



BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee

Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission to document a major rare bird in Australia. Its use is NOT mandatory. Please attach and/or include all relevant information including any digital images. Please Email the completed form/submission to the BARC Chair, Tony Palliser tonyp@bigpond.net.au

BARC considers submissions that include a minimum of the submitter's name(s), the bird species claimed and the location and date(s) of the record. However, more information and evidence will usually be required for BARC to accept a record. So, please submit as much detailed information about the bird as possible.

If you choose not to use this form please make sure all relevant information requested in this form is included in your submission. However, it is our preference that you fully complete sections "A" and "B", or follow their headings, so that BARC has some continuity between all submissions.

Section A: Submitter details	
Your name(s) Joint submissions are fine	Peter Kyne
Your email, phone or address	

Section B: Record details	
Common and scientific names Include subspecies if relevant	Grey Phalarope/Red Phalarope <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>
Site location (with GPS if possible)	Leanyer Sewage Ponds, Darwin, Northern Territory (NT) 12.3623°S, 130.9092°E (central point of ponds)
Date(s) and time(s) of record (First and last date of occurrence if known)	First located: Mick Jerram and Gus Daly on 21/01/2014 (https://ebird.org/checklist/S16455887) Last sighting: Adrian Boyle on 31/03/2014 (https://ebird.org/checklist/S44177954) My sightings: a) 21/01/2014: https://ebird.org/checklist/S99643532 b) 22/01/2014: https://ebird.org/checklist/S99651007 c) 05/02/2014: https://ebird.org/checklist/S48235248 d) 08/02/2014: https://ebird.org/checklist/S48238762
How many individuals were there?	One (1)
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	Variable due to access to site. On 21/01/2014 and 22/01/2014 the site could be accessed by vehicle and the bird could be viewed at estimated distances of 20–40 m. From 23/01/2014, the site was closed and the bird had to be viewed from outside the perimeter fence and viewing distances could be as far as an estimated 200–300 m (distances estimated with Google Earth Ruler).
Habitat description	Artificial sewage treatment ponds
Sighting conditions (e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)	No recollection of exact conditions on the days that I observed the bird, but January-March is within the Top End's wet season, categorised by high rainfall, extensive storm activity, and hot and humid conditions. From the photographs taken on 21/01/2014 and 22/01/2014, the lighting and visibility suggest ideal viewing conditions.

How confident are you in the identification (as a %) and why?	100%. The bird was photographed well on the first day (21/01/2014) by Micha Jackson and the diagnostic pale base to the bill was clearly visible ruling out Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes. The bird was seen by many local and interstate observers and all agreed on the identification.
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	The bird was found by Mick Jerram and Gus Daly on 21/01/2014 and they made the initial identification. I observed the bird on the same day and agreed on the identification (and subsequently observed it on other days). The bird was seen by many local and interstate observers and all agreed on the identification. See eBird for a list of observers (by viewing the 'large map' at https://ebird.org/species/redpha1/AU-NT and selecting the 'Leanyer Ponds' hotspot; several records have been carried across from Birdline but note that some observers do not use eBird so this list is therefore incomplete).
What experience have you had with this species?	No previous or subsequent experience as this is the only Grey Phalarope that I have observed. I have observed Red-necked Phalarope on 11 occasions in Australia, Canada, the USA, and the UAE, and Wilson's Phalarope on 5 occasions in Canada and the USA and am therefore familiar with the other phalarope species.
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	No. This represents the first record for the Northern Territory.
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	The bird was posted on Birdline and the NT Bird Yahoo email group. The bird was entered on multiple checklists in eBird (https://ebird.org/species/redpha1/AU-NT)
Do you permit BARC to display your images etc. electronically (credited with your name)	Yes, Figure 1 (photos from 21/01/2014) are credited to Micha Jackson. Figure 2 (photos from 22/01/2014) are credited to Peter Kyne.

You may choose to delete or ignore this page, but please include as much of the requested information in your submission as possible, especially Sections C and E.

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.

Figures 1 and 2 at the end of this document provide photos of the bird taken on 21/01/2014 by Micha Jackson and 22/01/2014 by Peter Kyne, respectively.

