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*Title*

Habitat modelling of tracking data from multiple marine predators identifies important areas in the Southern Indian Ocean

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## ABSTRACT

### *Aim*

The distribution of marine predators is driven by the distribution and abundance of their prey; areas preferred by multiple marine predator species should therefore indicate areas of ecological significance. The Southern Ocean supports large populations of seabirds and marine mammals and is undergoing rapid environmental change. The management and conservation of these predators and their environment relies on understanding their distribution and its link with the biophysical environment, since the latter determines the distribution and abundance of prey. We addressed this issue by using tracking data from 14 species of marine predators to identify important habitat.

### *Location*

Indian Ocean sector of the Southern Ocean.

### *Methods*

We used tracking data from 538 tag deployments made over a decade at the Sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands. For each real track, we simulated a set of pseudo-tracks that allowed a presence-availability habitat modelling approach that estimates an animal's habitat preference. Using model ensembles of boosted regression trees and random forests we modelled these tracks as a response to a set of 17 environmental variables. We combined the resulting species-specific models to evaluate areas of mean importance.

### *Results*

Real tracking locations covered 39.75 million km<sup>2</sup>, up to 7,813 km from the Prince Edward Islands. Areas of high mean importance were located broadly from the Subtropical Zone to the Polar Frontal Zone in summer, and from the Subantarctic to Antarctic Zones in winter. Areas of high mean importance were best predicted by factors including wind speed, sea surface temperature, depth and current speed.

### *Main conclusions*

The models and predictions developed here identify important habitat of marine predators around the Prince Edward Islands, and can support the large-scale conservation and management of Subantarctic ecosystems and the marine predators they sustain. The results also form the basis of future efforts to predict the consequences of environmental change.

### KEYWORDS

areas of ecological significance, distribution, hotspots, marine mammals, marine protected areas, seabirds, species distribution models

## INTRODUCTION

The distribution and life history traits of marine predators are influenced by the distribution and abundance of their prey, which are themselves affected by physical and biological factors. Therefore, marine top predators are touted as sentinels of marine ecosystems, which potentially integrate diverse and complex environmental signals (e.g., Boyd & Murray 2001, Moore 2008, Durant et al. 2009). Accordingly, areas with a high abundance or diversity of foraging top predators are regarded as representing ecologically important areas (Block et al. 2003, Hazen et al. 2013). Predators may also have significant top-down effects on ecosystems (Heithaus et al. 2008, Baum & Worm 2009). Quantitative information on the spatial distribution of marine predator assemblages is therefore required to better understand and manage marine systems. This is particularly so given the increasing anthropogenic impacts on the oceans (Maxwell et al. 2013, Halpern et al. 2015). While the distributions of many marine predator species are becoming well-known, there is an increasing emphasis on considering species assemblages to identify important ecological areas and common drivers of distribution and habitat use (e.g., Block et al. 2011, Raymond et al. 2015, Patterson et al. 2016, Thiers et al. 2017).

The Southern Ocean is a vast area interspersed with very few terrestrial sites where seabirds and seals can breed. One such island group is the Prince Edward Islands, comprising Marion Island and Prince Edward Island. At least 29 seabird species and three seal species breed there – collectively numbering millions of individuals making the Prince Edward Islands a globally significant site for seabirds and seals (Ryan & Bester 2008). In 2013 South Africa declared a 180,633 km<sup>2</sup> marine protected area in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding the islands, partly to protect this biodiversity (Lombard et al. 2007). A number of seabird species breeding at the islands have a threatened or near-threatened conservation status (Supplementary Table S1). Wide-scale environmental changes in the southern Indian Ocean have influenced the population sizes of several seal and seabird species breeding at sub-Antarctic islands (Weimerskirch et al. 2003). At the Prince

Edward Islands, mean sea surface temperatures increased by 1.4°C from 1949-1998 (Mélise et al. 2003) and such changes, coupled with changes in prey abundance and distribution, are thought to affect the abundance and life history parameters of several top predators breeding there (Crawford et al. 2014, Wege et al. 2016a).

Seabirds and marine mammals at the Prince Edward Islands have been studied since the 1950s (Cooper & Brown 1990, Bester et al. 2011), with the first studies using tracking devices to investigate their at-sea distribution conducted in the early 1990s (Bester & Pansegrouw 1992). Despite decades of research, most studies have focussed on individual species and no study has considered the distribution of an assemblage of top predators from the Prince Edward Islands. Thus, there is a significant gap in our understanding of the common patterns and drivers of marine predator distribution, and therefore the ecologically significant areas, in this region.

In this study, we collate tracking data for 14 species, including 10 seabirds, 3 seals and 1 cetacean from the Prince Edward Islands, to contribute to a broader understanding of the distribution and habitat use of marine top predators in the Southern Indian Ocean. Specifically, we build habitat preference models for each species, based on a set of environmental covariates, and predict areas of high habitat preference. We then combine these preference scores for all species to identify common areas of high preference. We focus on overlap and commonality at meso-scales (10s-100s of km), at which oceanographic and environmental features are likely to impact the foraging distribution of marine top predators.

## METHODS

The Prince Edward Islands (46.9° S, 37.7° E) are situated in the western Indian Ocean sector of the Southern Ocean (Figure 1). The islands are the summit of a volcano which rises ~5,000 m from the surrounding seafloor. Oceanographically, the region is dominated by the east-flowing Antarctic

Circumpolar Current and three associated fronts: the Subtropical, Subantarctic and Antarctic Polar Fronts (from north-south) (Lutjeharms & Ansorge 2008).

We collated published and unpublished tracking data for 14 predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands from 2003-2014 (Table 1; additional details in Supplementary Table S1).

Animals were tracked using a variety of satellite-linked (Argos) and global positioning system (GPS) tags. Details of animal capture and restraint, tags used, tag attachment methods, ethics approval and permitting are contained in the references cited in Table 1. After removing tracks with fewer than 30 at-sea locations and those flagged based on visual inspection, the data set contained 538 individual tracks. Complete as well as incomplete tracks were retained.

All analyses were conducted in the R environment (R Core Team 2017). First, we pre-processed tracks using the 'argosfilter' package (Freitas 2012) to remove position estimates that created location spikes (turning angles <15 and 25 degrees in conjunction with displacements >2.5 and 5 km, respectively) and high movement speeds (Freitas et al. 2008). We estimated animal locations at regular time intervals by fitting a continuous-time correlated random walk model (Johnson et al. 2008) to each track using the 'crawl' 1.5 package (Johnson 2015). This model accounts for errors around Argos location estimates, but we also fit the model to GPS tracks, assuming the same accuracy as the highest Argos location quality class. The time interval chosen was the whole number nearest the median time interval in the unprocessed tracking data for the given species and tag type (Supplementary Table S1). While the tracks therefore had different inherent accuracies, these differences are negligible with respect to the spatial scale of variation of the environmental data and the scale of the study. The tracking data were classified into 'summer' tracks and 'winter' tracks. The dates defining these two putative seasons for each species were the two minima of tracking effort in approximately April and October (Supplementary Figure S1). Where a track comprised dates in both seasons we assigned the whole track to the season with the larger proportion of locations.

We assessed the representativeness of the tracking data for each species in each season by drawing

curves of the cumulative number of grid cells visited against the number of individuals tracked. The order in which individuals were sampled was randomly shuffled to generate 1000 curves in each case. The mean of these curves was then modelled as a non-linear asymptotic regression, and the cumulative number of cells visited as a percentage of the estimated number of cells at the asymptote was used as a measure of the representativeness (*cf.* Hindell et al. 2003, Lascelles et al. 2016).

To characterize the environment potentially available to individuals, and thus allowing a case-control design for habitat preference modelling (Aarts et al. 2008), we simulated random or pseudo-tracks. For each real track, we simulated 20 pseudo-tracks by fitting a first-order vector autoregressive model characterized by the step lengths and turning characteristics of the real track – estimated from the random walk model – as detailed in Raymond et al. (2015). This maintains characteristics of the real tracks relevant for estimating the space available to an individual if it had no habitat preferences. This also means that characteristics of the tracking data due to the tag type (e.g., sampling frequency) are reflected in both the real and pseudo tracks for each individual animal, thereby minimizing any biases in the final results due to different tag types used on different species. The number of pseudo-tracks was chosen, as in Raymond et al. (2015), as a compromise between adequately characterizing the available environment and limiting the dataset size for computation. Pseudo-locations falling on land were rejected and re-sampled.

At each real and pseudo-location, we extracted a set of 17 environmental covariates - mainly remotely-sensed by satellites - using the 'raadtools' (Sumner 2016) and 'raster' (Hijmans 2016) packages (Table 2; additional details in Supplementary Table S2). For dynamic environmental covariates, we matched the date and time of the location to the nearest environmental data in space and time. We chose widely available environmental covariates which are commonly used to model the habitat of marine predators (Supplementary Table S2). They are assumed to represent bio-physical factors influencing predators and/or their prey directly or indirectly; however, some

covariates may be proxies for unknown or unmeasured environmental factors.

We assessed habitat preference by modelling the relationship between the space-use of animals and environmental covariates. We adopted the aforementioned case-control design (Aarts et al. 2008), where location estimates from a real track were treated as presences (1) and the pseudo-locations from the 20 simulated tracks were treated as habitat potentially available to an individual (0).

Classification models were used to discriminate these two sets of points based on their environmental covariates (Table 2).

These habitat preference models do not explicitly account for habitat accessibility – an important constraint for central place foragers (such as breeding seabirds and female seals provisioning pups).

We therefore constructed separate accessibility models for each species for prediction purposes.

Here, the response was whether a given cell contained any real or pseudo locations (1) (i.e., it was potentially accessible) or did not contain any location estimates (0); the sole predictor variable was distance from colony, as we assumed accessibility to be a function of distance. Predictions from the

habitat preference models were then weighted by the predictions from the accessibility models, yielding a prediction surface of preference, given availability. The habitat preference predictions are

not absolute estimates of the probability that a habitat is preferred, and are not directly comparable between different species (e.g. Beyer et al. 2010). To enable comparisons between species, we

therefore transformed each prediction map by percentile to give a habitat importance (hereafter percentile habitat) score (Raymond et al. 2015).

Habitat preference scores were calculated from ensemble models (combination or set of models) which combined boosted regression trees (Friedman 2001) and random forests (Breiman 2001).

These constituent models were fitted through the ‘caret’ (Kuhn 2016) package (Supplementary Table S3). Models were tuned by compiling sets of candidate models with different parameter

combinations and then comparing the average area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (AUC) scores – calculated from 10-fold cross validation – of these candidate models

(Supplementary Tables S3, S4). Cross validation folds were created by randomly dividing individuals into 10 groups containing an approximately equal number of individuals. The real and simulated tracks from any one individual were always kept together in the same fold. AUC scores calculated from random cross validation are usually overoptimistic due to spatial autocorrelation (Hijmans 2012), but our cross validation scheme should result in AUC scores which reflect the generalized model performance more accurately. Indeed, AUC scores calculated using this cross validation scheme were on average 0.19 lower (range = -0.31 – -0.08) than those calculated using random stratified cross validation during preliminary model runs. We then created ensembles (or combinations) of these models by ‘stacking’ them using the ‘caretEnsemble’ package (Deane-Mayer & Knowles 2016). The weight of each model in the ensemble (or ‘stack’) is its coefficient in a logistic regression of the model predictions (probability of being a real location estimate) against the original outcome (real or pseudo-location estimate) (Zhou 2012). Model performance in all cases was evaluated using AUC scores. To generate prediction maps, we calculated the mean of each environmental covariate for the study period (summer and winter separately) based on input data at the same spatio-temporal resolution as that used to model habitat preference. We used ordinary Kriging to interpolate any missing values. Values of these variables were then sampled on a new 0.1° x 0.1° grid which was used for prediction. By predicting to the mean environmental conditions over the study period while matching the locations used in the models to the spatio-temporally nearest environmental covariates, the interannual variation typical of this dynamic marine system should be accounted for to some extent. However, this assumes that the correlation between animal behaviour and environmental covariates holds across years, and interannual variation will likely still have some unquantified influence on our output.

To evaluate which species showed similar habitat preferences, we used affinity propagation clustering (Frey & Dueck 2007) to identify the number and composition of clusters (‘apcluster’ package; Bodenhofer et al. 2011). For visualization, we calculated kernel utilization distributions (Worton 1989) for each species (‘adehabitatHR’ package; Calenge 2006), with *h*-values selected

using the ad-hoc method (Silverman 1986). Finally, we calculated mean habitat importance; first, as the mean of all percentile habitat scores in each cell. However, because the diverse suite of species in this study can be expected to use the environment in different ways, we also calculated mean habitat importance scores using the top 8 percentile habitat scores for each cell and using only the top four scores – a more lenient overlap measure (*cf.* Raymond et al. 2015).

