

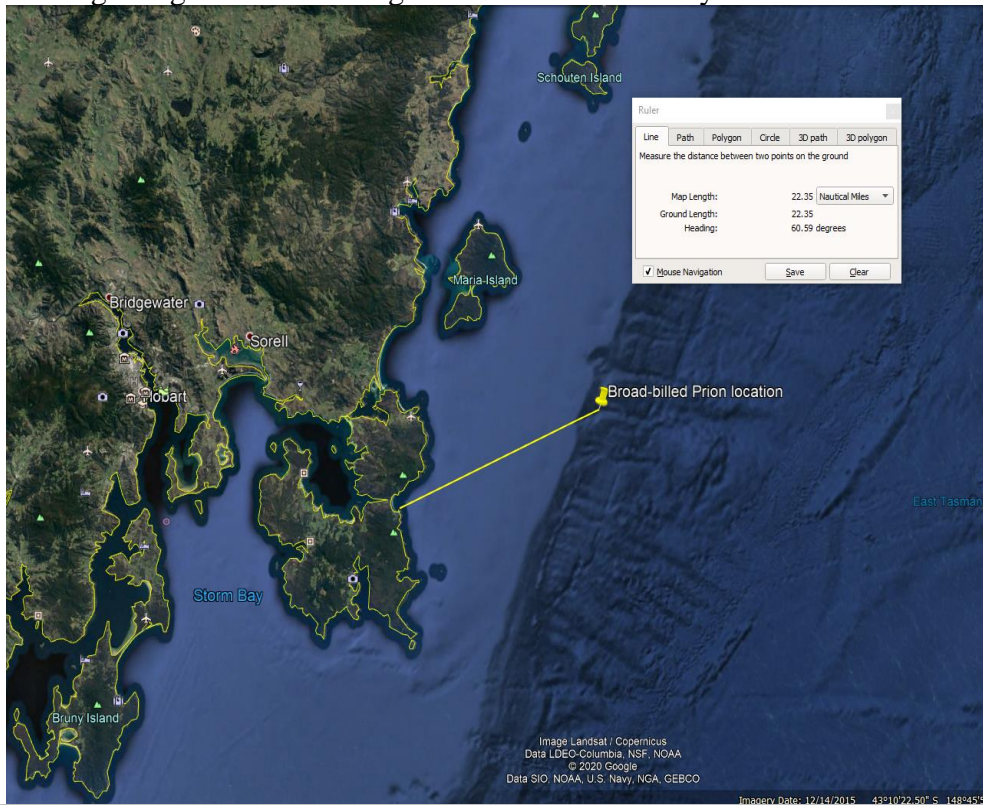
BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission for a major rarity in Australia. (It is not a mandatory requirement) Please complete all sections ensuring that you attach all relevant information including any digital images (email to tonyp@bigpond.net.au or andrew.silcocks@birdlife.org.au). Submissions to BARC should be submitted electronically wherever possible.



Full Name: Rob Morris	Office Use
Address: Robert P. Morris,	Phone No: Email:
Full Name: Andrew Sutherland (first noticed the second bird)	
Address:	Phone No: Email:
Species Name: Broad-billed Prion	Scientific Name: <i>Pachyptila vittata</i>
Date(s) and time(s) of observation:	11 August 2019 First individual photographed at 12.22 – last bird photographed at 13.11.
How long did you watch the bird(s)?	c30+ minutes – multiple sightings of 2 birds (possibly 3) and then an additional sighting of 1 bird 20 minutes later whilst travelling, flying past and photographed.
First and last date of occurrence:	11 August 2019
Distance to bird:	Down to approximately 20-30 m

Site Location: SE Tasmania. Approximately 42°50'36.30"S 148°24'46.23"E 22NM ENE of Pirates Bay, Eaglehawk Neck. We went north in an attempt to seek lighter winds and less swell and avoid heading straight into the strong SE winds and southerly swell.



Habitat (describe habitat in which the bird was seen):

Continental slope waters at a depth of approximately 260 fathoms.

