

## BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee Unusual Record Report Form

Section A: Submitter details	
Your name(s)	Steve N. G. Howell
Your email, phone or address	California

Section B: Record details	
Common and scientific names Include subspecies if relevant	Band-rumped Storm-Petrel sp. <i>Thalobata (Oceanodroma) castro</i> sp., perhaps (based on range) it was the migrant Japanese Storm-Petrel <i>O. [c.] kumagai</i> .
Site location (with GPS if possible)	Tasmantid Sea Mounts, Tasman Sea, NSW  Around the Derwent Hunter Tablemount of the Tasmantid Seamounts, between Coffs Harbour and Lord Howe Island  Bird 1: at 31°46'S, 156°31'E  Birds 2 and 3 at 31°46'S 156°31'E
Date(s) and time(s) of record (First and last date of occurrence if known)	27 February 2020
How many individuals were there?	Three sightings over about 4 hours (10:29, 14:04 and 14:06, based on camera stamps).
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	Bird 1 ~ 500m when photographed. Bird 2 ~ 300 m.
Habitat description	Pelagic waters around sea mounts
Sighting conditions (e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)	10-15 knots SE to NE breeze, low seas, sunny.
How confident are you in the identification (as a %) and why?	100%  I have extensive experience with Band-rumped and Leach's Storm-Petrels and consider the flight manner, structure, and plumage typical of Band-rumped and wrong for Leach's. As to which taxon of Band-rumped, who knows? Japanese seems most likely on geographic grounds, unless Band-rumps also breed in the Solomon Islands, cf. Howell & Zufelt 2019, p.246 ( <i>Oceanic Birds of the World: A Photo Guide</i> , Princeton Univ. Press).
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	Yes, I located all three. Fabrice Schmitt saw the first bird and agreed with the identification, confirming significant features.
What experience have you had with this species?	I have extensive experience with Band-rumped and Leach's Storm-Petrels
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	The only previous record of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel in Australia was recorded over the same chain of seamounts about 250 to 300 km north of these records in April 2016 (BARC Case 971).
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	Photographs were sent by email to Jeff Davies. They are mostly cropped jpegs (and a couple of uncropped showing the original images of Birds 1 and 3.  Jeff Davies enlarged the images and adjusted the levels in <i>Photoshop</i>

Do you permit BARC to display your images etc. electronically (credited with your name)

Yes

### Section C: Supporting evidence

Please include evidence that supports the identification, such as photographs, video, call recordings, etc. Digital images can be pasted into this document below, at the end, or provided separately. Digital video and sound recordings can be sent separately to this form. Label photos etc or insert captions to make note of relevant features they show.

#### **Bird 1. 27 February 2020, about 1029 h, at 31°46'S, 156°31'E**

I spotted the first bird about 1029 h flying alongside ship (Golden Princess) and stated something like “storm-petrel, flying right at 9 o'clock, [pause], Band-rumped...” and Fabrice Schmitt picked it up in his scope and watched it for 15 or so seconds before we passed it by. Realizing the significance of the record I also snapped some record shots with a Canon 7D-II and 100-400 zoom (at 400mm) but the bird was not close, perhaps 500m when I shot it. Position was 31°46'S 156°31'E.

