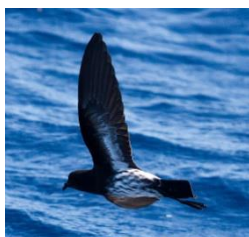


BRISBANE SEABIRD STUDY GROUP

Rare Seabird Forms



(Completed forms to be passed on to BQRAC or BARC, where appropriate).

Name: R. Morris

Address:

Ph: (H) (W)

E-mail:

Vessel: 46 ft Badenach monohull MV Grinner II

Crew: Craig Newton (skipper)

No. of observers present: 6

Contact(s): (full name). **Contact details: (include address, phone no(s). E-mail, etc.).**

1). Paul Walbridge Paul.walbridge@health.qld.gov.au

2). Glen Pacey glenpacey@bigpond.com

3). Stuart Pickering Stu_pickering@hotmail.com

4). Heyn de Kock heyndekock@gmail.com

5). Rich Everett Turaco365@gmail.com

Date of sighting: 31/10/2020.

Time & duration of sighting: 1642 hrs for approximately two minutes.

Species name:

Common:
Collared Petrel

Scientific:
Pterodroma brevipes ;magnificens'

No. of birds observed: 1

Location: Queensland Seamount, 27 43.84S/155 12.60E.

Be precise & include GPS readings when possible.

Habitat (indicate in appropriate box).

Bay/Inlet	Headland	River Mouth	Ocean Beach	Shelf Waters	Slope Waters	Open Ocean	Other
						X	

Optical and/or other aids used: Various Swarovski / Leica optics plus Sony, Canon & Nikon photographic gear.

Prior experience with this species: R. Morris and P. Walbridge on previous trips to these seamounts.

Confidence in sighting? (e.g. 90%, 100% etc.): 100%

Received:

BQRAC Case No:

BARC Case No:

Recommendation:

(Office Use Only).

FORM B

Weather Conditions: (including wind speed & direction).

The low centered over the NSW/QLD border had moved south into NSW with winds from the north 20-25 knots. Some high cloud cover but generally fine weather, with good visibility. Late in the day, storms heading from land out to sea began to catch up as we headed south. Maximum air temperature 24° C, barometer 1014 hPa.

Sea Conditions: (including water temp. °C, when possible).

Seas to 1.8 metres on just over 1 metre swell for most of the day. Sea surface temps. 23.7° C early on in the morning while still heading NE toward the Queensland Seamount, rising to 25.9° C at the first drift over the seamount in 224 fathoms of water. Stayed at 25.9° C for the rest of the day while drifting and cruising around in the shallower water until heading south into deeper water and temp. dropping to 25.2° C.

General Observations: (include behaviour of bird(s), view, distance etc).

The bird was first pick up by Rob Morris with his binoculars, at the back of the vessel, where all the observers were present and quickly called by him to sub-specific level. The bird approached the boat low down and was quickly on the starboard side of the boat banking in a high arc. The light was starting to fade, not helped by an approaching storm, creating an air of excitement as various species such as Black-bellied Storm-Petrel and Tahiti Petrel were pouring into the slick ahead of the front. As usual with the species, it didn't approach particularly close or for any length of time, approaching to within 40 metres with elevation from 10 metres down to about 2 metres above sea level and was present for probably two minutes maximum. Thankfully a number of observers managed adequate photographs.

Description of Bird(s): (be as detailed as possible).

The bird was seen quite well more or less immediately and was clearly a small Pterodroma petrel in the 'cookilaria' group; this was based on its small size, slender structure and jizz (flight style). The bird stood out as very dark on the upper-wing and when it banked, during its initial approach, so the underparts were visible it was clearly a very dark Collared Petrel P.b. *magnificens* – this identification was based on:

1. Very dark grey underparts including its undertail, apart from its white chin/throat which stood out very distinctly;
2. Its dark blackish cap running horizontally through the eye;
3. Extensive, prominent black carpal bars on the underwing from the leading edge of the wing, through the carpal area across to the auxiliaries, with small areas of white showing on the inner forewing and between the carpal bar and the secondaries.
4. Its upperparts were dark brownish-grey with an indistinct but noticeable darker 'M' mark across the wings.
5. The bird showed a slightly lighter grey tail with darker tip.
6. The bird showed a longish tapered tail with the central tail feathers protruding noticeably.

The bird spent a lot of time flying erratically, quite low to the water, however on a number of occasions it veered into steep banks and arced high in front of us (up to c. 8-10m) showing itself much more clearly.

See Photos 1-9 showing the upper and underwing of the bird.

How was it distinguished from other similar species?:

Experience of seeing Collared Petrels (both *magnificens* and *brevipes*) on Southport trips to the seamounts makes them relatively easy to pick up quickly. Some brief thoughts on similar

- All other cookilarias including those that are likely to occur or could possibly occur (Gould's, Black-winged, Stejneger's, Cook's and Pycroft's) can all be eliminated on the coloration of the underparts. Gould's Petrel is the most similar of the cookilarias but this differs in having white (not dark grey) underparts, and in its hooded appearance (face pattern) and structure (shorter tailed appearance).
- Two other petrels which do show darker underparts – Mottled Petrel and intermediate/dark Soft-plumaged Petrels can also be eliminated:

- Intermediate/dark Soft-plumaged Petrels; differ in larger size, shape (shorter squarer tail), underwing-pattern (they do not have a black carpal bar), their face pattern (less distinct and contrasting). (See Photo 10)
- Mottled Petrel is a much larger bird, with a stronger flight. The dark belly is not as extensive and the underwing is much whiter contrasting with its black carpal bar. The face pattern is also very different. (See Photos 11-12)

Other Comments:

Since 2014 there have been, counting this bird, three sightings on the Queensland Seamount and three on the Britannia Seamount. Five of these birds have been of the *Pterodroma brevipes 'magnificens'* taxon and one of the nominate *Pterodroma b. brevipes*, that bird occurring this year on a July seamount trip and yet to be submitted. The species has now occurred on four separate excursions to the Queensland and Britannia Seamounts over the months of March, April, July and October. This would suggest some degree of regularity and with more months to be covered with ongoing planned trips to the Tasmantid Seamounts time will tell if this is the case. Both taxon occur and breed in various regions in the Vanuatu archipelago and it is entirely possible that the Northern Tasmantid Seamounts in the southern Coral Sea ranging from just NE of Fraser Island down to east of Coffs Harbour is an important foraging area for one or both sub-species.

Bibliography:

Seabirds an identification guide (1985) Peter Harrison

Photographic Handbook of the Seabirds of the World (1997) by Jim Enticott and David Tipling

A new taxon of Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* from the Banks Islands, Vanuatu
by Vincent Bretagnolle & Hadoram Shirihai

Oceanic Birds of the World: A Photo Guide (2019) Steve N. G. Howell and Kirk Zufelt

Form C



Photo 1. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020 Rob Morris



Photo 2. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020 Rob Morris



Photo 3. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes 'magnificens'* Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020 Rob Morris



Photo 4. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes 'magnificens'* Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020 Rob Morris



Photo 5. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020. Heyn de Kock.



Photo 6. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/20. Heyn de Kock.



Photo 7. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020. Heyn de Kock.



Photo 8. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020. Heyn de Kock.



Photo 9. Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes* '*magnificens*' Queensland Seamount, 31/10/2020. P. Walbridge.

Comparison species



Photo 10. Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* Perth Pelagic August 2010 Rob Morris



Photo 11-12. Mottled Petrels *Pterodroma inexpectata* Snares Islands (November 2013) Rob Morris