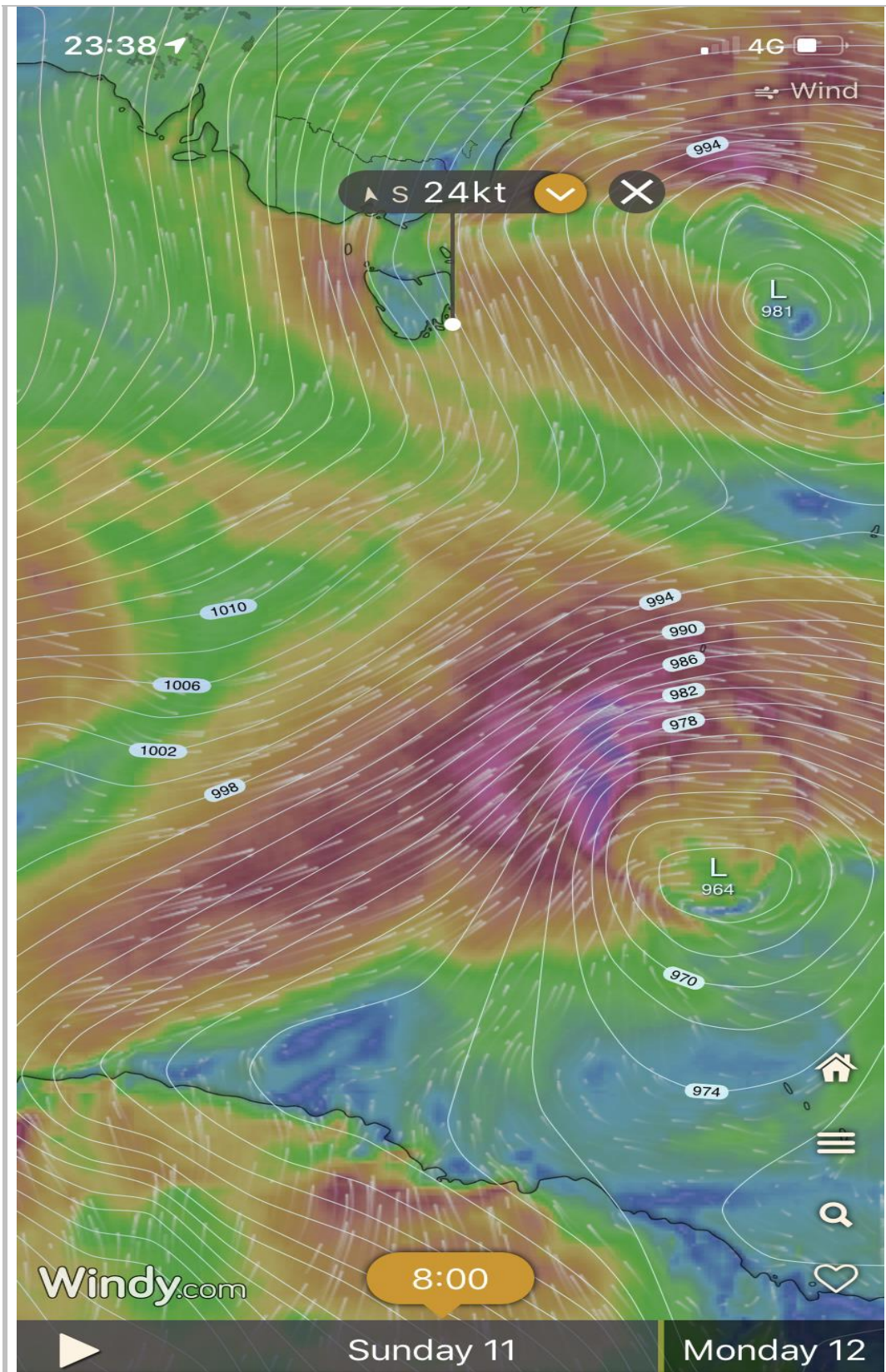
Sighting conditions (weather, visibility, light conditions etc.):

Weather: Both days were mostly cloudy with occasional periods of bright sunshine. On both days we had occasional shows. During the time the Broad-billed Prions were present on the 11th August, the visibility was good. Conditions were not completely perfect for viewing however due to the 3+ meters of swell causing the boat to rock, spray and the birds often disappeared from view. Despite that, the birds were seen and photographed well.

