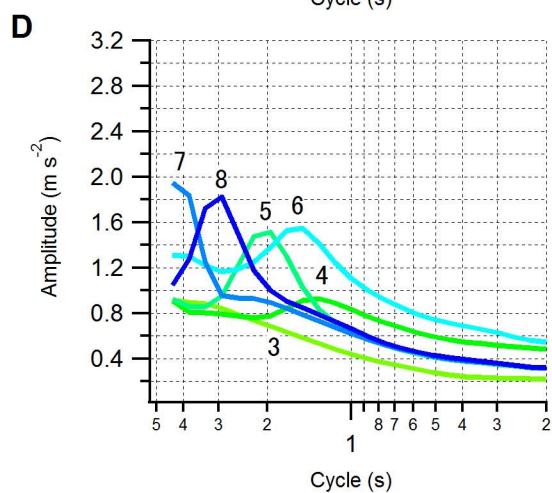
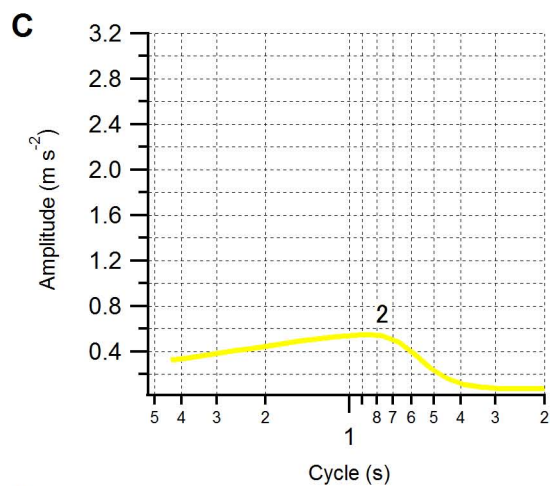
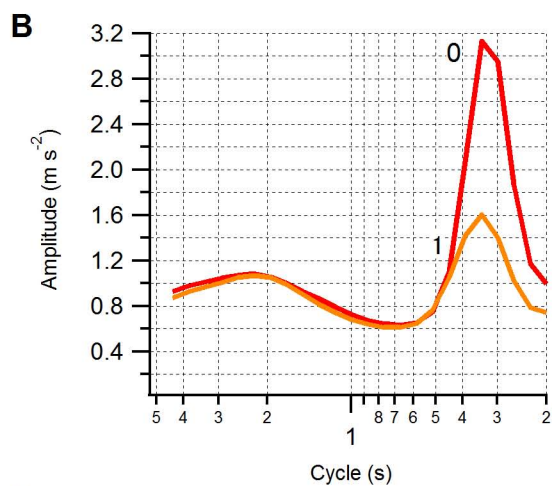
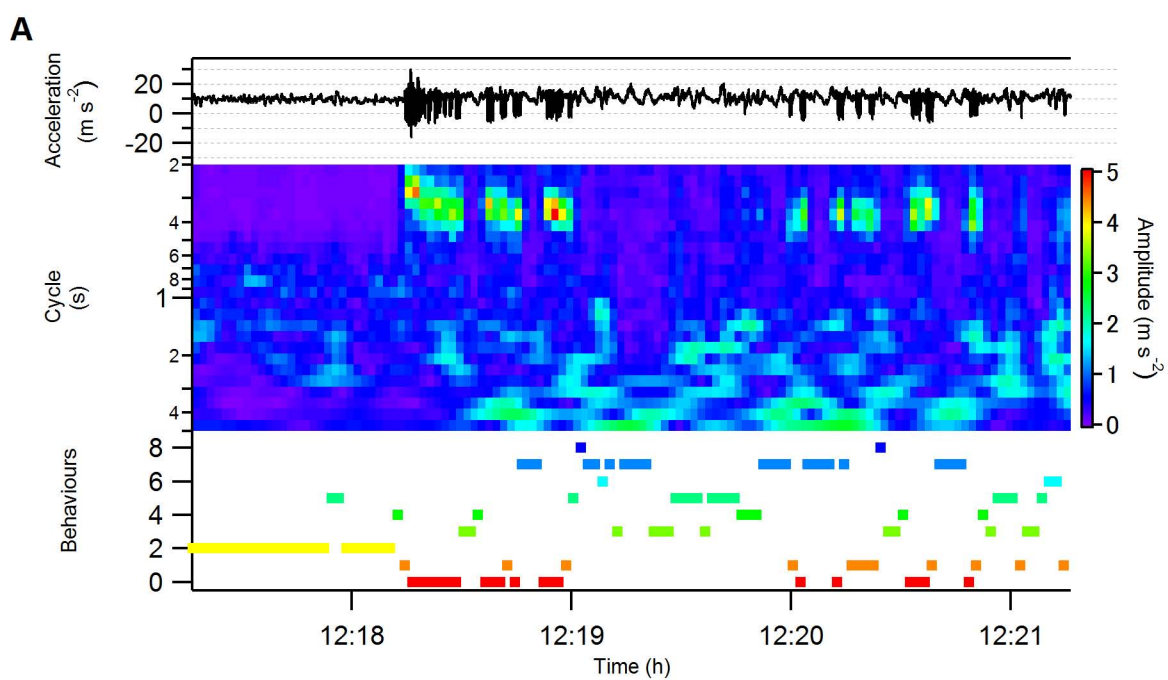
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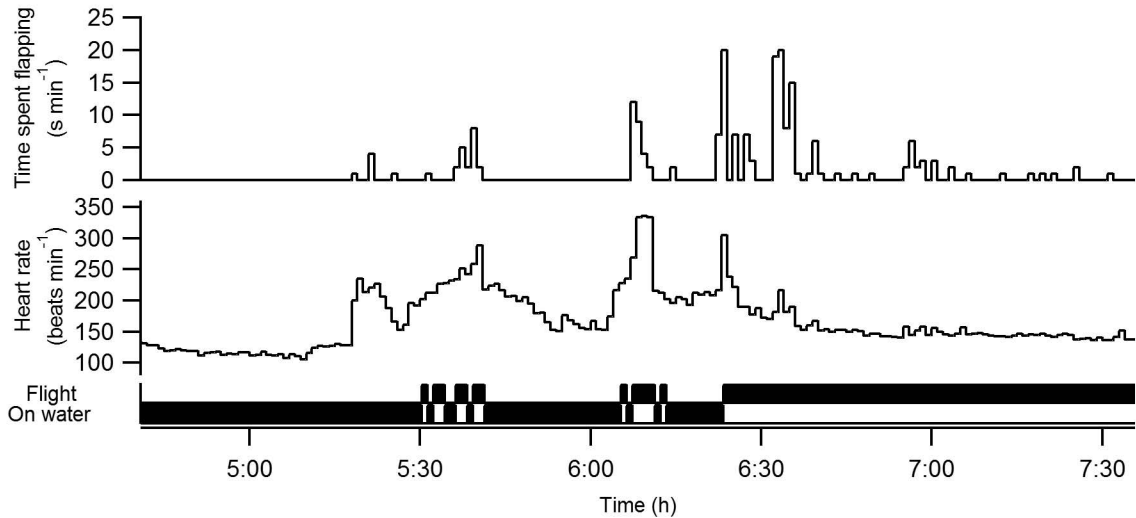


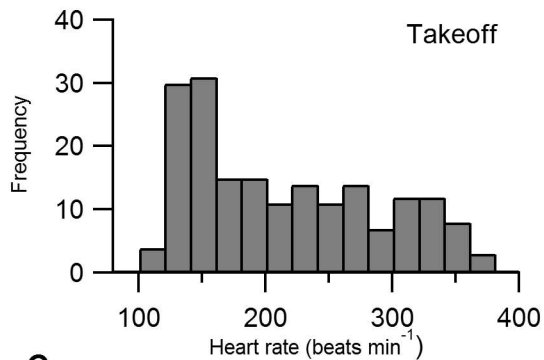
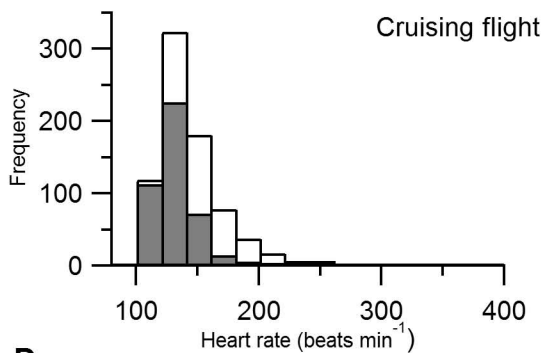
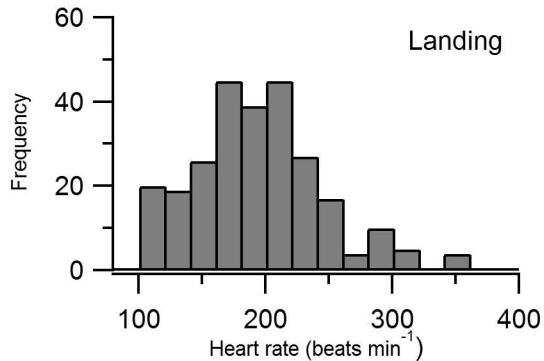
Bird ID	Body mass (kg)	Year	Recorder	Heart rate (beats min <sup>-1</sup> )					Time spent in each activity (%)				Time spent flapping (%)		
				Takeoff	Flapping in cruising flight	Gliding in cruising flight	Landing	On water	Takeoff	Cruising flight	Landing	On water	Takeoff	Cruising flight	