For mapping and further modelling, we used only cells with mean habitat importance in the 95th percentile. To identify the environmental variables associated with these areas of high mean importance, we also modelled the relationship between mean importance scores and the set of environmental covariates using a model ensemble (as above). In this case models were regression rather than classification models, as the response values are continuous, and models were evaluated using root mean square error (RMSE) and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).

## RESULTS

We analysed 538 tracks from 14 species, which yielded 244,276 at-sea location estimates, covering an area of 39.75 million km<sup>2</sup>. Location estimates were up to 7,813 km from the deployment location (Figure 1). More than half the location estimates (126,835; 52%) were in the EEZ around the Prince Edward Islands, but most location estimates (152,265; 62%) were outside the Prince Edward Islands marine protected area. Few locations were in the EEZ around mainland South Africa (3,181 locations; 1.3%). The estimated representativeness of the tracking data for each species ranged from 32.7% (killer whales) to 96.5% (Subantarctic fur seals) during summer and from 45.0% (killer whales) to 97.4% (Subantarctic fur seals) during winter (Supplementary Table S5).

Many species showed strong directional tendency in their movement, as well as having marked differences between summer and winter distributions (Figure 2). Based on the kernel utilization distributions, species fell into several groups with similar patterns of space use. In summer, these

were species with (i) core areas south of the islands (Antarctic fur seal, macaroni penguin and rockhopper penguin), (ii) around the islands and to the north (wandering albatross, sooty albatross, killer whale, Subantarctic fur seal and grey-headed albatross), (iii) north of the islands, particularly near South Africa (white-chinned petrel and Indian yellow-nosed albatross), and (iv) to the southwest of the islands (southern elephant seal and light-mantled albatross) (Figure 2). In winter, four core use areas were identified: (i) to the southwest of the islands (macaroni penguin, Antarctic fur seal, rockhopper penguin, king penguin and southern elephant seal), (ii) around the islands (Subantarctic fur seal, northern giant petrel and killer whale), (iii) broadly distributed (light-mantled albatross and sooty albatross) and (iv) near South Africa (Indian yellow-nosed albatross) (Figure 2). Overlap was generally lower in winter than in summer.

Model performance (AUC) ranged from 0.54-0.85. Boosted regression trees generally had the highest AUC scores, but scores were nearly always within one standard deviation of each other (Supplementary Figure S2). The predictions of models used in the ensemble generally showed strong correlation (mean = 0.83, range = 0.44 – 0.99).

The predictor variables differed in their importance rank across species and seasons, but during summer the variables sea surface temperature (SST), distance to the ice edge (DISTICE), depth (DEP) and primary productivity (PROD) (ranked by mean variable relative importance across species) were often the most important predictors of habitat preference (Supplementary Figure S3). These four predictors had combined importance of 28.2-84.2 (mean = 43.1) across the species. During winter, the same four variables were generally most important, but ranked DISTICE, DEP, PROD, SST. Their combined importance across species was 28.7-58.0 (mean = 38.2) (Supplementary Figure S3).

Cluster analysis of the percentile habitat scores indicated four species clusters in summer and in winter. Nine species comprised a single large cluster in summer and five species a single cluster in winter. In summer, light-mantled sooty albatross, macaroni penguins and white-chinned petrels each formed their own independent clusters, while in winter killer whales, sooty albatrosses and

Indian yellow-nosed albatrosses each formed an independent cluster (Supplementary Figure S4). The hierarchical clustering did not match taxonomic relationships among the species.

Prediction maps for each species are shown in Figure 3. In this figure, we mapped predictions only above an arbitrarily chosen threshold of 95, but generally, cells with predicted habitat importance in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile showed good agreement with kernel utilization distributions. In summer, cells with the highest mean habitat importance generally ranged from the approximate location of the Antarctic Polar Front to north of the approximate location of the Subtropical Front (Figure 4). Mean habitat importance for all species indicated the highest value areas around the Subantarctic Front. In contrast to the mean importance calculated for 4 and 8 species, the mean importance for all species did not identify as many important cells in proximity to the Prince Edward Islands (Figure 4). In winter, the highest mean importance areas (4 and 8 species) included cells slightly further south than in summer and areas south and south-west of the islands in the Polar Frontal Zone were important (Figure 4). Mean importance for all species highlighted some far-lying areas, including small patches nearer the Antarctic continent. The Crozet Islands to the east of the Prince Edward Islands were included among important areas. Cells with high mean habitat importance for all species were generally more patchily distributed than cells with high mean importance for 4 and 8 species (Figure 4).

Areas with the highest mean habitat importance were often situated outside the Prince Edward Islands EEZ (Figure 4, Supplementary Figure S5). Within the EEZ, the proportion of important grid cells inside versus outside the marine protected area was relatively even across mean habitat importance values (Supplementary Figure S5) and the marine protected area often encompassed cells with very high mean habitat importance (Supplementary Figure S6). Virtually all cells in the EEZ around the Prince Edward Islands met the 95th percentile threshold (see methods) and therefore the proportion of important cells in the marine protected area matched the proportion of the EEZ represented by the marine protected area (~34%).

Ensemble models of mean habitat importance indicated that wind (WINDV and WINDU), SST, DEP, SST gradient (SSTgrad) and meridional current (CURRV) were generally important environmental predictors during summer and winter (Supplementary Figure S7). Partial plots of the predictions (Supplementary Figure S8) show similar relationships between mean importance and environmental variables across seasons and models. During summer, areas of high mean importance are characterised by high SST, negative WINDV (i.e., northerly wind), positive WINDU (i.e., westerly wind), shallower DEP, and lower SSTgrad. These relationships were similar during winter, however, SST of important areas showed a lower peak, mean habitat importance was high in very shallow and very deep areas, and distance to sea ice (DISTICE) of ~1,000 km was related to important areas (Supplementary Figure S8).

## DISCUSSION

Using tracking data from 14 species and an ensemble modelling approach, this is the first study that quantitatively describes important habitats for an assemblage of marine top predators around the Prince Edward Islands in the Southern Indian Ocean. The study illustrates the extensive at-sea distribution of predators breeding at the islands. Tracking locations covered nearly 40 million km<sup>2</sup>, with animals travelling nearly 8,000 km from the islands; almost half of the location estimates were outside of the South African EEZ. Cluster analysis of the habitat preference model predictions shows different habitat use among the species, which is unsurprising considering their taxonomic diversity. However, habitat use did not necessarily follow taxonomic similarities. Important areas were situated from subtropical waters north of the Subtropical Front to Antarctic waters south of the Polar Front (Figure 4). During winter, important areas were more broadly distributed. Seabirds and seals are, in general, less constrained by dependent offspring during this time and can search for prey more extensively. More extensive search areas may also be required by seasonal changes in the abundance and distribution of prey, including possible prey depletion following more concentrated

summer foraging.

The Marine Protected Area in South Africa's EEZ around the Prince Edward Islands was designed during a systematic conservation planning study, with the aim of conserving biodiversity patterns and processes around the islands, while minimizing constraints of an existing fishery (Lombard et al. 2007). Kernel utilization distributions for three species – southern elephant seals, wandering albatrosses and grey-headed albatrosses – were among the data layers used to define pelagic 'flexible processes'. These data identified several of the important areas identified in the present study – including areas to the south-west and north-west of the islands – but inadequately represented the broader top predator community. Lombard et al. (2007) recommended that new information, such as presented here, be used to reassess the spatial plan. The authors also pointed to the importance of a management framework beyond the Prince Edward Islands EEZ, and our results show that this is indeed necessary. The latter point was also highlighted in a study that used tracking data from 10 seabird species at the Crozet, Kerguelen and Amsterdam islands to identify Important Bird Areas using criteria set out by BirdLife International (Delord et al. 2014). The authors identified 19 candidate Important Bird Areas in the southern Indian and southern Atlantic Oceans, several of which include important habitat identified in our study. An analysis of global tracking data from 60 seabird species also identified a high concentration of IBAs in the southwest Indian Ocean, including many in the high seas (Lascelles et al. 2016).

Tracking data for nine species of seabirds and marine mammals has similarly been used to identify important habitat for top predators around the Kerguelen Archipelago, ~2,300 km east southeast of the Prince Edward Islands (Thiers et al. 2017). The authors of that study developed habitat models for four of the nine species included, which they considered representative of the top predator community at the islands. Using these models, they predicted that the shallow Kerguelen/Heard plateau and its shelf-break was important to the community (Thiers et al. 2017), echoing the findings of an earlier effort to identify areas of ecological significance based on tracking data for five species

from Kerguelen and Heard islands (Hindell et al. 2011). The Prince Edward Islands, in contrast, have a small (~1,000 km<sup>2</sup>) shelf between the two islands, limiting shelf and shelf-break habitats for predators. Some species made use of distant shelf and shelf-break habitats off South Africa (Indian yellow-nosed albatross and white-chinned petrel), but high mean importance areas were generally pelagic. This has two notable implications. Firstly, much of the important area is in the high seas, beyond the jurisdiction of any nation, which presents a conservation and management challenge (Game et al. 2009). Secondly, the processes and features associated with favourable pelagic foraging habitat for meso- and apex predators are often dynamic (Hazen et al. 2013). It is therefore important to explicitly link predator distributions with environmental data to accurately predict the spatial occurrence of such areas for any management actions (Hyrenbach et al. 2000, Game et al. 2009). Our habitat models were primarily predictive but the environmental covariates in the models have mechanistic links with biological productivity and therefore the distribution and abundance of prey. The relative importance of environmental covariates in our habitat models offer some insight into the factors that influence top predator distributions. However, it is critical to note that our models allow interactions among covariates, and that these interactions are themselves likely to be very important (Dorman 2007).

In species-specific models, sea surface temperature, primary productivity and depth were often important predictors of habitat preference. In a tagging study of 23 top predator species in the Pacific Ocean, Block et al. (2011) showed a positive relationship between SST and predator abundance. Similarly, a global analysis of marine species richness showed that SST was the best predictor of species richness across diverse taxa (Tittensor et al. 2010). In the same study, however, primary productivity was a better predictor of species richness in cetaceans and pinnipeds (Tittensor et al. 2010). In our species-specific models, productivity was also of high importance. SST and productivity are linked and are among the main factors influencing ocean ecosystems (Kaiser et al. 2005, Garrison 2009). While these predictors may be decoupled in time and space, and from prey availability at higher trophic levels (e.g., Grémillet et al. 2008), we might expect that they broadly

indicate profitable foraging areas for marine top predators (e.g., Block et al. 2011). Depth is also an important predictor in both species-specific and mean habitat importance models and bottom slope was important in a winter mean habitat importance model. Bathymetric characteristics have often been linked to predator diversity (Morato et al. 2010, Bouchet et al. 2015), as the seafloor has a fundamental influence on biophysical processes (Kaiser et al. 2005, Garrison 2009). For example, features like seamounts and shelf breaks can interact with currents to increase vertical mixing and upwelling, which increases productivity and in turn may attract higher order predators (Morato et al. 2010, Bouchet et al. 2015).

SSTgrad, SSHA and SSHgrad are linked to ocean fronts and eddies, which are considered important to a range of marine top predators (Nel et al. 2001, Bost et al. 2009, Scales et al. 2014). While these had moderate influence for some species (e.g., light-mantled albatross in summer), only SSTgrad was an important predictor in the mean habitat importance models, and the direction of this relationship was contrary to expectation, with lower SSTgrad in high mean importance areas. Eddy kinetic energy was a poor predictor even in species-specific models. It may be that such associations will only be detected at finer spatio-temporal scales, or if along-track behaviour of the animals is modelled rather than using a case-control design (see below).

In terms of mean habitat importance, SST was influential but wind typically had a greater influence. Wind affects the depth of the mixed layer (MLD), which in turn affects primary productivity and chlorophyll-a concentration (Sallée et al. 2010), but it is interesting that these variables themselves (CHL, PROD, MLD) were not of higher importance than wind for predicting mean importance (although both PROD and CHL were generally more influential in species-specific models). Our use of monthly climatologies (MLD and CHL) and coarse resolution data (MLD) may have masked this relationship, as well as the secondary nature of the mean habitat importance model. Response curves for the environmental variables, particularly SST and WINDU, illustrate the seasonal southward shift of important areas, from the Subtropical and Subantarctic Zones in summer to a

more Polar Frontal Zone distribution in winter.

