



NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee

Unusual Record Report Form

Manx Shearwater Puffinus puffinus Eaglehawk-Neck Tasmania 11th August 2019

Jodi Webber

Date(s) and time(s) of observation:

11th August 2019 12:27

How long did you watch the bird? / First and last date of occurrence?

JW - Less than one minute on that day only.

Distance to bird

150-200 m off the back of the boat

Site Location

Pelagic off Eaglehawk-neck. Left Pirates Bay at 7.15am and headed east-north-east to 260ths and idled / drifted around. Headed back to Pirates bay at 1.15pm. Bird seen at 12:27 pm at -43.029180 S, 148.298411 E.

Habitat

Open ocean

Sighting conditions

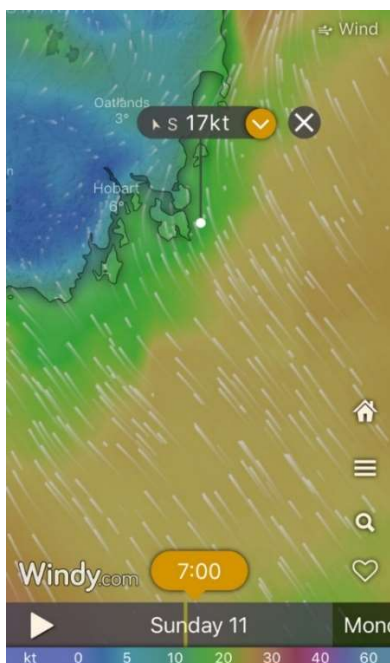
Winds SSE tending SE > 15 kts increasing at times to 25-30kts. Seas to 3.5m

Very rough seas, skies overcast, winds gusting at the time.

Temperature of water 12.1 deg C

This bird appeared just after the broad-billed prions appeared. Other birds seen on the day in the area included:

- Southern Royal Albatross 2
- Northern Royal Albatross 1 ad
- Gibson's (Wandering) Albatross 1
- Shy Albatross 40-50
- Black-browed Albatross 3-5
- Campbell Albatross 2
- Antarctic Prion 2-3
- Grey-faced Petrel c40-50
- Blue Petrel 15-20
- BROAD-BILLED PRION 2-3
- Southern Buller's Albatross c10
- Grey-headed Albatross 4 (ad, sub-ad and 1st cy imm)
- Northern Giant Petrel 3
- Cape Petrel (3) 5 all australe
- Great-winged Petrel c10+
- White-headed Petrel c10-12
- Grey-backed Storm-Petrel c.10
- Grey Petrel 1
- Fairy Prion 3
- Slender-billed Prion 2



Optical aids used:

Photos taken on a Canon 7D MII, with Canon lens 100-400 MII

To your knowledge, is the species seen frequently at this site?

No

Did you use a field guide?

The bird was identified after the pelagic, so the reference guides were used after the pelagic.

Initially identified on Facebook. Further identification on Seabirds and Pelagics Facebook site with many people's input

The Australian Bird Guide CSIRO 1st Ed *Menkhorst, Rogers, Clarke, Davies, Marsack & Franklin*

Albatrosses, Petrels and Shearwaters of the World 3rd Ed *Onley & Scofield*

Colins Bird Guides 2nd Ed *Svensson, Mullarney & Zetterstrom*

A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife 2nd Ed *Shirihai*

Oceanic Birds of the World, A Photo Guide 1st Ed *Howell & Zufelt*

Plumage variability and field identification of Manx, Yelkouan and Balearic Shearwaters Published on 08 September 2015 - A clean underwing is the most commonly shown pattern in Manx Shearwater, but about a third of birds show diffuse dark marks around the 'wrist' area. Rarely (<6%), Manx Shearwater may show a dark diagonal axillary bar.

Ebird and The Cornell Lab website.

Were other observers present Do any of the other observers disagree with your identification, if so, who?

The bird arrived just after the broad bill prions were first observed. It was called as a diving petrel (potentially from the way it was flying low) at the time which did not draw most people away from observing the broad billed prions. The bird did not stay long. There were twelve birders on the boat. At least two other people saw the bird. No one else have photos.

The Pelagic was on board the Pauletta skippered by John Males. Observers on the Pelagic trip included Rob Morris (organiser); Richard Webber, Karen Dick; Brian Russel; Andrew Sutherland; Jon Norling; Bruce Neil; John Gunning; Dan Pendavingh; Els Wakefield; Arthur Curew; Jodi Webber

JN's recollection that it was a small dark upper, white below stout bird flying with rapid wing beats low over the water away from the boat. He called it as a CDP and then immediately took his eyes away from it to concentrate on other birds because he realised that he could not get a decent photo of it. He had it in his field of vision for less than 2 seconds and perhaps for not much more than 1 second. Jon is very familiar with Hutton's and Fluttering Shearwaters, which appear to be more similar to Manx Shearwater than CDP, but his brain suggested CDP rather than 'Fluttering-type,' which would have been his more usual call for these group of birds. In the limited time it was in his vision, he did not see it arc up, like the Fluttering-types. At the time he was concentrating on the Broad-billed Prions, Blue Petrels and other Prions we had around the boat at that time, which is why he had no interest in what he thought was a CDP flying low and away from the boat.

How confident are you of your identification?

After looking through field guides and other information on-line I am not sure what else the bird can be, comparing the photos after the fact. At least 99 % sure. In addition, the way it flew on the day, similar to a diving petrel, staying low matches the behavior mentioned in the field guides. It did not hang around the boat with just the single pass.