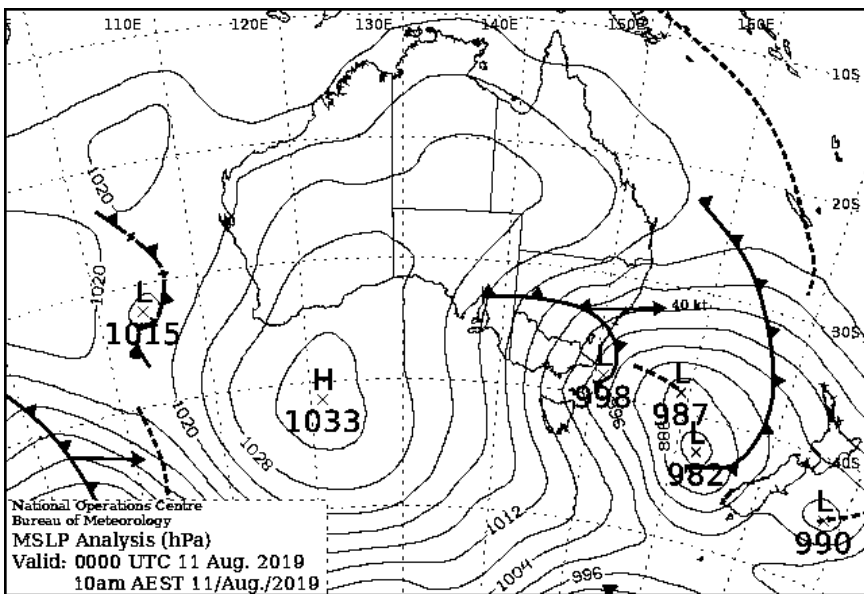
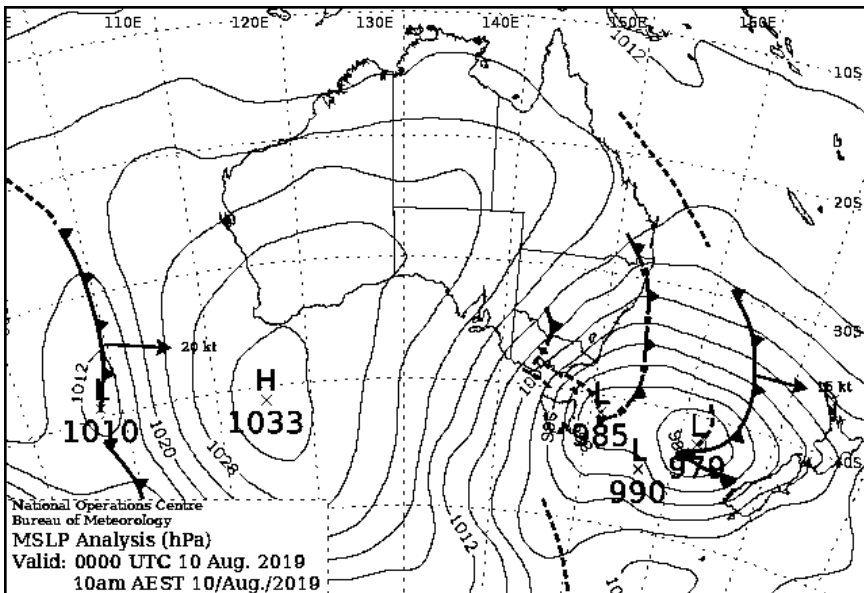
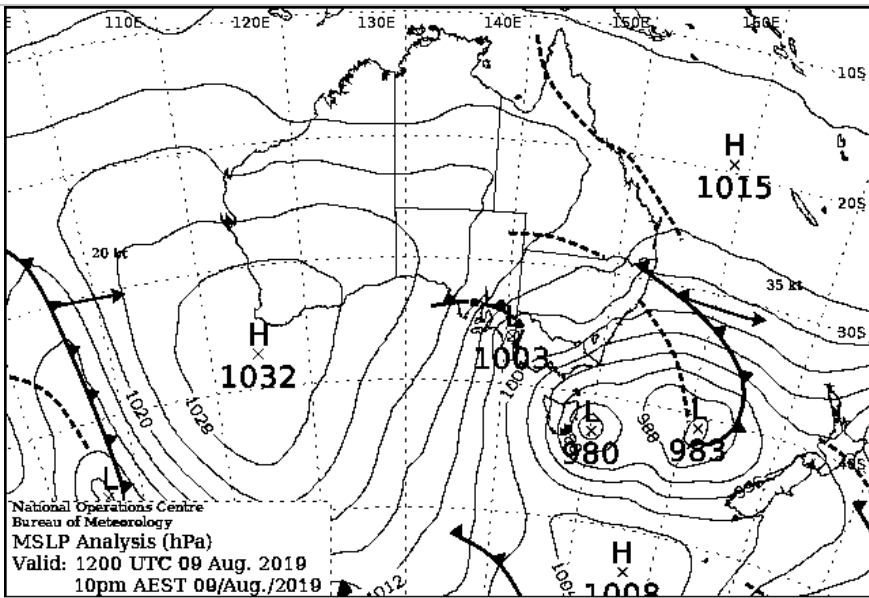
Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic - 10 August 2019 Left Pirates Bay at 7.15am and headed east-north-east to 250fths and idled around. Winds SSW 15-35kts. Seas around 3.5m. Headed home at 12.15 as conditions deteriorated with S winds increasing to 40+Kts..

Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic - 11 August 2019 - Left Pirates Bay at 7.15am and headed east-north-east to 260ths and idled / drifted around. Winds S tending SE 15kts increasing at times to 25-30kts. Seas to 3.5m Headed home at 1.15pm. Temperature 6°C to 12°C with a strong wind chill factor.

The “windy’ chart below shows actual wind speeds and the synoptic conditions: a low lying due east of Tasmania causing strong SE winds. Further south this was combining with a strong southern ocean Low giving ideal conditions for Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic species to occur. At 8am the wind recorded on the wind chart was 24kts S. By 11.30 it was 25-30kt SE.



BOM Synoptic charts for the 9th, 10th and 11th of August are shown below.



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

There have certainly been records from SE Tasmania and Eaglehawk Neck although it is a rare species in this general area (see accepted records below). There have been more records from the seamounts S and SE of Tasmania most of which I suspect have not been submitted to BARC.

Were other observers present? Yes:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Brian Russell | bj54@bigpond.com |
| 2. Jon Norling | jon@norling.com.au |
| 3. Niel Bruce | niel.bruce@qm.qld.gov.au |
| 4. John Gunning | John.Gunning@tollgroup.com |
| 5. Dan Pendavingh | dpendavingh@gmail.com |
| 6. Richard Webber | sa_richard@yahoo.com |
| 7. Jodi Osgood | jodi_osgood@yahoo.com.au |
| 8. Els Wakefield | elswakefieldtas@gmail.com |
| 9. Arthur Carew | acdc29@bigpond.com |
| 10. Karen Dick | kadick@bigpond.com |

Do any of the other observers disagree with your identification, if so, who? No one disagreed with the identification

Did you use a field guide? Not in the field. The birds were immediately identified as probable 'Broad-billed Prion' and then identified without any literature looking at the back of cameras in the field. Since returning from the field I have consulted:

Albatrosses and Petrels across the World (Bird Families of the World). Oxford. • ENTICOTT J & TIPLING D (1997): Seabirds of the World. London.
HARRISON P (1983): Seabirds, an identification guide. Beckenham.
HARRISON P (1987): Seabirds of the World. A Photographic Guide. London.
HOWELL, SNG & ZUFELT, K (2019) Oceanic Birds of the World – A Photographic Guide. PUP
MARCHANT S & HIGGINS PJ (eds) (1990): Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 1: Ratites to Ducks. Melbourne.
MENKHORST P, ROGERS D, CLARKE R, DAVIES J, MARSACK P, FRANKLIN L (2017): The Australian Bird Guide. Clayton South
ONLEY D & SCOFIELD P (2007): Albatrosses, Petrels & Shearwaters of the World. Princeton. •
SHIRIHAI, H. (2007, 2nd ed.): A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife. London.