Given the diverse space-use and foraging strategies of predators included in this study, it is possible that these factors identified as most influential for mean habitat importance only correlate with high mean importance areas, rather than being the mechanistic cause thereof. This should have been alleviated somewhat by using only the 4 or 8 highest species scores for each cell, which should select sets of predators with similar responses to environmental conditions (as identified in the cluster analysis). However, different sets of predators will be selected in each case which may preclude broad inference in this study. The dataset we assembled may be used to further explore such mechanistic links. However, our results show that there is unlikely to be a simple relationship linking areas of high top predator overlap with environmental predictors in this region. The results underscore the utility of predictive modelling for management and conservation purposes. Along with other studies around French and Australian islands in the Indian Ocean sector of the Southern Ocean (Hindell et al. 2011, Delord et al. 2014, Patterson et al. 2016, Thiers et al. 2017), we show the advantages of analysing multi-species tracking data to identify important marine habitat for top predators, but also illustrate diverse foraging areas and space-use patterns for sub-Antarctic top predators breeding at different archipelagos.

#### *Limitations and future research*

The study makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of marine top predator distribution in the Southern Ocean. However, some caveats should be noted.

The tracking data available for the study are not representative of all top predators breeding at the Prince Edward Islands. Although we included a broad range of taxa with varied foraging strategies, smaller seabirds are not represented due to the logistical challenges of tracking them. Inshore-feeding species – Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*) and Crozet shags (*Phalacrocorax [atriceps]*)

*melanogenis*) – were also not included. However, the inter-island shelf and inshore areas typically used by the latter species (e.g., Carpenter-Kling et al. 2017) represent a very small number of grid cells in our study, and most of these cells are already highlighted. Therefore, the inclusion of tracking data for these species would be unlikely to significantly change our findings.

Not all life history stages of each species are represented in our study: data are primarily from adult individuals, and breeding phases are better represented. Although our analysis suggests that tracking data are representative of the population of each species, these results apply only to the life history stage during tracking. Moreover, representativeness can only be estimated and, in our method, the representativeness score was dependent on the non-linear regression used.

We compared environmental covariates along observed tracks to those along simulated tracks to estimate broad-scale habitat preferences. Alternatively, we could calculate indices of foraging behaviour (or ‘area-restricted search’) along each track and compare characteristics of putative foraging locations with those of putative non-foraging locations (e.g., Reisinger et al. 2015). While this may reveal environmental features related to foraging specifically, the selected indices of foraging behaviour may show weak correspondence with actual foraging (e.g., Weimerskirch et al. 2007, Ramasco et al. 2015) and a single index might not be appropriate across species with different foraging modes. Furthermore, this approach typically does not account for environments that were available but not used by the animals, which may underestimate habitat preference.

The data and results presented here form the basis of future efforts to predict the consequences of environmental change (e.g., Hazen et al. 2013) and it would be useful to identify species representative of the distribution of the broader suite of marine predators. Explicitly identifying specific priority areas requires choosing thresholds for habitat percentile and mean habitat importance values, and further work is required in this regard. Further effort should also be directed towards exploring alternative approaches for modelling the distribution and overlap of this set of marine top predators, including multivariate models (e.g., Elith & Leathwick 2007, Warton et al.

2015).

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceived and designed the research: RRR, BR, MAH, PAP

Conducted analyses and contributed analytical tools and methods: RRR, BR, MAH, MDS, SW

Contributed tracking data: RRR, MNB, RJMC, DD, PJNdB, BJD, SPK, ABM, PGR, SS, KS, CAT, MW, TOW, PAP

Wrote the manuscript: RRR, with contributions from all other authors.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Supplementary information in a single file containing Supplementary Tables S1-S4 and

## Supplementary Figures S1-S8.

### DATA ACCESSIBILITY

Individual locations, pseudo-locations and environmental covariates extracted at these locations, as well as predictions and overlap scores, are deposited in Reisinger et al. (2017):

<https://figshare.com/s/6ce809954cca4aa4bdb1>

### BIOSKETCH

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TABLES

Table 1

Tracking data from 14 top predator species used to model important habitat around the Prince Edward Islands. Further details in Supplementary Table S1. DEA – Department of Environmental Affairs; MRI – Mammal Research Institute; FIAO – FitzPatrick Institute for African Ornithology.

Family	Species	Common name	Abbreviation	Tracks (n)	Start date	End date	Location estimates (n)	Reference/data source
<i>Birds</i>								
Albatrosses	<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>	Light-mantled albatross	LMS	23	2008/04/13	2014/01/15	7845	DEA unpubl. data FIAO unpubl. data
Albatrosses	<i>Phoebetria fusca</i>	Sooty albatross	DMS	41	2008/04/02	2013/12/31	16072	DEA unpubl. data Schoombie et al. 2017
Albatrosses	<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed albatross	GHA	47	2012/12/16	2014/12/29	23860	FIAO unpubl. data
Albatrosses	<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>	Indian yellow-nosed albatross	IYA	24	2008/12/18	2011/03/31	1813	DEA unpubl. data
Albatrosses	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering albatross	WAB	26	2009/04/15	2014/03/30	8453	FIAO unpubl. data
Penguins	<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>	King penguin	KIN	16	2008/04/03	2013/07/31	14451	Pistorius et al. 2017
Penguins	<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>	Southern rockhopper penguin	SRP	60	2008/04/19	2014/03/26	9772	DEA unpubl. data FIAO unpubl. data Whitehead et al. 2016
Penguins	<i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i>	Macaroni penguin	MAC	57	2008/04/01	2013/12/24	22123	DEA unpubl. data FIAO unpubl. data

								Whitehead et al. 2016
Petrels	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned petrel	WCP	19	2012/12/05	2013/03/09	11240	FIAO unpubl. data
Petrels	<i>Macronectes halli</i>	Northern giant petrel	NGP	10	2008/04/07	2010/10/26	2962	DEA unpubl. data
<i>Mammals</i>								
Dolphins	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Killer whale	ORC	10	2012/04/28	2013/05/21	1991	Reisinger et al. 2015
Eared seals	<i>Arctocephalus gazella</i>	Antarctic fur seal	AFS	41	2009/12/10	2014/08/05	31245	Wege 2017
Eared seals	<i>Arctocephalus tropicalis</i>	Subantarctic fur seal	SFS	76	2009/04/26	2013/09/06	62119	de Bruyn et al. 2009 Kirkman et al. 2016 Wege et al. 2016b Wege 2017
True seals	<i>Mirounga leonina</i>	Southern elephant seal	SES	88	2003/11/03	2013/01/08	30330	McIntyre et al. 2012 Tosh et al. 2012 Tosh et al. 2015 MRI unpubl. data
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14</b>			<b>538</b>			<b>244276</b>	

Table 2

Environmental variables used as predictors in habitat selectivity models for 14 top predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands. Further details in Supplementary Table S2.

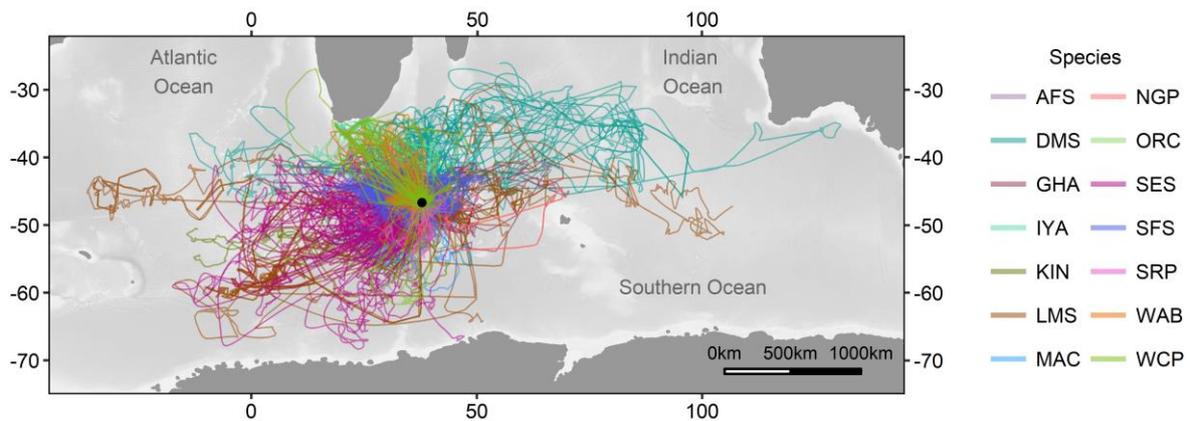
Abbreviation	Description	Type	Unit	Spatial resolution	Temporal resolution	Source
DEP	Ocean depth	Static	m	0.02°	-	General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans hosted by the British Oceanographic Data Centre
TRI	Terrain ruggedness index (Wilson et al. 2007)	Static	-	0.02°	-	Derived from DEP
SLOPE	Ocean floor slope	Static	°	0.02°	-	Derived from DEP
SST	Sea surface temperature	Dynamic	°C	0.25°	Monthly	NOAA/OAR/ESRL
SSTgrad	Sea surface temperature gradient	Dynamic	°	0.25°	Monthly	Derived from SST
SSHa	Sea surface height anomaly	Dynamic	m	0.12°	Daily	Ssalto/Duacs, produced and distributed by the Copernicus Marine and Environment Monitoring Service
SSHgrad	Sea surface height gradient	Dynamic	°	0.25°	Daily	Produced by Ssalto/Duacs, distributed by Aviso with support from Cnes
CURRU	Horizontal (zonal) geostrophic velocity	Dynamic	cm/s	0.25°	Weekly	Produced by Ssalto/Duacs, distributed by Aviso with support from Cnes
CURRV	Vertical (meridional) geostrophic velocity	Dynamic	cm/s	0.25°	Weekly	Produced by Ssalto/Duacs, distributed by Aviso with support from Cnes
EKE	Eddy kinetic energy	Dynamic	cm <sup>2</sup> /s <sup>2</sup>	0.25°	Weekly	Derived from CURRU and CURRV
MLD	Mixed layer depth	Climatology	m	1°	Monthly	Scripps Institution of Oceanography/UCSD
CHLA	Chlorophyll-a concentration	Climatology	mg/m <sup>3</sup>	9 km	Monthly	NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Ocean Ecology Laboratory, Ocean Biology Processing Group
PROD	Net primary production	Dynamic	mg C/m <sup>2</sup> /day	0.08°	Monthly	Ocean Productivity Web

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ICE	Sea ice concentration	Dynamic	%	25 km	Monthly	National Snow and Ice Data Center
DISTICE	Distance from sea ice concentration >15%	Dynamic	km	25 km	Monthly	Derived from ICE
WINDU	Horizontal (zonal) wind	Dynamic	m/s	1.9°	Daily	NOAA/OAR/ESRL PSD
WINDV	Vertical (meridional) wind	Dynamic	m/s	1.9°	Daily	NOAA/OAR/ESRL PSD

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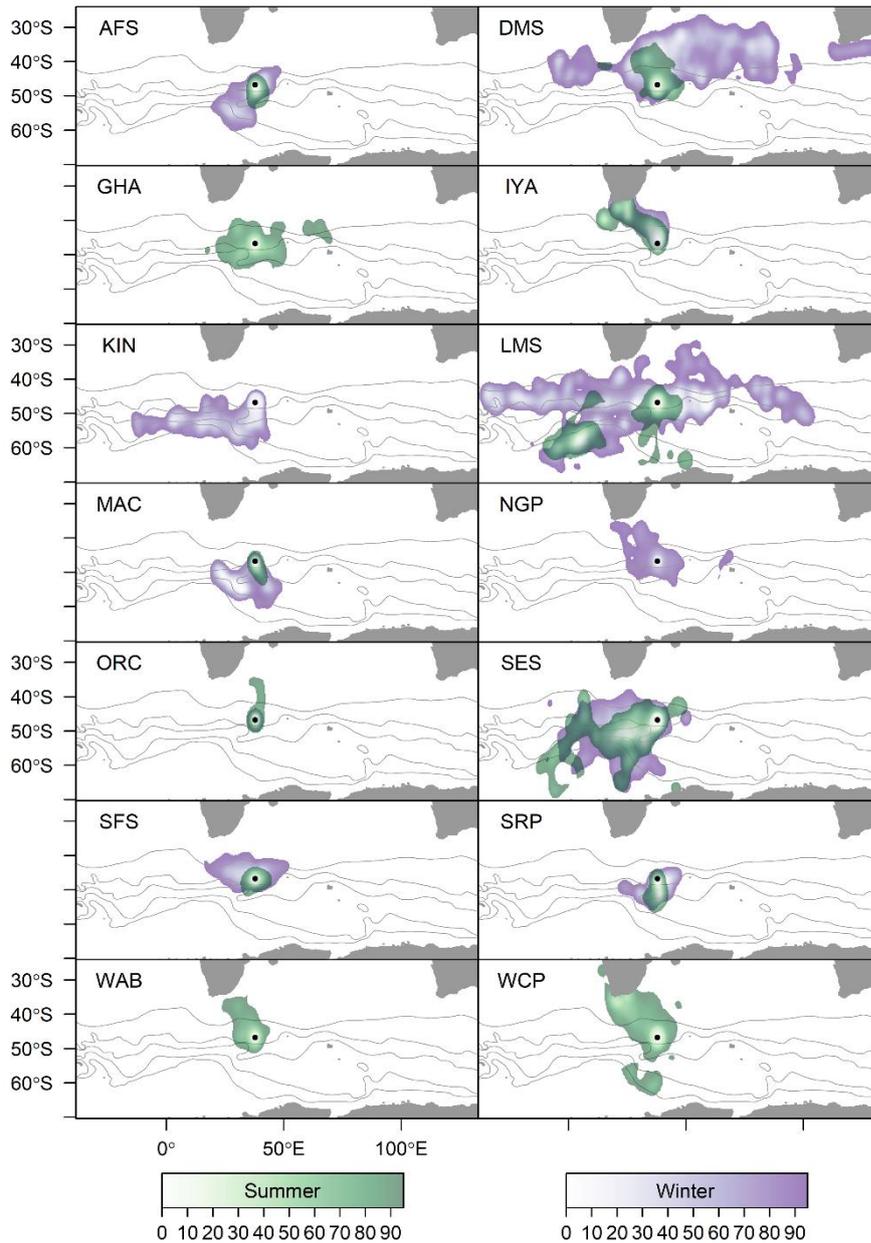
## FIGURES



*Figure 1*

Location estimates for 538 tracking deployments on 14 species of marine predators at the Prince Edward Islands (filled black point), used to model important habitat around the islands. Utilization distributions for each species are shown in Figure 2.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.