A distant photograph taken on 31/03/2014 by Adrian Boyle is included in the following eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S44177954>

Section D: Description of the bird(s)

Please provide a description of the bird(s) including all identification features recorded. Provide all possible details that might corroborate the identification.

Plumage	Plumage appeared to match post-juvenile moult indicating an immature non-breeding plumage. Underparts white; grey scapulars and mantle; dark wing coverts and tertials; dark rear cap; thick dark 'phalarope' mark with some black in front of eye; prominent white wingbar in flight; dark central rump with white sides to rump.
Bare parts	Bill black except for diagnostic trace of yellow at base; eyes black.
Moult details	Bird had retained dark wing coverts and tertials matching post-juvenile moult. Feathers were very storm damaged.
Structure and 'jizz'	A 'bulky' phalarope.

Calls	Silent.
Behaviours	Seen floating on water, flying, feeding along pond bund walls, feeding on overflows between ponds and roosting on gravel bunds.
Age, sex and/or taxonomy	Suspected immature based on retained dark wing coverts and tertials.

Section E: Confusion species

Please indicate other species that the bird(s) might be confused with and how they can be eliminated

The genus *Phalaropus* comprises three species: Grey/Red Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope, and Wilson's Phalarope. Red-necked Phalarope is a regular migrant in small numbers to Australia while both Grey and Wilson's Phalaropes are vagrants. These species are separable by plumage, structure and colour of the bill, and size.

Red-necked Phalarope: this represents the most likely confusion species in immature and non-breeding plumage. Red-necked Phalarope is smaller with a longer, finer bill that lacks the yellow base evident in the Leanyer bird.

Red-necked Phalaropes were present at the site from 05/02/2014 to 31/03/2014. Initially 7 were located, increasing to 8 and then to 11 (and possibly to 16). This allowed some comparison between Red-necked and Grey Phalaropes.

Further details can be seen at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S48235248>; <https://ebird.org/checklist/S48238762>; <https://ebird.org/checklist/S44177954>

Wilson's Phalarope: has a long thin needle-like bill, a white rump, lacks a wingbar, and lacks a thick dark 'phalarope' mark in immature and non-breeding plumages (rather it has a thinner grey line through eye).

The Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*) could possibly be confused with phalaropes in non-breeding plumage given the elegant structure and grey plumage of the species, but this species is longer-legged, has a longer needle-like bill, has a white 'wedge' up its back, lacks a wingbar, and only has a small area of grey behind the eyes (some potential for confusion with Wilson's Phalarope, but not Grey Phalarope).

Other shorebird species are easily separable from phalaropes and are not treated here.

Section F: References and aids

Did you use books, journal articles or on-line sites or pages to help you prepare this submission? Which ones?

This submission was prepared nearly 8 years after the sighting of the bird given that the finders had not submitted a BARC submission. The submission was largely based on photographs taken at the time, along with notes in NT Birds Yahoo Group emails, eBird checklists (see: <https://ebird.org/species/redpha1/AU-NT>), and from memory.

The following references were consulted in the preparation of this submission:

Dunn, J.L., Alderfer, J. (2017). *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Seventh Edition. National Geographic, Washington, D.C.

Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P., Franklin, K. (2017). *The Australian Bird Guide*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

O'Brien, M., Crossley, R., Karlson, K. (2006). *The Shorebird Guide*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission?

The bird was found and initially identified by Mick Jerram and Gus Daly. I thank them for getting the word out quickly allowing others to visit the site and see the bird. I thank Rohan Clarke for additional discussions on the identification when he came to Darwin to see the bird. The bird was viewed by a large number of local and interstate birders and many contributed to discussions at that time. I particularly thank Micha Jackson for providing photographs used in this submission.

Figure 1. Photos of 2014 Leanyer Sewage Ponds Grey Phalarope taken on 21/01/2014 by Micha Jackson.







Figure 2. Photos of 2014 Leanyer Sewage Ponds Grey Phalarope taken on 22/01/2014 by Peter Kyne.