How confident are you of your identification? e.g. 70%, 100%. If not 100%, why not? **100%**

Please confirm that you are willing for BARC to display your images (fully credited with your name) electronically

YES or NO: **YES**

Physical Description of Bird - *Please describe only what you saw:* (The features described are illustrated in Figures 1-12 below)

(1) **No. of individuals present:** multiple sightings of 2 birds (possibly 3 (called at one point)) and then an additional sighting of 1 bird (flying past and photographed) 20 minutes later whilst we were travelling back in. So, a minimum of 2, I suspect 3 to 4 birds.

(2) **Age and sex:** Sex unknown. Age: also unknown: the birds were fresh looking and no moult was noticed.

(3) **Size and shape:** I picked up the first bird flying in I initially (at distance) thought it was a Blue Petrel. At that point there were at least 7-8 Blue Petrels around the boat. However, as it approached the boat I saw the typical tail pattern of a Prion and I took a series of shots. I suspected it was a Broad-billed Prion on size and structure and the photos showed this likely to be the case. I immediately called the bird as a probable Broad-billed Prion so others could get on to it. This bird and the second bird that joined it were a very similar size to Blue Petrels present, and they were seen together in the same field of view. The birds were also seen along side Antarctic Prions and were clearly larger and bulkier. Shape wise they were clearly a large prion. They looked quite long-tailed and had a very robust 'square shaped' head with a steep forehead meeting an extremely large bill.

(4) **Plumage colour and pattern (including any details of moult):**

The birds showed a typical prion pattern – with mid grey upper parts the typical 'W' pattern across the wings which was fairly boldly black. The terminal band on the tail was also black and reasonably extensive compared to other species of prion present on the day.

The head was boldly marked with a broad darker grey/black eye-stripe, a prominent white supercilium mainly above and behind the eye, smudgy greyish-white lores and a dark line present 'bridle' running across the face from the gap. One bird showed less of a bridle.

The underparts were mainly white with a broad dark grey patch coming down from the shoulder forming a collared appearance (see photo 2). The birds also showed a small black line on the forewing and an obvious black tip to the undertail with white sides.

(5) **Colour of bill, eyes and legs/feet:** the feet were bluish grey. The bills appear dark greyish-black on the upper mandibles with some blue-grey or shininess to the lower mandible. Antarctic Prions seen at the same time showed a lighter blue grey bill.

(6) **Calls:** No calls were heard or recorded.

(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?**

The birds were striking in their strong arching flight, at times more reminiscent of a Blue Petrel or Cookilaria. Their flight was unlike the smaller prions most of the time and the first bird was picked up on flight pattern and behaviour (I initial thought here comes another Blue Petrel). At the same time birds for comparison couldn't have been more ideal comprising: Antarctic (3), Slender-billed (1) and Fairy (2) as well as up to 8 Blue Petrels. The Broad-billeds were pretty close and easy to pick out in the mix of species but with small numbers.

Please indicate other species with which you think it might be confused and how these were eliminated?

- *Pachyptila turtur*, Fairy Prion and *Pachyptila crassirostris*, Fulmar Prion: tail pattern, head pattern, dark collar, size and bill shape eliminate the two non-Whalebird prions
- *Pachyptila desolata*, Antarctic prion: large size, bill shape, face pattern (bridle), bill colour and flight style / jizz eliminates this species.
- *Pachyptila belcheri*, Slender-billed Prion: large size, bill shape, face pattern (bridle), tail pattern, bill colour and flight style / jizz eliminates this species.
- *Pachyptila macgillivrayi* MacGillivray's Prion This is the most similar Prion taxa to Broad-billed Prion. On distribution, Broad-billed is more likely breeding commonly on the islands in the South of New Zealand e.g. around Stewart Island. Likewise, gale force south-easterlies are more likely to produce Broad-billed Prions than MacGillivray's. However, identification wise, the following features favour Broad-billed for the birds recorded on 11th August 2019:
 - The steepness of the forehead
 - The face pattern: small supercilium mostly behind, the bridle and broad dark greyish-black eye strip
 - The bill dark grey /blackish bill colour with no true blue colouring showing (which could be seen on other Prions present at the same time).
 - They were also extremely large birds – similar in size to the Blue Petrels they were associating with.
- *Pachyptila salvini*, Salvin's prion: larger size (the Birds were Blue Petrel sized), larger bill, face pattern (bridle), darker bill colour eliminates this species.

