

THE PETREL

2012



**Annual Report for Southport
The Brisbane Seabird Study Group
SOSSA, Northern Sector**

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**Cover Photo: - Tahiti Petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata*) – Paul Walbridge.
This page: - 37 ft Steber monohull M.V. Grinner.**

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Foreword

Pelagic trips were first conducted in the region in the late 1970s, mainly out of Brisbane. Initial trips were conducted by a number of people, notably Tony Palliser, David Stewart, Tom Tarrant and Chris Corben etc. circa 1990, Chris Corben handed the reins over to me and I continue to run these trips to this day, albeit on a more organized and regular basis. From before 1990 until April 1995 the trips were run out of Manly Boat Harbour in Brisbane using the wooden hulled Murphy Star. This meant a long trip, usually under cover of darkness across Moreton Bay before we got out into open ocean. Also, the trips were at best sporadic and four trips a year would be a good year.

Early in 1995, the late Tony Ashby (a founding member of SOSSA) not long from Sydney and newly arrived on the Gold Coast negotiated with Sea World to trial their Research & Rescue Vessel. The trial was successful and from April 1995 until late 2000 we enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Sea World and trips became as a rule, monthly when weather permitted. The trips were now operating out of Southport and via the Southport Seaway we were entering open ocean almost immediately! This partnership ended towards the end of 2000 and I took a year off running pelagics.

Early in January 2002, Steve McCourt, who had worked with us when he was a Sea World employee, contacted me. He'd recently acquired a boat and was keen to start trialling it as an ongoing concern as a pelagic trip and fishing charter. We trialled the vessel which was fast but ran with a pair of large outboard motors and when the number crunching was complete the eventual pricing for that time proved to be too high. I might mention here that we had been rather spoilt by Sea World with charter costs, as the trips were subsidised somewhat, therefore the price now being asked was too big a jump.

Whilst working with Sea World, on the odd occasion when the vessel was unavailable we would use one of the local 'Wahoo Charters' vessels based at Mariner's Cove. I approached the owner of this fleet of four charter boats and negotiated a deal which enabled us to use one of the vessels, once a month at a reasonable cost per head. With four boats ranging from 42 feet to 65 feet there was always a vessel available. Due to circumstances however, by 2006 the operation was becoming less viable and we needed to find yet another operator & vessel.

It must be said here, that finding an operator and vessel prepared to take a bunch of birders out to sea further than they would normally go and for considerably less money than their usual commercial rates, is extremely difficult. Even in a highly competitive arena like the Gold Coast. There was however, yet another option open to us. During our tenure with both Sea World and Wahoo we had been supplied (with written permission from DPI) with free shark liver for berley, by the local beach protection contractor for the Gold Coast beaches, Craig Newton. Craig was keen to start something different and he and various crew over time have become enthusiastic supporters of what we do. Last year he secured a further 10 year beach protection contract with the authorities which ensures pelagic operation out of Southport is a going concern for a while yet.

Further offshore, there are a series of Sea Mounts from adjacent to Fraser Island down to past the Qld/NSW border and in 2012 I finally managed, with the aid of our skipper, to organise an expedition to the Queensland and Britannia Sea Mounts, on the 84 ft ocean going cruiser 'Texas Tea'. The 3 day trip was a resounding success and if the owner of the vessel is happy for us to use it again, when the vessel is free to use, I'm already planning for April 2014. The 22" retractable TV monitor was finally fitted and in operation for the December 15th pelagic and holds much promise for future use and will become a very handy tool. Also, with a couple more species having been added in 2012 and early 2013 an updated Southport checklist appears towards the end of the publication.

Paul Walbridge, Editor.

Introduction

2012 was a record year for Southport, with a total of 51 species of seabirds recorded outside the Seaway. A total of 14 trips were conducted, 13 normal day excursions totalling just over 118 hours and a 3day trip out to the Queensland and Britannia Sea Mounts. The January 28th trip was postponed due to inclement weather and was conducted on February 4th, which produced good numbers of Tahiti Petrels and the first Buller's Shearwater for some time but all too brief views. Better views were had of a lone Streaked Shearwater out wide although it had to be 'chased' somewhat, down the slick to get better views for some on board. The regular February trip was conducted on the 18th and was a fairly quiet affair, although a few Great-winged (Grey-faced) Petrels did come in to the vessel wide out and the highlight of the day being back near the Seaway where we encountered at least 6 Streaked Shearwaters in among the large rafts of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters.

