

The life of a Northern Royal Albatross

"What to expect to see on tour"

Diomedea sanfordi / Toroa

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

Late September - October, breeding birds begin to return to the colony for the start of the breeding season. They have spent the last 12 months out at sea and will begin to establish a nest. Viewing/ sightings can be tough, on tour we may see adult/s on land, in flight or both. Afternoon tours can increase chances of viewing when the wind usually increases.

NOVEMBER

Egg laying happens during November. 1 egg is laid every two years. Non-breeding albatross begin to return back to the colony, on average we may see 3-5 adults nesting on view from our observatory + potentially albatross in flight and other birds on land.

DECEMBER

Non-breeding birds are partying & socialising, beginning to find a mate. Breeding birds are well into their incubation period. Eggs will be incubated for 79 days, both parents share this duty. Nesting albatross on view. Afternoon tours can increase chances of seeing albatross in flight.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY

HATCHING TIME! Chicks are beginning to hatch, this process can take up to 3-5 days. Adults nesting on view. We may see a chick if the parent stands up.

MARCH

Chicks are growing bigger by the day, weighing over 4 kgs. Parents take turns guarding their chick and going out to sea to forage for food. Non-breeding birds are now slowly leaving the colony to spend time off the coast of South America.



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APRIL

Chicks are now on their own and both parents are out at sea foraging. They return independently every 2-4 days to feed their chick. Sightings of adult albatross can come with luck. All non-breeding albatross have departed.

MAY - JUNE

Chicks are more active by the day and may wander away from their nest, parent albatross still return back to feed their chick ever few days *anytime of the day.



JULY

Chicks are not quite as fluffy, their adult plumage / feathers begins to show. Chicks can weigh between 8-12 kgs and are now heavier than their parents. Parent albatross still return back to feed their chick ever few days *anytime of the day

AUGUST

Chicks are more active, lots of stretching to build the strength in their wings. Parents are feeding their chick a little less food now, as they need to be at an ideal weight of between 8-9 kgs to be able to take off! Parent albatross still return back to feed their chick ever few days *viewing anytime of the day



SEPTEMBER

FLEDGING TIME! It is now time for the chicks to take their first ever flight from the colony to spend the next 5 years of their life out at sea before touching land again. They will fly towards the coast of Chile - where there is an abundance of food.

FUN FACTS

1. They have a 3 metre wingspan
2. Live on average to 25 years
3. Spend over 80% of their life at sea
4. Favorite food - squid/ octopus
5. Lay 1 egg every two years

ALBATROSS VIEWING

Adult albatross nesting on view:

November - March

Chicks nesting on view: (adults come and go)

March - Sept

Potential Viewing of Albatross:

Late Sept - Oct - 80% of tours see albatross

seeing albatross in flight comes with luck

Binoculars are provided on our tours.