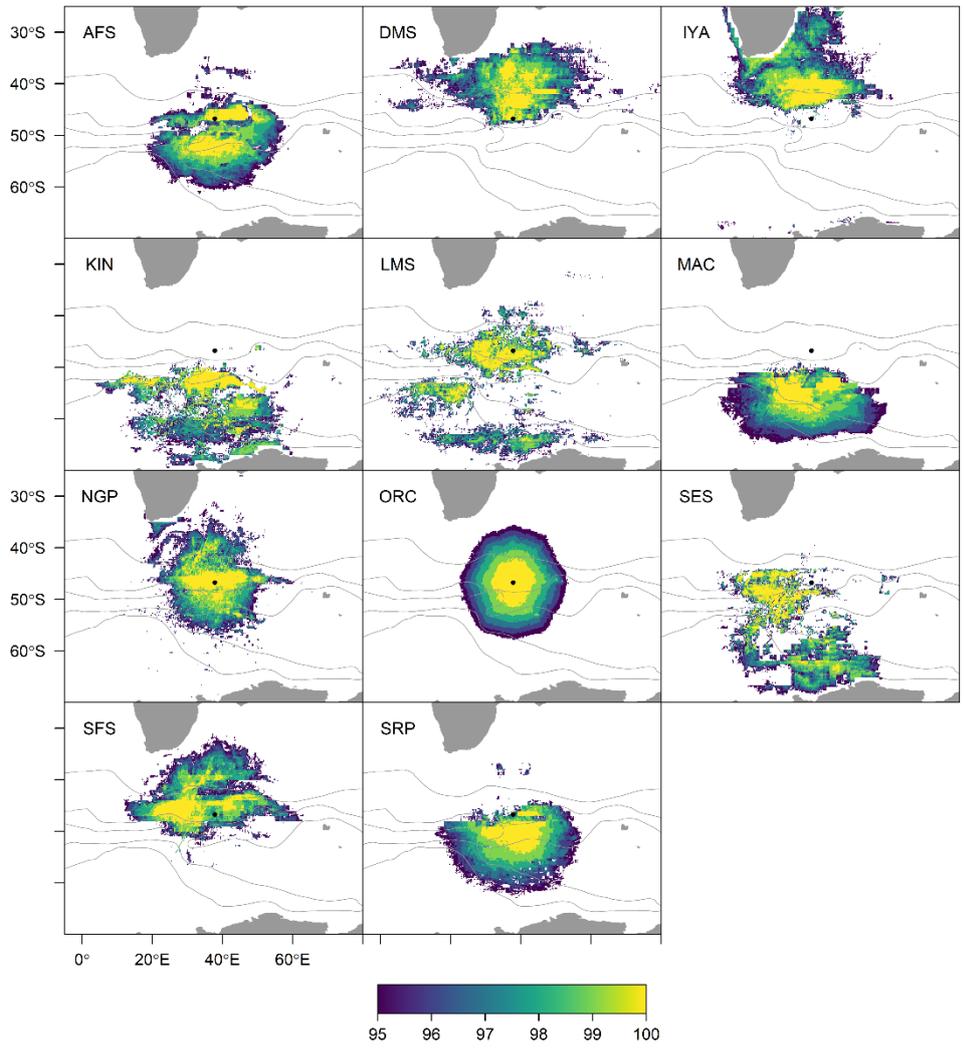


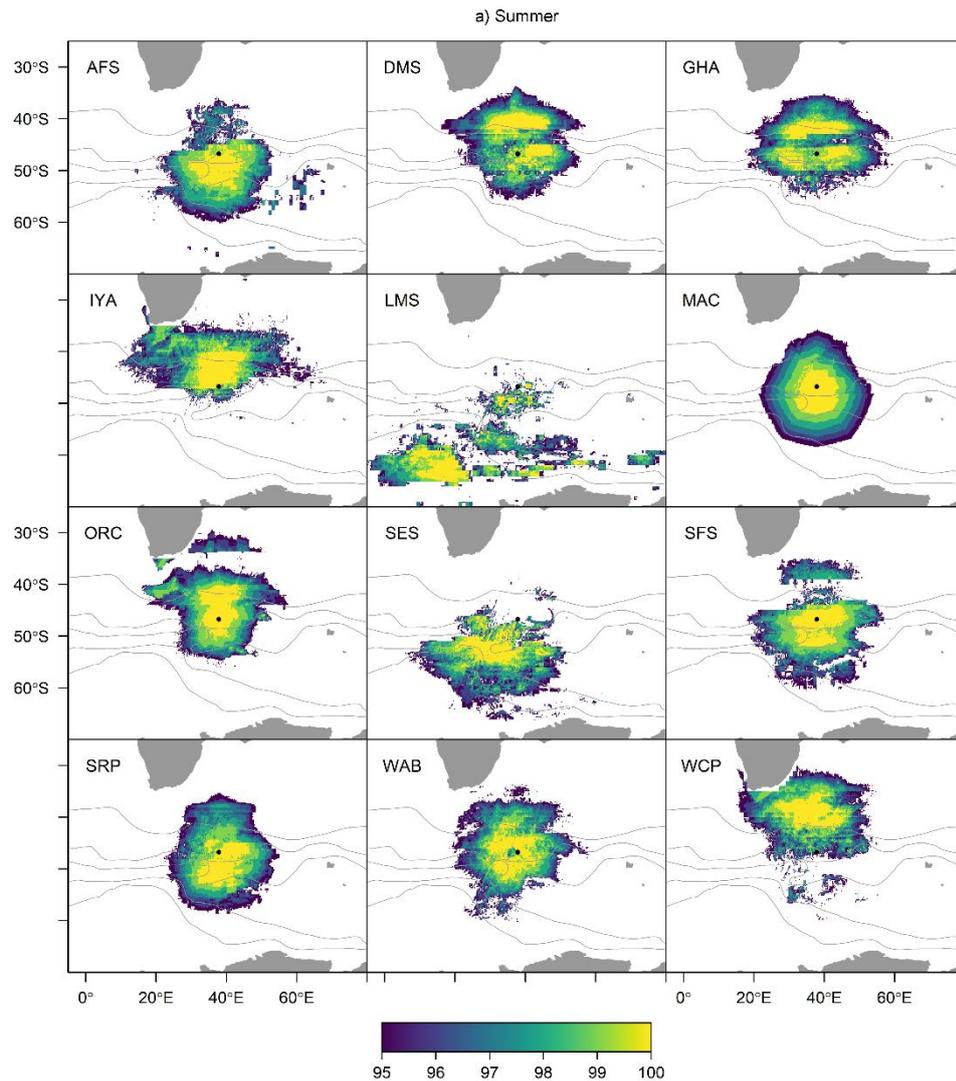
*Figure 2*

Kernel utilization distributions of 14 predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands during summer (green) and winter (purple). Lower utilization distribution values, typically below 50%, indicate the core areas. Grey lines indicate positions of major fronts after Orsi et al. (1995); from north to south: the Subtropical Front, Subantarctic Front, Antarctic Polar Front, Southern Antarctic Circumpolar Front and the southern boundary of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.

b) Winter

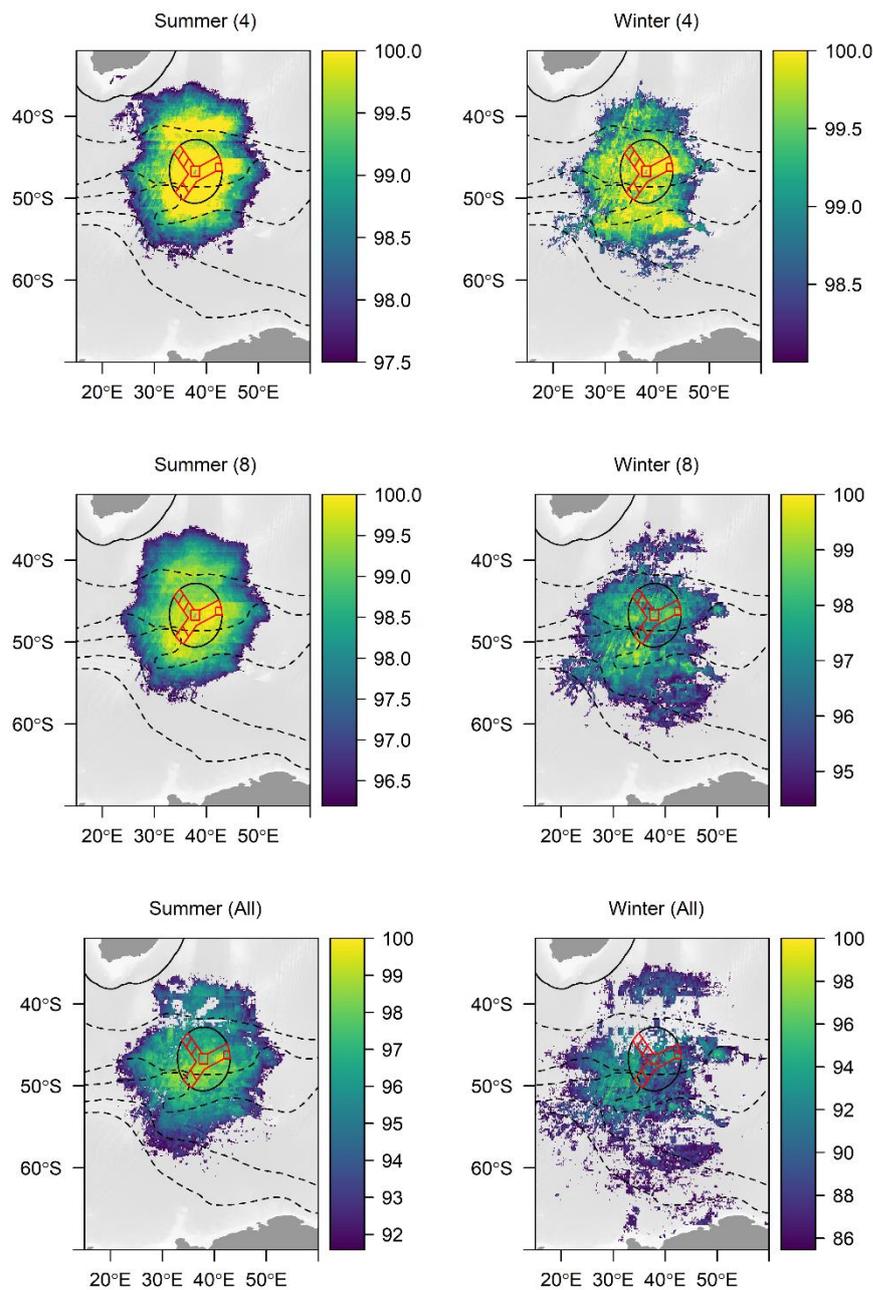




*Figure 3*

Habitat preference predictions of ensemble models for 14 predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands during a) summer and b) winter. Predictions have been percentile-transformed to yield a habitat importance score which is comparable among species, and only cells with values >95 are shown (representing 5% of the most important cells in the study area). Grey lines show the positions of oceanographic fronts, as in Figure 2.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.



