

# Elephant seal (*Mirounga* sp.) from the Pleistocene of the Antofagasta Region, northern Chile

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© 2015 by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. The genus *Mirounga* is the largest living member of the Phocidae family (true seals) and includes two species: *M. angustirostris* and *M. leonina*. These species exhibit a noticeable antitropical distribution in the Northern and Southern hemispheres, respectively. The evolutionary history of elephant seals, especially in regard to establishing this antitropical pattern, is poorly known. Nearly all fossils of the genus are isolated remains from the Pleistocene of California (*M. angustirostris*) and South Africa (*M. leonina*). Here, we describe new fossil material of *Mirounga* sp. (incomplete maxilla, dentary, and humerus), from the middle to late Pleistocene of Antofagasta Region, northern Chile. This material constitutes the first fossil occurrence of this species in South America and suggests that during part of the Pleistocene, phocids coexisted with otariids along the eastern edge of the South Pacific Ocean, which contrasts with the current