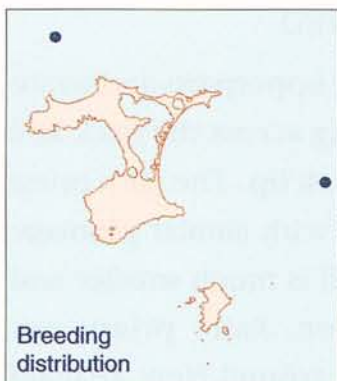


Northern giant petrel *Macronectes halli* 90 cm

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE, NOT THREATENED



Giant petrels are also known as nellies, stinkers or stinkpots for their rather unpleasant habit of feeding on carrion such as dead seals and whales. The northern giant petrel is a large robust brown bird with a pale face and throat, and a huge straw-coloured bill with a reddish tip, and prominent nasal tubes. Young birds have entirely dark, almost black, feathers. Southern giant petrels (*M. giganteus*) are generally paler (sometimes all white), with a greenish bill tip. Giant petrels sometimes form noisy flocks squabbling over food behind fishing boats. However, they also catch fish, squid, small seabirds and

crustaceans. Northern giant petrels breed on a number of subantarctic islands and in the Chatham Islands, where an estimated 2000 pairs breed on The Sisters and The Forty Fours. They are at risk from fishery by-catch, and also illegal shooting due to their unfavourable reputation.



Northern giant petrels at their nests,
Little Sister Island.
Photo: Rod Morris (DOC).

Adult northern giant petrel, at Rangatira, showing nasal tubes characteristic of all petrels, but most pronounced in giant petrels. Photo: Helen Gummer.