*Figure 4*

Maps showing mean habitat importance scores for top predators tracked from the Prince Edward Islands during summer (left panels) and winter (right panels). Habitat importance was calculated as the mean of the four highest scores in each cell (upper panels), eight highest scores in each cell (middle panels) and of all scores in each cell (bottom panels). Only cells with scores in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile are shown. Solid black lines show the South African Exclusive Economic Zone, solid red lines show the Prince Edward Islands Marine Protected Area, and dashed black lines show average locations of important oceanographic fronts (Orsi et al. 1995). From north to south these are: the Subtropical Front, Subantarctic Front, Antarctic Polar Front, Southern Antarctic Circumpolar Current Front, and the southern boundary of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR:

*Habitat modelling of tracking data from multiple marine predators identifies important areas in the Southern Indian Ocean*

Diversity and Distributions <https://doi.org/10.1111/ddi.12702>

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Supplementary Table S1

Tracking data from 14 top predator species used to model important habitat around the Prince Edward Islands. Conservation status after the IUCN RedList (2016): DD – Data Deficient; EN – Endangered; LC – Least Concern; NT – Near-Threatened; VU – Vulnerable. DEA – Department of Environmental Affairs; MRI – Mammal Research Institute; FIAO – FitzPatrick Institute for African Ornithology

Family	Species	Common name	Abbreviation	Conservation status	Tag type	Tracks (n)	Start date	End date	Time step (hours)	Location estimates (n)	Reference/data source
<i>Birds</i>											
Albatrosses (Diomedidae)	<i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i>	Light-mantled albatross	LMS	NT	Argos; GPS	23	2008/04/13	2014/01/15	6; 2	7845	DEA unpubl. data FIAO unpubl. data
Albatrosses (Diomedidae)	<i>Phoebastria fusca</i>	Sooty albatross	DMS	EN	Argos; GPS	41	2008/04/02	2013/12/31	7; 1	16072	DEA unpubl. data Schoombie et al. 2017
Albatrosses (Diomedidae)	<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed albatross	GHA	EN	GPS	47	2012/12/16	2014/12/29	1	23860	FIAO unpubl. data
Albatrosses (Diomedidae)	<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>	Indian yellow-nosed albatross	IYA	EN	Argos	24	2008/12/18	2011/03/31	6	1813	DEA unpubl. data
Albatrosses (Diomedidae)	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering albatross	WAB	VU	Argos; GPS	26	2009/04/15	2014/03/30	2; 1	8453	FIAO unpubl. data
Penguins (Spheniscidae)	<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>	King penguin	KIN	LC	Argos	16	2008/04/03	2013/07/31	3	14451	Pistorius et al. 2017
Penguins (Spheniscidae)	<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>	Southern rockhopper penguin	SRP	VU	Argos; GPS	60	2008/04/19	2014/03/26	3; 1	9772	DEA unpubl. data FIAO unpubl. data Whitehead et al. 2016
Penguins (Spheniscidae)	<i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i>	Macaroni penguin	MAC	VU	Argos; GPS	57	2008/04/01	2013/12/24	1	22123	DEA unpubl. data FIAO unpubl. data

											Whitehead et al. 2016
Petrels (Procellariidae)	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned petrel	WCP	VU	GPS	19	2012/12/05	2013/03/09	1	11240	FIAO unpubl. data
Petrels (Procellariidae)	<i>Macronectes halli</i>	Northern giant petrel	NGP	LC	Argos	10	2008/04/07	2010/10/26	6	2962	DEA unpubl. data
<i>Mammals</i>											
Dolphins (Delphinidae)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Killer whale	ORC	DD	Argos	10	2012/04/28	2013/05/21	3	1991	Reisinger et al. 2015
Eared seals (Otariidae)	<i>Arctocephalus gazella</i>	Antarctic fur seal	AFS	LC	Argos	41	2009/12/10	2014/08/05	3	31245	Wege 2017
Eared seals (Otariidae)	<i>Arctocephalus tropicalis</i>	Subantarctic fur seal	SFS	LC	Argos	76	2009/04/26	2013/09/06	3	62119	de Bruyn et al. 2009 Kirkman et al. 2016 Wege et al. 2016 Wege 2017
True seals (Phocidae)	<i>Mirounga leonina</i>	Southern elephant seal	SES	LC	Argos	88	2003/11/03	2013/01/08	12	30330	McIntyre et al. 2012 Tosh et al. 2012 Tosh et al. 2015 MRI unpubl. data
<i>Total:</i>	<b>14</b>				<b>Total:</b>	<b>538</b>				<b>244276</b>	

Supplementary Table S2

Environmental variables used as predictors in habitat selectivity models for 14 top predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands.

Abbreviation	Description	Type	Unit	Spatial resolution	Temporal resolution	Source and URL
DEP	<i>Ocean depth</i> GEBCO_08 grid	Static	m	0.02°	-	General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans hosted by the British Oceanographic Data Centre <a href="http://www.gebco.net/data_and_products/gridded_bathymetry_data/">http://www.gebco.net/data_and_products/gridded_bathymetry_data/</a>
TRI	<i>Terrain ruggedness index</i> (Wilson et al. 2007) Calculated from DEP using raster package	Static	NA	0.02°	-	Derived from DEP
SLOPE	<i>Ocean floor slope</i> Calculated from DEP using raster package	Static	°	0.02°	-	Derived from DEP
SST	<i>Sea surface temperature</i> NOAA optimum interpolation sea surface temperature, version 2.	Dynamic	°C	0.25°	Monthly	NOAA/OAR/ESRL <a href="https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oisst">https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oisst</a>
SSTgrad	<i>Sea surface temperature gradient</i> Calculated from SST using raster package	Dynamic	°	0.25°	Monthly	Derived from SST
SSHa	<i>Sea surface height anomaly</i> Delayed-time, multi altimeter satellite, gridded sea surface heights computed with respect to a twenty-year mean (DT-MSLA-H)	Dynamic	m	0.12°	Daily	Ssalto/Duacs, produced and distributed by the Copernicus Marine and Environment Monitoring Service <a href="http://marine.copernicus.eu">http://marine.copernicus.eu</a> <a href="http://marine.copernicus.eu/services-portfolio/access-to-products/?option=com_csw&amp;view=details&amp;product_id=SEALEVEL_GLO_SLA_MAP_L4_REP_OBSERVATIONS_008_027">http://marine.copernicus.eu/services-portfolio/access-to-products/?option=com_csw&amp;view=details&amp;product_id=SEALEVEL_GLO_SLA_MAP_L4_REP_OBSERVATIONS_008_027</a>
SSHgrad	<i>Sea surface height gradient</i> Gradient of delayed-time, multi altimeter satellite, gridded sea surface heights (DT-MADT-H), calculated using raster package	Dynamic	°	0.25°	Daily	Ssalto/Duacs. distributed by Aviso with support from Cnes <a href="http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/duacs/">http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/duacs/</a> <a href="http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/en/data/products/sea-surface-height-products/global/madt-h-uv.html">http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/en/data/products/sea-surface-height-products/global/madt-h-uv.html</a>
CURRU	<i>Horizontal (zonal) geostrophic velocity</i> Delayed-time, multi-altimeter satellite, gridded vertical geostrophic velocity (DT-MADT-UV)	Dynamic	cm/s	0.25°	Weekly	Ssalto/Duacs. distributed by Aviso with support from Cnes <a href="http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/duacs/">http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/duacs/</a> <a href="http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/en/data/products/sea-surface-height-">http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/en/data/products/sea-surface-height-</a>

						<a href="http://products/global/madt-h-uv.html">products/global/madt-h-uv.html</a>
CURRV	<i>Vertical (meridional) geostrophic velocity</i> Delayed-time, multi-altimeter satellite, gridded vertical geostrophic velocity (DT-MADT-UV)	Dynamic	cm/s	0.25°	Weekly	Ssalto/Duacs. distributed by Aviso with support from Cnes <a href="http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/duacs/">http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/duacs/</a> <a href="http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/en/data/products/sea-surface-height-products/global/madt-h-uv.html">http://www.aviso.altimetry.fr/en/data/products/sea-surface-height-products/global/madt-h-uv.html</a>
EKE	<i>Eddy kinetic energy</i> Calculated from CURRU and CURRV as: EKE = 0.5(CURRU2 + CURRV2)	Dynamic	cm <sup>2</sup> /s <sup>2</sup>	0.25°	Weekly	Derived from CURRU and CURRV
MLD	<i>Mixed layer depth</i> Monthly mixed layer depth climatology, 2000-2015, compiled from Argo profiles using the hybrid algorithm	Climatology	m	1°	Monthly	Scripps Institution of Oceanography/UCSD <a href="http://mixedlayer.ucsd.edu">http://mixedlayer.ucsd.edu</a>
CHL	<i>Chlorophyll-a concentration</i> Chlorophyll-a concentration from NOAA MODIS Aqua (OCI Algorithm)	Climatology	mg/m <sup>3</sup>	9 km	Monthly	NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Ocean Ecology Laboratory, Ocean Biology Processing Group <a href="http://oceancolor.gsfc.nasa.gov/cms/doi/10.5067/AQUA/MODIS/L3B/CHL/2014">http://oceancolor.gsfc.nasa.gov/cms/doi/10.5067/AQUA/MODIS/L3B/CHL/2014</a>
PROD	<i>Net primary production</i> Carbon net primary production calculated using the Vertically Generalized Production Model	Dynamic	mg C/m <sup>2</sup> /day	0.08°	Monthly	Ocean Productivity Web <a href="http://www.science.oregonstate.edu/ocean.productivity/standard_product.php">http://www.science.oregonstate.edu/ocean.productivity/standard_product.php</a>
ICE	<i>Sea ice concentration</i> Near-real-time DMSP SSMIS gridded sea ice concentrations version 1	Dynamic	%	25 km	Monthly	National Snow and Ice Data Center <a href="http://nsidc.org/data/NSIDC-0081">http://nsidc.org/data/NSIDC-0081</a>
DISTICE	<i>Distance from sea ice</i> Distance to nearest cell with sea ice concentration >15%; calculated from ICE	Dynamic	km	25 km	Monthly	Derived from ICE
WINDU	<i>Horizontal (zonal) wind</i> NCEP/DOE AMIP-II Reanalysis (Reanalysis-2)	Dynamic	m/s	1.9°	Daily	NOAA/OAR/ESRL PSD <a href="http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/">http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/</a> <a href="http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/cgi-bin/db_search/DBSearch.pl?&amp;Dataset=NCEP/DOE+AMIP-II+Reanalysis+(Reanalysis-2)+Daily+Averages&amp;Variable=U-wind">http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/cgi-bin/db_search/DBSearch.pl?&amp;Dataset=NCEP/DOE+AMIP-II+Reanalysis+(Reanalysis-2)+Daily+Averages&amp;Variable=U-wind</a>
WINDV	<i>Vertical (meridional) wind</i>	Dynamic	m/s	1.9°	Daily	NOAA/OAR/ESRL PSD

	NCEP/DOE AMIP-II Reanalysis (Reanalysis-2)					<a href="http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/">http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/</a> <a href="http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/cgi-bin/db_search/DBSearch.pl?&amp;Dataset=NCEP/DOE+AMIP-II+Reanalysis+(Reanalysis-2)+Daily+Averages&amp;Variable=V-wind">http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/cgi-bin/db_search/DBSearch.pl?&amp;Dataset=NCEP/DOE+AMIP-II+Reanalysis+(Reanalysis-2)+Daily+Averages&amp;Variable=V-wind</a>
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*Supplementary Table S3*

Tuning parameters tested for each modelling approach. Method – *method* argument to the *train* function in R package *caret* (Kuhn 2016). R package – R package called by *caret* for model fitting. Tuning parameters – tuning parameters which were tested for each model; the best parameter combination was chosen per mean area under the receiver operating characteristic curve during 10-fold cross validation. The final parameters chosen are listed in Supplementary Table S4.

Modelling approach	Method	R package	Tuning parameters	Values
Boosted regression trees (BRT)	gbm	gbm (Ridgeway 2015)	Number of trees (n.trees)	1-10,000 at 1000 intervals
			Learning rate/shrinkage (shrinkage)	0.1, 0.5, 0.01, 0.005
			Tree complexity/interaction depth (interaction.depth)	1, 3, 5, 9
			Minimum number of observations in a node (n.minobsinnode)	20
Random forests (RF)	rf	randomForest (Liaw & Wiener 2002)	Number of predictors selected at each node (mtry)	3, 4, 5

Liaw, A., Wiener, M. (2002) Classification and Regression by randomForest. *R News*, **2**, 18-22.