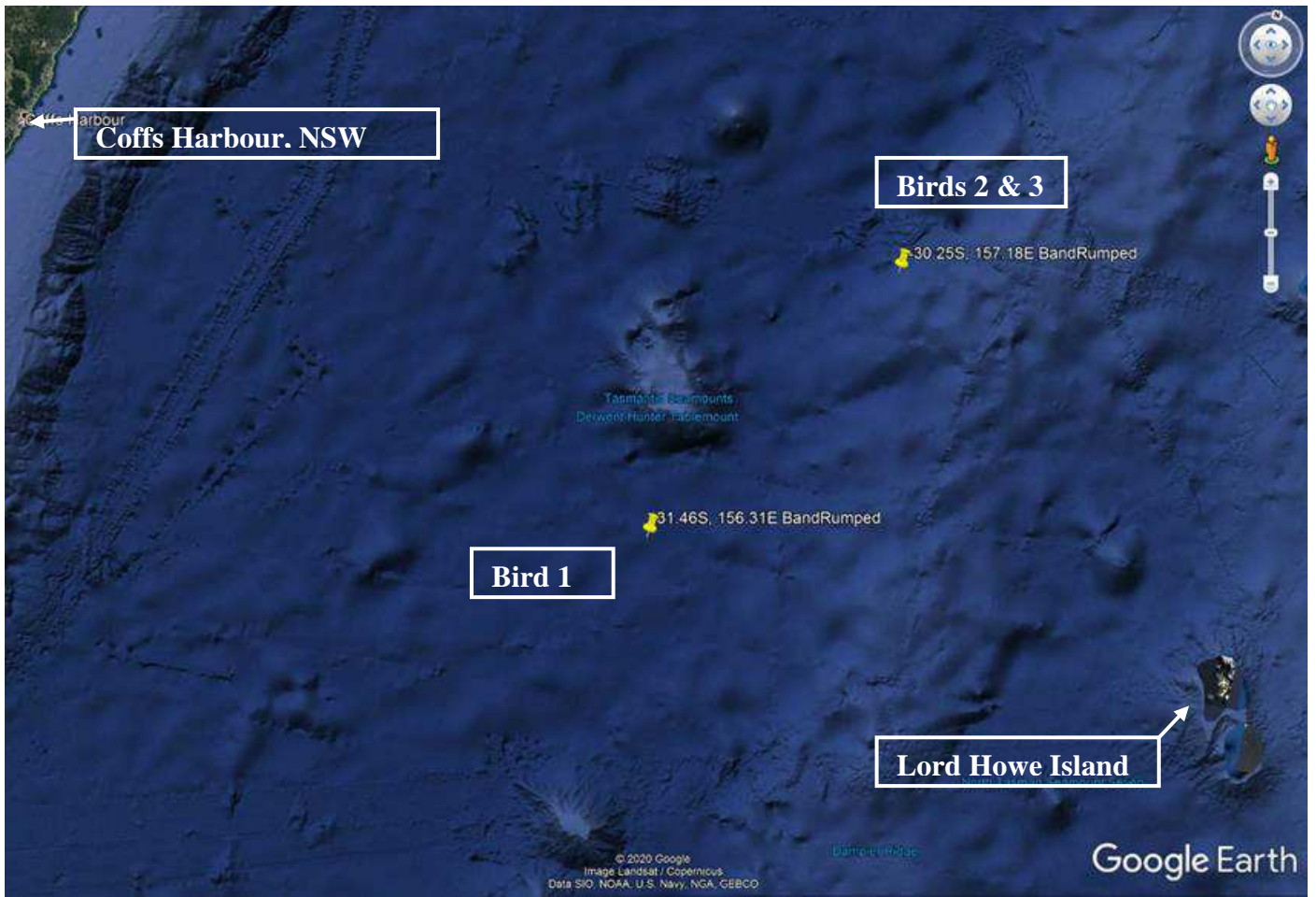
Description: Basically, an obvious northern storm-petrel (Hydrobatidae, vs southern Oceanitidae), blackish overall with bold white rump, relatively narrow crooked wings beating deeply with languid cadence, emphasis on downstroke, no gliding. In the scope, Fabrice noted the squared tail and white rump wrap-around, and the photos support this and also indicate wing molt completing. They also show the pale upperwing band relatively even in width and not reaching the leading edge of the wing.

#### **Bird 2. 27 February 2020, about 1404 h, at about 30°25'S 157°18'E**

The second (and third?) birds were at about 1400 h, when Fabrice was taking a break. I spotted a group of 7 Gray-faced Petrels on the water and was pleased to see a White-bellied Storm-Petrel circling them and snapped a few pix. Looking back with bins I saw a second storm-petrel, another Band-rumped, and snapped a few pix as it circled the group of petrels, perhaps at 300m or so from the ship. Again it was typical northern storm-petrel, blackish overall with a bold white rump band, pale upperwing band, and deep loping wingbeats, this time interspersed with brief glides as it circled. The photos support these plumage features, especially white wrapping around boldly on the rump sides, and the first image suggests there may be molt in the outer primaries, with p10 old (projecting and pointed?) and p9 thus growing, but this is not really clear and best left as conjectural; this image shows a slight tail notch, typical of Band-rumped (especially at this angle) but not the obvious fork of Leach's.

#### **Bird 3. 27 February 2020, about 1406 h, at about 30°25'S 157°18'E**

About 2 minutes later (quite a ways away when cruising at 20 knots, ) there was another small group of Gray-faced Petrels on the water with a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel circling them, again. Perhaps the same bird but I suspect not, as the photos show it looks cleaner, with wing molt completed and thus more rounded wings, plus a duller-looking pale upperwing band. Again, it was a typical northern storm-petrel, and the flight manner (languid deep wingbeats on cupped wings), structure (squared tail, etc) and plumage (white band wrapping boldly to sides, pale upperwing band not reaching leading edge of wing) point to Band-rumped Storm-Petrel. These last 2 birds were at about 30°25'S 157°18'E.



Bird 1: One of the original images uncropped

Bird 2: One of the original images uncropped

Below are the best of the images. On the left hand side are the original images cropped to bird. On the right hand side are the same images adjusted in *Photoshop* by Jeff Davies.





Bird 1



Bird 1



Bird 1



Bird 1



Bird 1



Bird 1



Bird 2



Bird 2



Bird 2



Bird 2



Bird 2



Bird 2



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Bird 3



Bird 3



Bird 3



Bird 3





<b>Section F: References and aids</b>	
<b>Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission?</b>	Jeff Davies processed the images in Photoshop, prepared the Google Earth map and provided information on the status of the species in Australia. David James compiled email texts and images into the submission document.