Blue Petrel – doesn't need discussing !

Was the description written from memory? Yes, and photographs viewed 'live' on cameras as the birds were being watched over a prolonged period of time.

Photo 1. First bird photographed at 12.22pm Rob Morris



Photo 2 Same bird as above. Rob Morris



Photo 3 Rob Morris



Photo 4 Rob Morris



Photo 5 Rob Morris



Photo 6 Rob Morris



Photo 7 Rob Morris



Photo 8 Rob Morris



Photo 9 Rob Morris



Photo 10. Last bird Photographed at 13.11



Photo 11 Jon Norling



Photo 12 Jon Norling



What experience have you had with the species in question?

I have seen 100s of Broad-billed Prions in New Zealand around Stewart Island, Snares Island and the Chatham Islands. I have also seen 1 bird south of Tasmania on a seamount trip organized by Simon Mustoe in July 2009.

I have extensive experience of Antarctic, Slender-billed, Fairy Prions. I have seen 100s of Fulmar Prions in the sub-Antarctic Islands of NZ mainly around the Bounty Islands. I have seen at least 3 Salvin's Prion in Australia. I have no field experience of MacGillivray's Prion.

Name: Robert P Morris

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Please email all material

Trip reports from the two days at sea are shown below.

Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic - 10 August 2019

Left Pirates Bay at 7.15am and headed east-north-east to 250fths and idled around. Winds SSW 15-35kts. Seas around 3.5m. Headed home at 12.15 as conditions deteriorated.

Highlights - North Royal Albatrosses, 2 imm Grey-headed Albatrosses, 2-3 Blue Petrels, 3 Grey Petrels, c20 White-headed Petrels, 1 Providence Petrel. 22 species seen at sea.

Northern Royal Albatross 1 juv
Shy Albatross c80
Black-browed Albatross c5
Campbell Albatross c5
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross 2-3 all inshore on the way out
Southern Buller's Albatross c6
Grey-headed Albatross 2 imm both 3 year
Sooty Albatross 1
Northern Giant Petrel 3-4
Cape Petrel (2) 5 all australe
Great-winged Petrel c50+
White-headed Petrel c20
Grey-faced Petrel c5
Providence Petrel 1
Grey Petrel 3
Blue Petrel 2-3
Fairy Prion 3
Grey-backed Storm-Petrel 3
Common Diving Petrel c5
Australian Gannets 3
Crested Tern 1
Silver Gull 1

Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic - 11 August 2019

Left Pirates Bay at 7.15am and headed east-north-east to 260ths and idled / drifted around. Winds SSE tending SE 15kts increasing at times to 25-30kts. Seas to 3.5m
Headed home at 1.15pm.

Highlights – Manx Shearwater! Southern and North Royal Albatrosses, 3 Grey-headed Albatrosses (Ad, sub-Ad and 1st Cy) c15-20 Blue Petrels, 1 Grey Petrel, c15 White-headed Petrels, 1 Providence Petrel, Broad-billed (2-3), Slender-billed (2) and Antarctic Prions. 29 species seen at sea.

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
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross 1
Southern Buller's Albatross c10
Grey-headed Albatross 3 (ad, sub-ad and imm)
Sooty Albatross 1
Northern Giant Petrel 3
Cape Petrel (3) 5 all australe
Great-winged Petrel c10+
White-headed Petrel c10-12
Grey-faced Petrel c40-50
Providence Petrel 1
Grey Petrel 1
Blue Petrel 15-20
Manx Shearwater 1 !
Fairy Prion 3
Broad-billed Prion 2
Slender-billed Prion 2
Antarctic Prion 2-3
Grey-backed Storm-Petrel c.10
Common Diving Petrel c3
Australian Gannets 4
Crested Tern 6
Kelp Gulls 6
Pacific Gull imm
Silver Gull 1