Ridgeway, G. (2015) gbm: Generalized Boosted Regression Models. R package version 2.1.1.  
<https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=gbm>

*Supplementary Table S4*

Parameter values used to fit summer and winter habitat preference models for 14 marine predator species at the Prince Edward Islands. Model details are given in the methods and in Supplementary Table S3. GBM – boosted regression trees, RF – random forests.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.

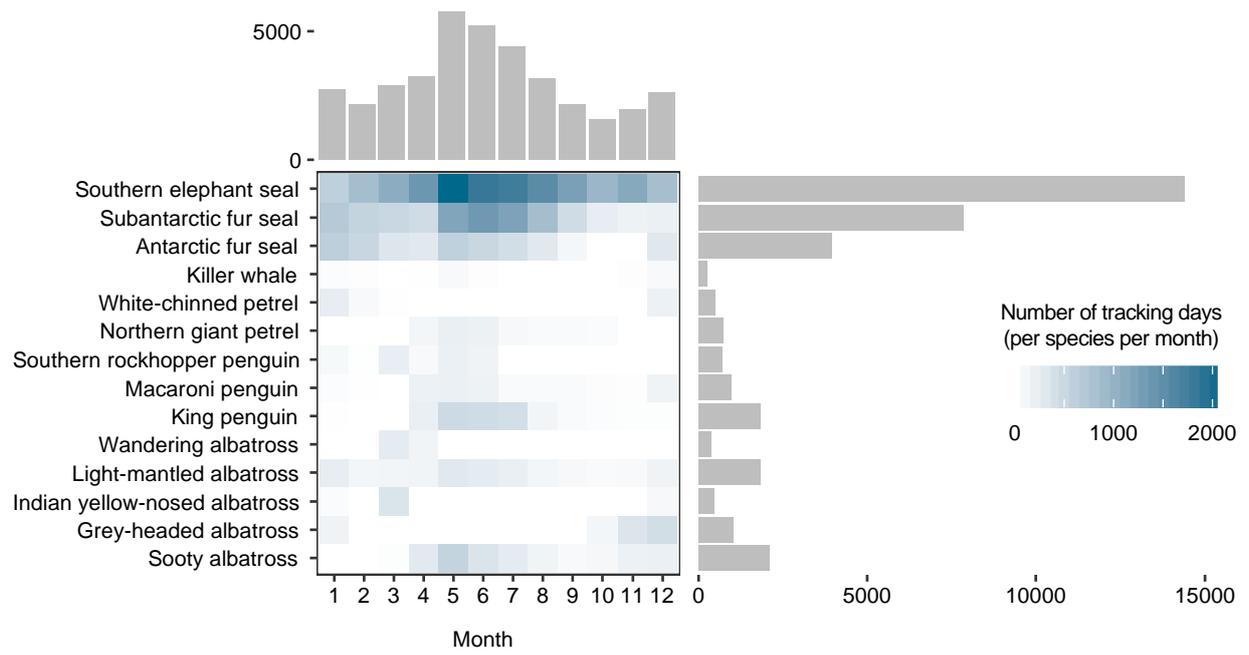
Species	Season	GBM				RF
		interaction.depth	n.trees	shrinkage	n.minobsinnode	mtry
AFS	Summer	3	1000	0.005	20	3
AFS	Winter	5	2000	0.005	20	3
DMS	Summer	5	1000	0.01	20	5
DMS	Winter	3	7000	0.005	20	5
GHA	Summer	9	1000	0.005	20	5
GHA	Winter	-	-	-	-	-
IYA	Summer	3	1000	0.005	20	3
IYA	Winter	9	4000	0.01	20	3
KIN	Summer	-	-	-	-	-
KIN	Winter	9	1000	0.01	20	5
LMS	Summer	3	6000	0.005	20	4
LMS	Winter	5	1000	0.005	20	3
MAC	Summer	1	1000	0.005	20	3
MAC	Winter	1	3000	0.005	20	4
NGP	Summer	-	-	-	-	-
NGP	Winter	5	1000	0.1	20	4
ORC	Summer	1	1000	0.005	20	3
ORC	Winter	3	1000	0.005	20	5
SES	Summer	1	1000	0.01	20	3
SES	Winter	5	1000	0.005	20	4
SFS	Summer	5	1000	0.005	20	3
SFS	Winter	3	1000	0.005	20	3
SRP	Summer	1	1000	0.005	20	3
SRP	Winter	5	4000	0.01	20	3
WAB	Summer	5	1000	0.005	20	3
WAB	Winter	-	-	-	-	-
WCP	Summer	3	1000	0.01	20	3

WCP	Winter	-	-	-	-	-
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*Supplementary Table S5*

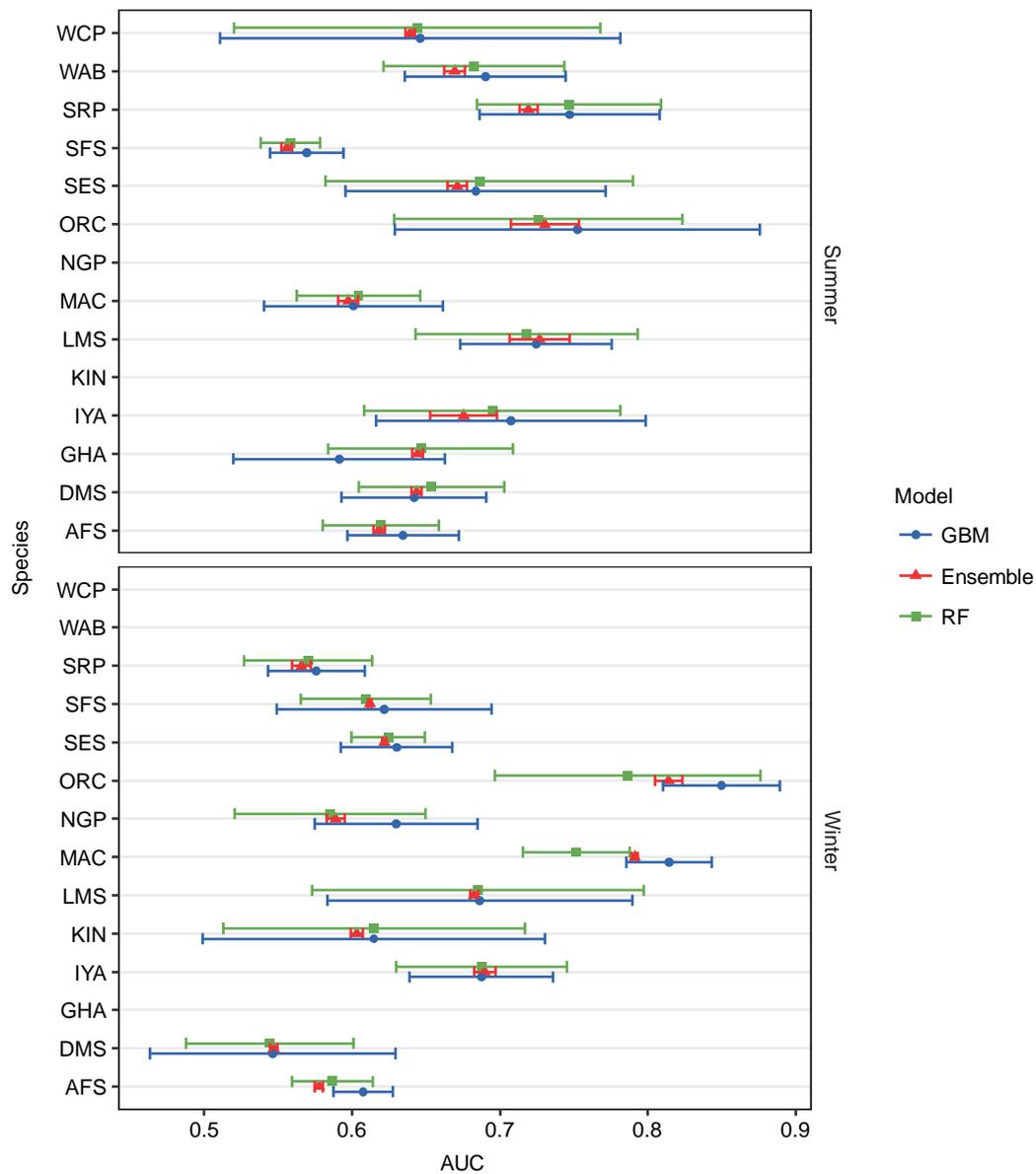
Estimated representativeness of the tracking data for each species. Values represent the actual number of cells used as a percentage of the asymptote of the number of cells predicted by non-linear regression of accumulation curves.

Species		Representativeness	
Abbreviation	Common name	Summer	Winter
AFS	Antarctic fur seal	96.4	87.8
DMS	Sooty albatross	78.7	80.6
GHA	Grey-headed albatross	84.6	-
IYA	Indian yellow-nosed albatross	67.6	96.2
KIN	King penguin	-	83.8
LMS	Light-mantled albatross	89.1	60.1
MAC	Macaroni penguin	86.3	68.2
NGP	Northern giant petrel	-	87.7
ORC	Killer whale	32.7	45.0
SES	Southern elephant seal	65.9	89.2
SFS	Subantarctic fur seal	96.5	97.4
SRP	Southern rockhopper penguin	86.4	61.7
WAB	Wandering albatross	83.7	-
WCP	White-chinned petrel	81.0	-



*Supplementary Figure S1*

Tracking effort by species and month for the 14 top predator species used in this study. Further details of the tracking data are given in Supplementary Table S1.

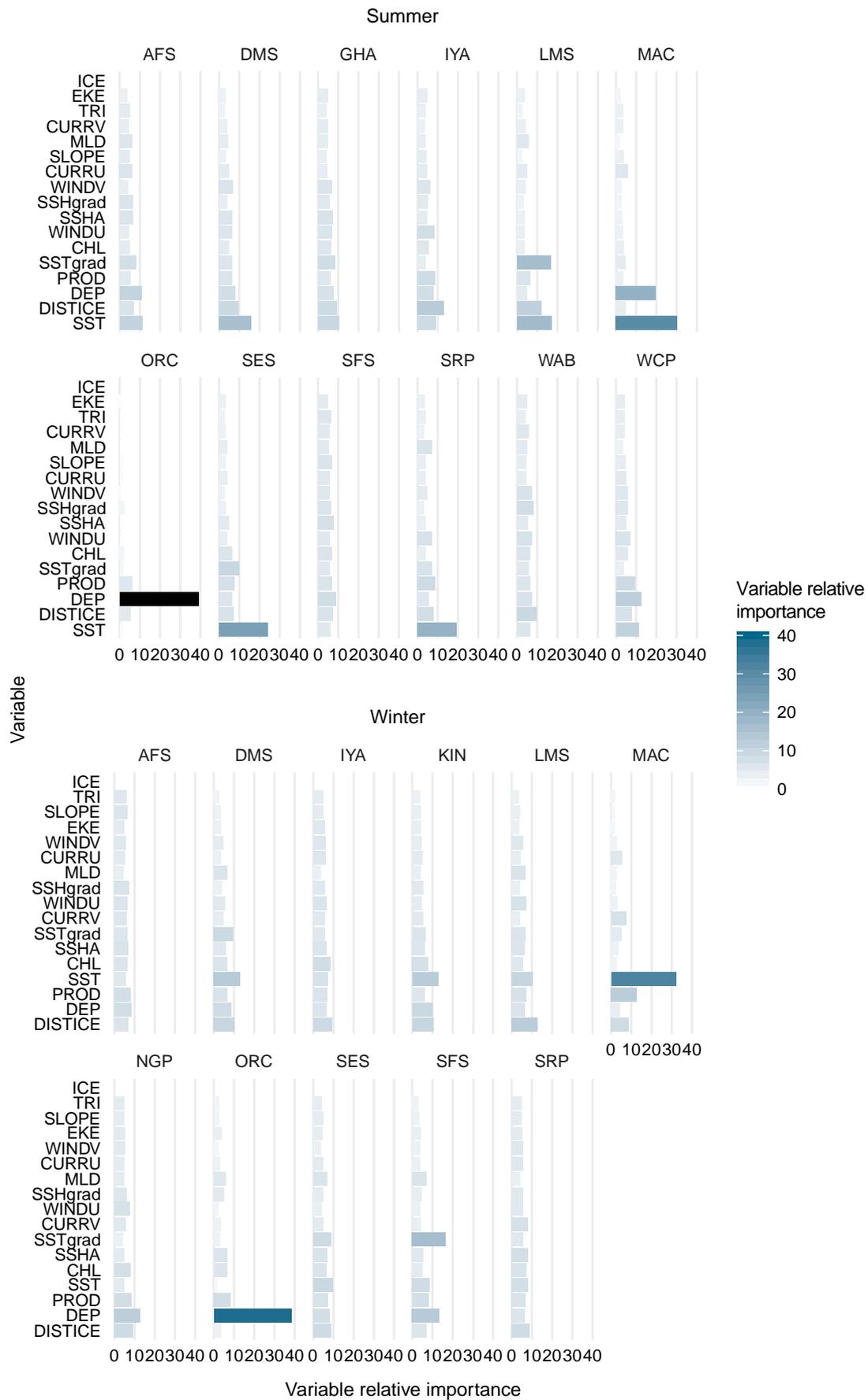


Supplementary Figure S2

Model performance of two model types –boosted regression trees (GBM) and random forests (RF) – and an ensemble of these two models, used to model the habitat preference of 14 top predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands.