BBA1	3.70	2005	Heave & Activity							12.2 (494)	48.1 (1947)	10.2 (414)	29.4 (1191)	11.6	5.0
BBA2	3.40	2005	Heave & Activity							16.8 (399)	25.7 (610)	13.1 (312)	44.3 (1052)	7.3	4.6
BBA4	3.05	2005	Heave & Activity							13.0 (378)	64.6 (1884)	9.1 (266)	13.3 (387)	8.6	5.5
BBA5	3.45	2005	Heave & Activity							13.2 (534)	49.4 (1999)	7.2 (293)	30.2 (1221)	5.8	3.4
BBA6	3.65	2009	Heave							10.0 (218)	57.0 (1241)	6.9 (150)	26.2 (570)	9.2	5.6
BBA7	4.17	2009	ECG & Heave	200.0 ± 63.1 (105)	158.6 ± 36.1 (107)	137.1 ± 15.4 (83)	186.5 ± 55.9 (121)	134.1 ± 26.3 (278)		11.7 (164)	32.0 (449)	13.4 (188)	42.9 (603)	13.2	5.4
BBA8	4.25	2009	ECG & Heave	217.9 ± 72.1 (32)	159.5 ± 26.0 (229)	125.4 ± 14.7 (142)	189.0 ± 48.7 (65)	143.7 ± 37.2 (159)		7.6 (174)	54.1 (1232)	8.2 (186)	30.1 (687)	15.9	5.7
BBA9	3.60	2009	ECG & Heave	240.3 ± 87.2 (50)	157.0 ± 58.0 (56)	130.4 ± 19.3 (168)	210.3 ± 37.5 (75)	171.5 ± 28.2 (82)		8.9 (187)	61.6 (1290)	9.4 (196)	20.1 (422)	6.9	1.7
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.66 ± 0.40</b>									<b>11.7 ± 2.9</b>	<b>49.1 ± 13.8</b>	<b>9.7 ± 2.5</b>	<b>29.6 ± 10.4</b>	<b>9.8 ± 3.5</b>	<b>4.6 ± 1.4</b>

Data are mean ± s.d. Numbers in parentheses indicate recording duration in min.







**A****B****C****D**