Other details: e.g. Do you have historical and or anecdotal information/comments relating to the prior occurrence/status of the species within or near this location?

There is a BARC submission confirmed from 1961.
Manx Shearwaters are now rare but regular off California waters.

Physical Description of Bird - Please describe only what you saw: (1) No. of individuals present (living or dead); (2) age (adult, juvenile, immature) and sex; (3) size and shape; (4) plumage colour and pattern (including any details of moult); (5) colour of bill, eyes and legs/feet; (6) calls; (7) behaviour, movements, flight pattern, and anything else that might help to identify the bird e.g. feeding, interactions with other birds, describe where the bird was – on ground, in canopy, flying etc. Were comparisons made with other species?

1. Single bird
2. –
3. Refer to photos
4. Manx Shearwater- a darker under-wing type
 - a) Head dark to below the eye – Figure 1
 - b) Defined cap with white crescent behind ear-coverts - Figure 1
 - c) Pale semi-collared
 - d) White undertail coverts, dark-tipped undertail coverts
 - e) Slightly protruding feet
 - f) Underwing fine
 - g) The balance of tones in the under-wing – Figure 5
 - o dark forward edge to under primary coverts especially including single outermost median and greater
 - o broad blackish leading edge on the innerwing
 - o distal end of the humerals (axillaries)
 - h) Bill pretty narrow
 - i) Dark-tipped undertail coverts
 - j) Discrete black spots at the end of each of the longest humerals near the black trailing edge – Figure 6
 - k) the general darkness on the forward half of the wing may be the result of some worn feathers losing their white tips and revealing darker base
5. Dark bill, dark eye
6. N/A
7. E-Bird and field guides says that Manx Shearwater flies low to the water, rarely arcing up high unless wind is strong. – It was called as a diving petrel on the day potentially as it was flying low, with rapid wing beats. It did not look like a diving petrel and it did not fly like a fluttering type shearwater which is why the photos were taken of this bird whilst the broadbills were about.



Figure 1 Manx Shearwater (J Webber)



Figure 2 Manx Shearwater (J Webber)



Figure 3 Manx Shearwater (J Webber)



Figure 4 Manx Shearwater (J Webber)



Figure 5 Manx Shearwater (J Webber)



Figure 6 Manx Shearwater (J Webber) Showing twin spots

Other species with which you think it might be confused and how these were eliminated?

A. Fluttering Shearwater

- Humerals (axillaries) are toned the wrong way around for Fluttering, being dark at the forward end and white at the distal, longest end
- Flutterings have all dark grey longest humerals and lack all of that darkness out along the leading edge of the underwing that this bird has
- Fluttering does not have a broad blackish leading edge on the innerwing like this bird

B. Huttons Shearwater

- Pale greater primary coverts and underwing
- This bird does not have humerals(axillaries) of Hutton's like Fluttering has all dark longest
- Hutton's have a longer bill and no white hook behind ear coverts

C. Audubon's Shearwater

- this bird does not have a white eye-ring
- Longer bill
- white undertail
- dark "armpit" markings
- wings pointy

D. Newell's Shearwater

- this bird does not have dark undertail, upperparts are brown
- Newell's have all white longest humerals,
- Newell's are more strongly black and white generally with more obvious demarcation at sides of neck

E. Tropical Shearwater

- This bird has no white eye-ring
- Tropical has a diagnostic deep half collar at lower neck and all white longest humerals with no black spot at tip

F. Little Shearwater

- dark below the eye,
- not mostly white underwing (dark "armpit" markings) with large border

G. Subantarctic Little Shearwater

- This bird has dark lores
- not mostly white underwing (dark “armpit” markings)

H. Boyd’s Shearwater

- this bird has dark below the eye,
- no white eye-ring,
- has dark “armpit” markings

I. Barolo Shearwater

- this bird has dark below the eye
- dark “armpit” markings

J. Bryan’s Shearwater

- this bird has dark below the eye
- dark “armpit” markings

K. Black vented Shearwater

- this bird has a long thin bill,
- feet don’t project beyond tail
- lacks black vent

L. Rapa Shearwater

- this bird has dark below the eye
- has a collar

M. Townsend’s Shearwater

- this bird does not have dark undertail
- does not have black lines on inner wing

N. Macaronesian Shearwater

- No silver panel on top
- No white on cheeks

O. Bannerman’s Shearwater

- white undertail

P. Balaeric Shearwater

- This bird has no pot belly,
- has saddle bags,
- underparts not almost entirely dark, but white.
- underwing contrasting
- does not have dark longest humerals

Q. Yelkouan Shearwater

- no dusky undertail,
- underwing doesn't fit

R. Galapagos Shearwater

- no dark undertail,
- underwing not dirty, more contrasting

S. Pinkfooted Shearwater

- this bird has white saddle bags,
- no pattern on top of wings
- pale undertail

T. Persian (Arabian) Shearwater

- legs not pink,
- no white eye-ring
- this bird has white secondary coverts
- extensive dark trailing edge of the wing
- a bit more contrast on the underwing

U. Common Diving Petrel

- Different shape,
- no blue feet,
- long pencil-like bill vs stubby bill of CDP

Was the description written from memory, notes and/or sketches made in the field or after consulting field guides or other references?

The photos taken of the bird was reviewed against reference material.

What experience have you had with the species in question?

J Webber – None.

None, it was not identified on the day as a rare bird. It was initially identified by others on Facebook.

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