Model performance was measured as the mean area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (AUC) during 10-fold cross validation. Error bars represent standard deviations of the AUC scores.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.

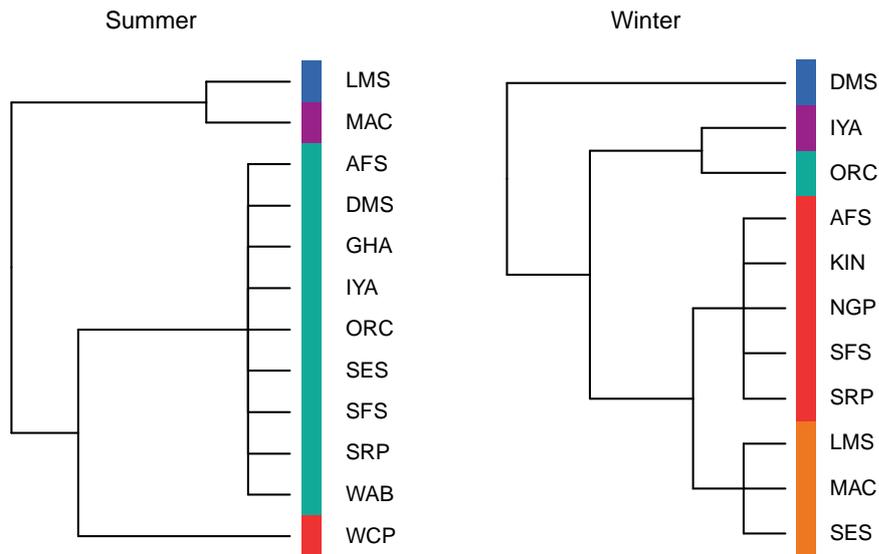


### *Supplementary Figure S3*

Overall relative variable importance of 17 environmental covariates used in ensemble models to model the habitat preference of 14 top predator species tracked from the Prince Edward Islands. Variable importance was calculated by taking the mean of the variable importance across each model in the ensemble (boosted regression tree and random forest), weighted by the model's weight in the ensemble (refer to Methods). The value of DEP in Summer ORC is 71.2, but the bar has been truncated at 40.0 for presentation.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.

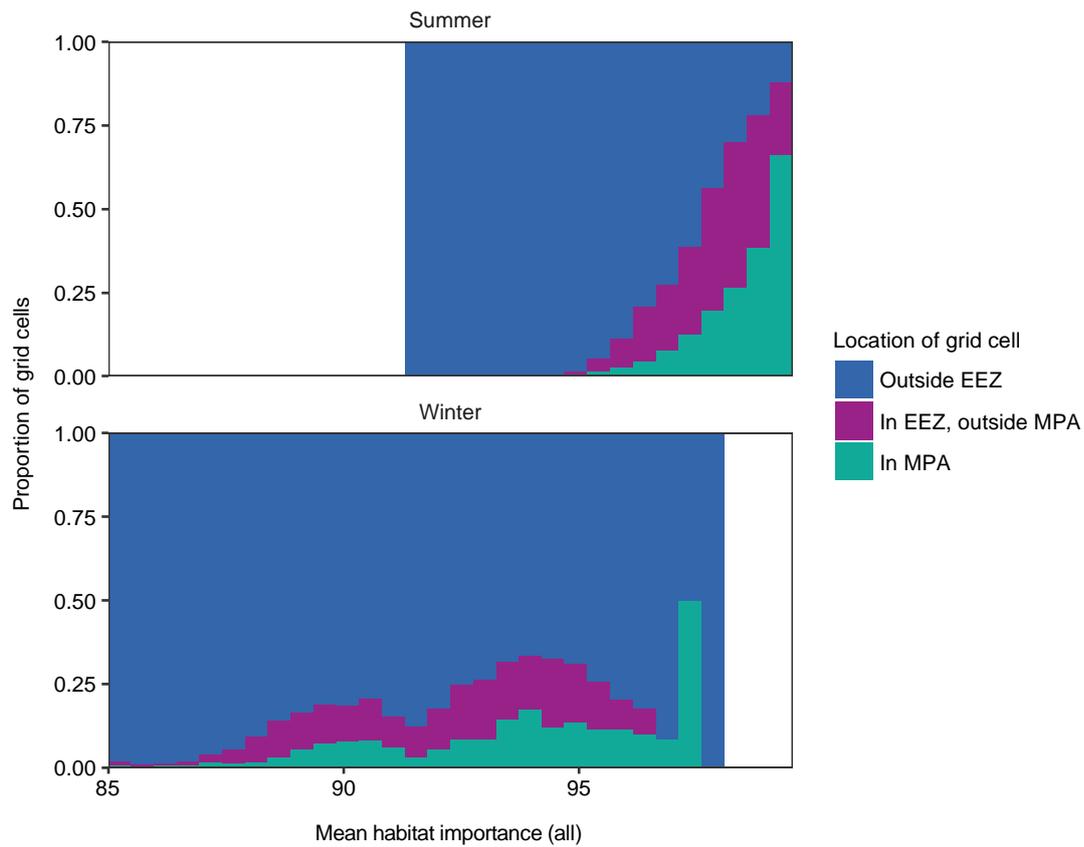
CHLA - chlorophyll-a concentration, CURRU - horizontal (zonal) geostrophic velocity, CURRV - vertical (meridional) geostrophic velocity, DEP - ocean depth, DISTICE - distance from sea ice concentration >15%, EKE - eddy kinetic energy, ICE - sea ice concentration, MLD - mixed layer depth, PROD - net primary production, SLOPE - ocean floor slope, SSHa - sea surface height anomaly, SSHgrad - sea surface height gradient, SST - sea surface temperature, SSTgrad - sea surface temperature gradient, TRI - terrain ruggedness index, WINDU - horizontal (zonal) wind, WINDV - vertical (meridional) wind.



*Supplementary Figure S4*

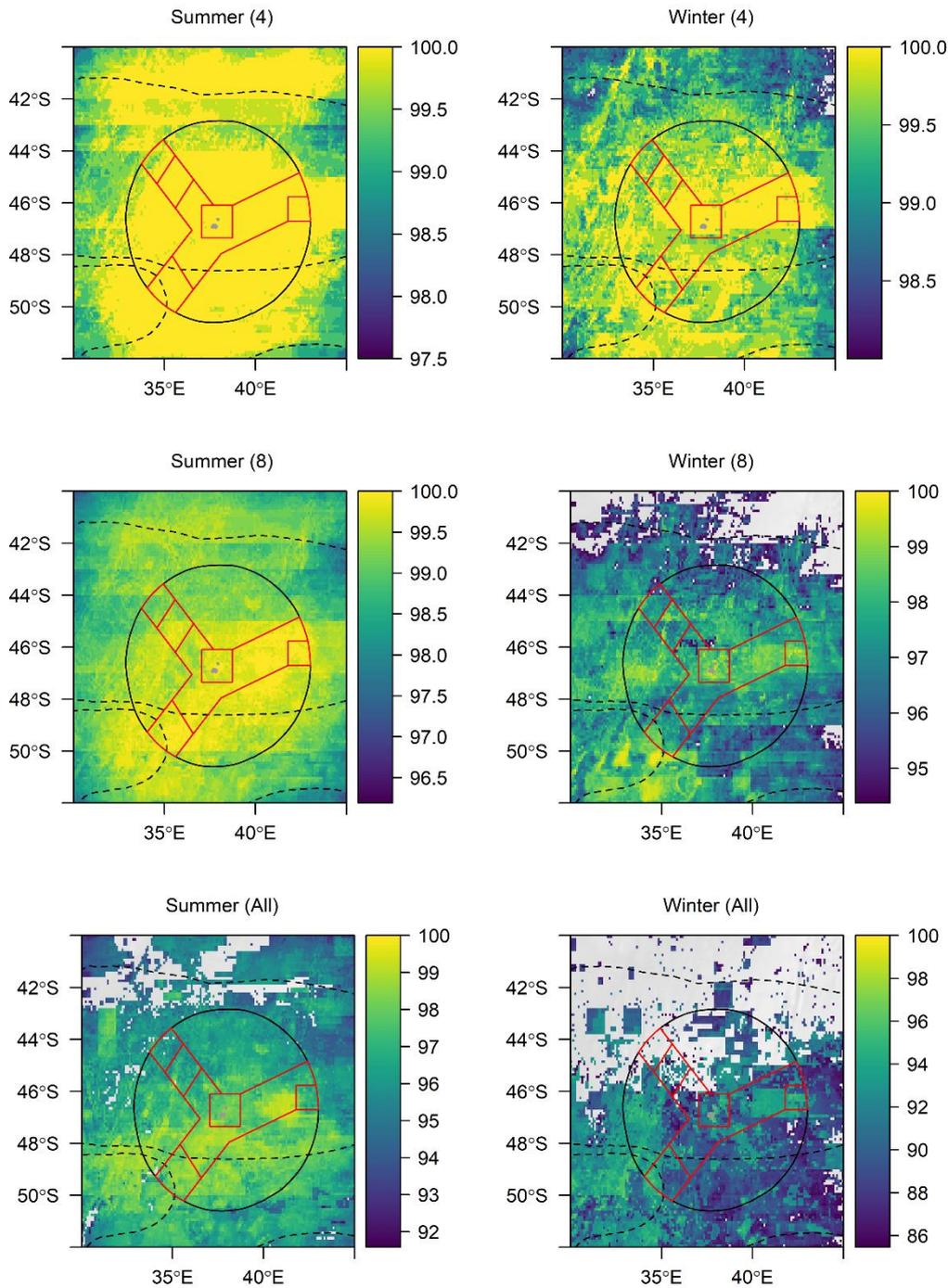
Dendrogram of affinity propagation cluster analysis of percentile habitat importance scores for 14 species of top predators tracked from the Prince Edward Islands. Colours show clusters identified using affinity propagation clustering.

AFS – Antarctic fur seal, DMS – sooty albatross, GHA – grey-headed albatross, IYA – Indian yellow-nosed albatross, KIN – king penguin, LMS – light-mantled albatross, MAC – macaroni penguin, NGP – northern giant petrel, ORC – killer whale, SES – southern elephant seal, SFS – Subantarctic fur seal, SRP – rockhopper penguin, WAB – wandering albatross, WCP – white-chinned petrel.



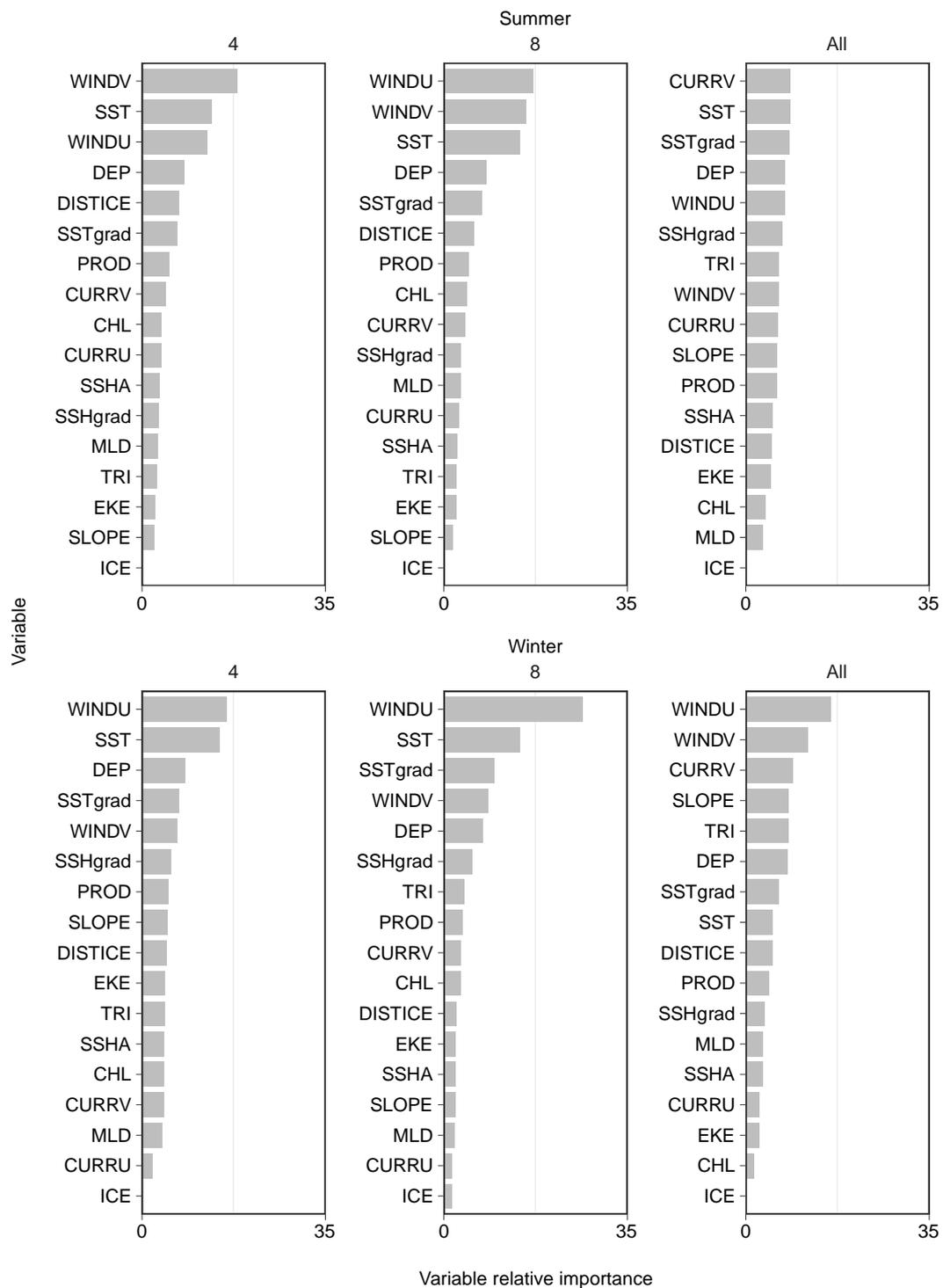
*Supplementary Figure S5*

Proportions of grid cells with high mean habitat importance that were located outside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the Prince Edward Islands, in the EEZ but outside the Prince Edward Islands marine protected area (MPA) and in the MPA. Here, the mean habitat importance based on all species scores in each grid cell was used (see Methods for further details), and only grid cells with scores in the 95th percentile are considered.



**Supplementary Figure S6**

Maps showing mean habitat importance scores for top predators tracked from Prince Edward Islands during summer (left panels) and winter (right panels). Habitat importance was calculated as the mean of the four highest scores in each cell (top panels), eight highest scores in each cell (middle panels) and of all scores in each cell (bottom panels). Only cells with scores in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile are shown and the maps focus on the South African Exclusive Economic Zone around the Prince Edward Islands (solid black lines) and the Marine Protected Area (solid red lines). Dashed black lines show average locations of important oceanographic fronts (Orsi et al. 1995). From north to south these are: the Subtropical Front, Subantarctic Front and the Antarctic Polar Front.



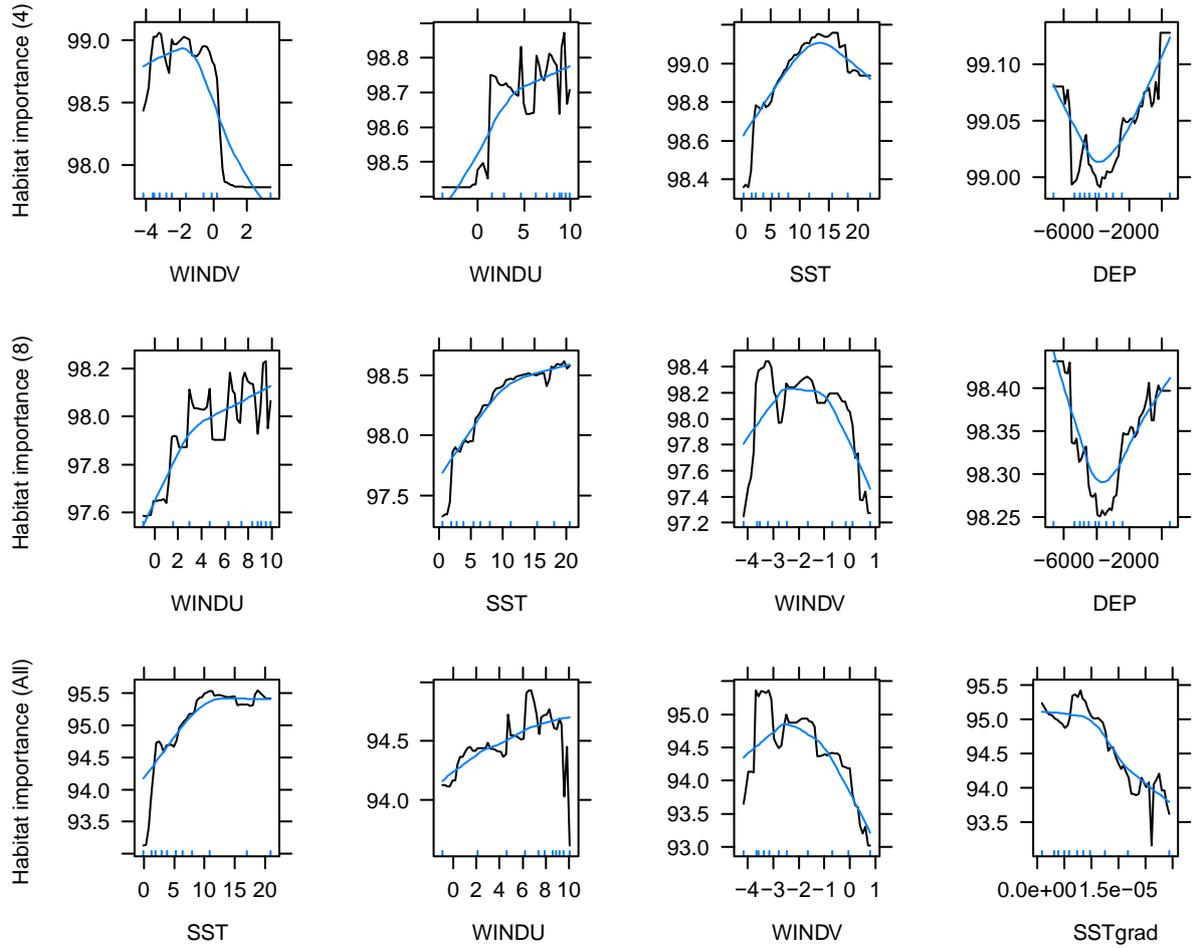
*Supplementary Figure S7*

Relative importance of variables used in an ensemble model of the relationship between environmental covariates and mean habitat importance in summer (top panels) and winter (bottom panels). Mean habitat importance was calculated as the mean of the four and eight highest habitat importance scores in each cell (first two columns: '4' and '8', respectively) and as the mean of all percentile habitat scores in each cell (third column: 'All'). Variable importance was calculated by

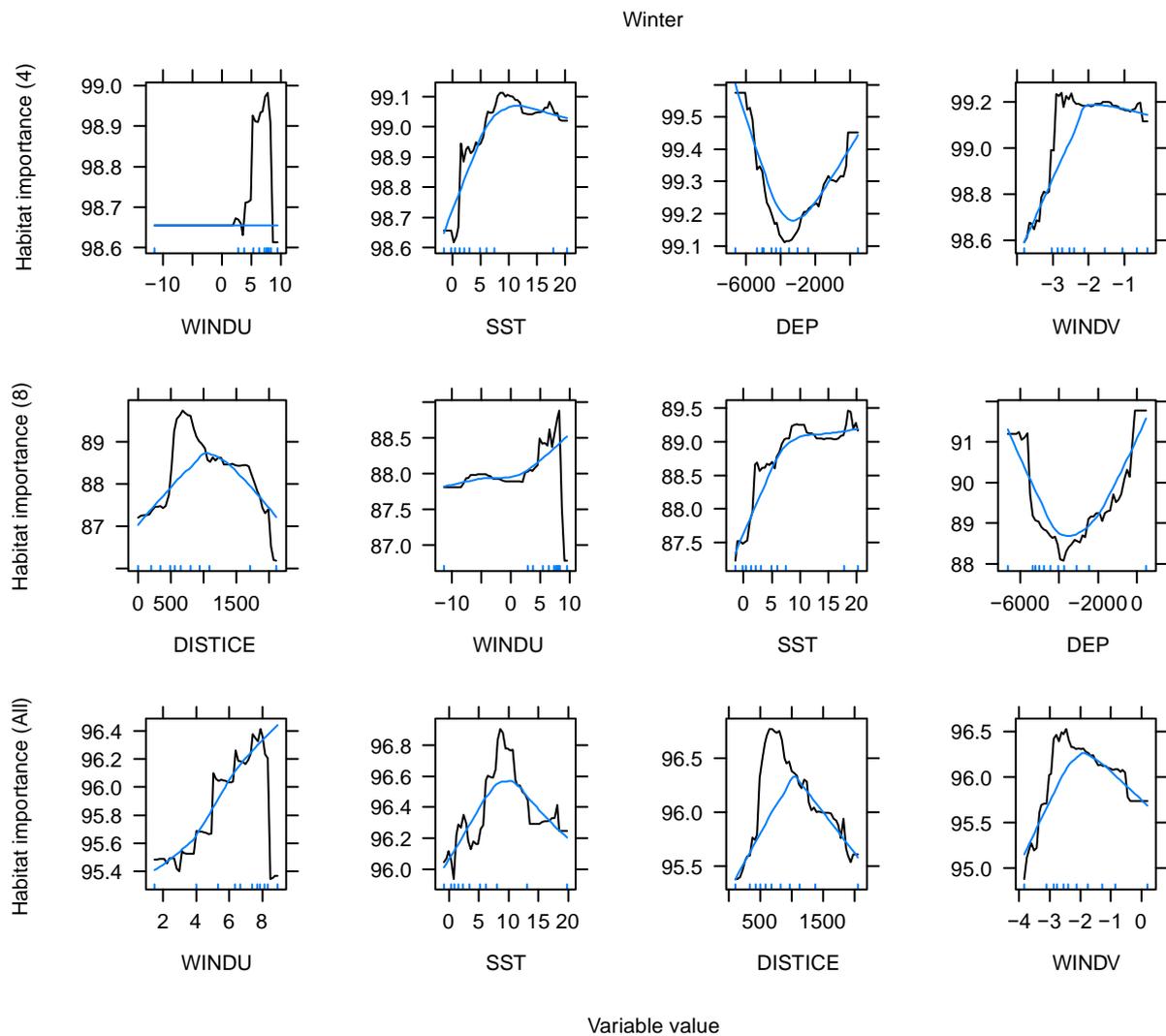
taking the mean of the variable importance across each model in the ensemble (boosted regression tree and random forest), weighted by the model's weight in the ensemble (refer to Methods).

CHLA - chlorophyll-a concentration, CURRU - horizontal (zonal) geostrophic velocity, CURRV - vertical (meridional) geostrophic velocity, DEP - ocean depth, DISTICE - distance from sea ice concentration >15%, EKE - eddy kinetic energy, ICE - sea ice concentration, MLD - mixed layer depth, PROD - net primary production, SLOPE - ocean floor slope, SSHa - sea surface height anomaly, SSHgrad - sea surface height gradient, SST - sea surface temperature, SSTgrad - sea surface temperature gradient, TRI - terrain ruggedness index, WINDU - horizontal (zonal) wind, WINDV - vertical (meridional) wind.

Summer



Variable value



*Supplementary Figure S8*

Partial dependence plots showing ensemble model predictions of the effect of environmental variables on habitat overlap during summer (top panels) and winter (bottom panels). Black lines show the partial dependence while blue lines show a smooth thereof. Mean habitat importance was calculated as the mean of four highest percentile habitat scores per cell (top rows), eight highest scores (middle rows) and all scores per cell (bottom rows). Only the four best predictors are shown for each model; variable importance is shown in Supplementary Figure S7.

CHLA - chlorophyll-a concentration, CURRU - horizontal (zonal) geostrophic velocity, CURRV - vertical (meridional) geostrophic velocity, DEP - ocean depth, DISTICE - distance from sea ice concentration >15%, EKE - eddy kinetic energy, ICE - sea ice concentration, MLD - mixed layer depth, PROD - net primary production, SLOPE - ocean floor slope, SSHa - sea surface height anomaly, SSHgrad - sea surface height gradient, SST - sea surface temperature, SSTgrad - sea surface temperature gradient, TRI - terrain ruggedness index, WINDU - horizontal (zonal) wind, WINDV - vertical (meridional) wind.