The March 17th trip was highlighted by two Red-footed Boobies, Grey-faced Petrel for the second month in a row and all 3 species of Jaeger, particularly 2 very accommodating Long-tailed Jaegers out wide. Also, 2 Providence Petrels put in an appearance, the first March record for this venue, although this shouldn't be too surprising as they would already be arriving at their breeding grounds at Lord Howe Island some 600 nautical miles to the SE. There were two trips conducted in April, the first being the extraordinary Sea Mounts trip from 13-16th April. There is a full trip report further into the Report but standouts for the trip were five species of Storm-Petrel including unprecedented numbers of up to 10 New Zealand Storm-Petrels. Five species of Pterodroma were recorded in good numbers, a total of five Gibson's Albatrosses also put in an appearance, very early for the region, also both local species of Tropicbird were sighted. The regular April pelagic on the 21st was most significant in the sudden surge of Tahiti Petrel numbers compared to just a few days earlier, with 55 recorded and a rise in water temperature just off the shelf being the main contributing factor. Also present were yet more White-faced Storm-Petrels, a single Black Petrel and a very accommodating Streaked Shearwater, which spent a good deal of time around the vessel, much to the delight of the photographers on board.

As often happens May was a bit quiet and with the very still conditions, the scent of the berley didn't carry far but it was a good day for storm-petrels, with fair numbers of Wilson's Storm-Petrel and a few Black-bellied Storm-Petrels. A lone, passing Sooty Shearwater was a good sighting for Southport and the first 'molly' for the winter, an Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross sitting on the water just a couple of miles offshore, when returning. The first couple of weeks of June saw strong SE winds hitting the south Queensland coastline and several reports of seabirds were coming in from land-based sea-watches, namely Pt. Lookout on North Stradbroke Island. Also, the pelagic from the Sunshine Coast produced at least one Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, so the June 16th pelagic arrived with much anticipation. Large numbers of Great-winged Petrel were present, highly unusual for winter and all of the New Zealand '*gouldi*' form, the biggest surprise though was the presence of five species of albatross, including 3 Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, a first for Southport and the 81st species for the venue. A count of 8 Cape Petrels was a high number for the region and a White-headed Petrel that hung around for at least half an hour was only the 3rd Southport record.

With the strong SE winds persisting it was decided to get a second June trip going late in the month which was actually postponed until the following day, July 1st due to extreme conditions at the bar, the scheduled July trip never eventuated, also due to inclement weather. The July trip was a bit of a letdown compared to the June trip and a lot of the birds, including many Common Noddies were more intent on heading south including a Giant Petrel, the species not being determined. However, two species of Albatross were present, Indian Yellow-nosed and Gibson's and the usual numbers of Providence Petrel but only a single Black-bellied Storm-Petrel among several Wilson's Storm-Petrels. The biggest surprise of the day was the very early return of two Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, a month earlier than normal. August 18th was characterised by the numbers of returning Wedge-tailed Shearwaters for the Summer. Small numbers of Fluttering and Hutton's Shearwater were present as were several Australasian Gannets but a lone Tahiti Petrel was a surprise given the low water temperatures and this bird quickly headed back north.

The September 15th pelagic saw the first returning Short-tailed Shearwaters (4) and still good numbers of Providence Petrel with 93 sighted. The usual influx of Wilson's Storm-Petrel didn't eventuate with only 17 sighted along with again just a solitary Black-bellied Storm-Petrel. Two Cape Petrels were a welcome addition for the day as were the first two Kermadec Petrels since the Autumn. We actually went out on a strong wind warning with the October trip which was called after the decision was made to go, so we proceeded with caution and actually made it out to slope waters. With the strong winds coming from the north, nothing much was expected and Wilson's Storm-Petrels were still just passing through in low numbers (13) however a Spring high of 6 Black-bellied Storm-Petrels were sighted but understandably Providence Petrel numbers were starting to drop and only a solitary Australasian Gannet was noted. An Arctic Jaeger was the first Jaeger of the Spring encountered and for the second month in a row 2 Kermadec Petrels put in an appearance.

With a policy now of adding extra trips when the opportunity presents itself, in this case for Spring migration it was decided to add a November trip (the 4th) particularly as October hadn't been up to expectations and it proved to be fairly fruitful. Wilson's Storm-Petrels were now starting to move through in better numbers with 48 sighted and two Black Petrels for the day being most welcome. All three species of Jaeger were noted along with a couple of late Providence Petrels and the first Brown Booby for the year, Short-tailed Shearwaters however were still passing through in very low numbers. The scheduled November trip on the 17th saw the late return of 5 Flesh-footed Shearwaters, two months later than normal and much larger numbers of migrating Short-tailed Shearwaters with 520 passing through to the south. The most notable sightings were of 72 Tahiti Petrels, with the sea-surface temps. now rising to more usual summer levels, this also saw a Red-footed Booby making an appearance. December saw Southport seeing the year out with a bang for the second year in a row, with a South Polar Skua appearing astern shortly after leaving the Seaway and all 3 Jaegers being sighted. Yet another Black Petrel was briefly sighted passing around the vessel to the south with still more Short-tailed Shearwaters doing likewise. Although in stark contrast to the preceding trip with only two Tahiti Petrels putting in an appearance, a total of four Pterodromas were sighted namely Kermadec Petrel (12), Great-winged Petrel (139), Gould's Petrel (3) and Black-winged Petrel (1).

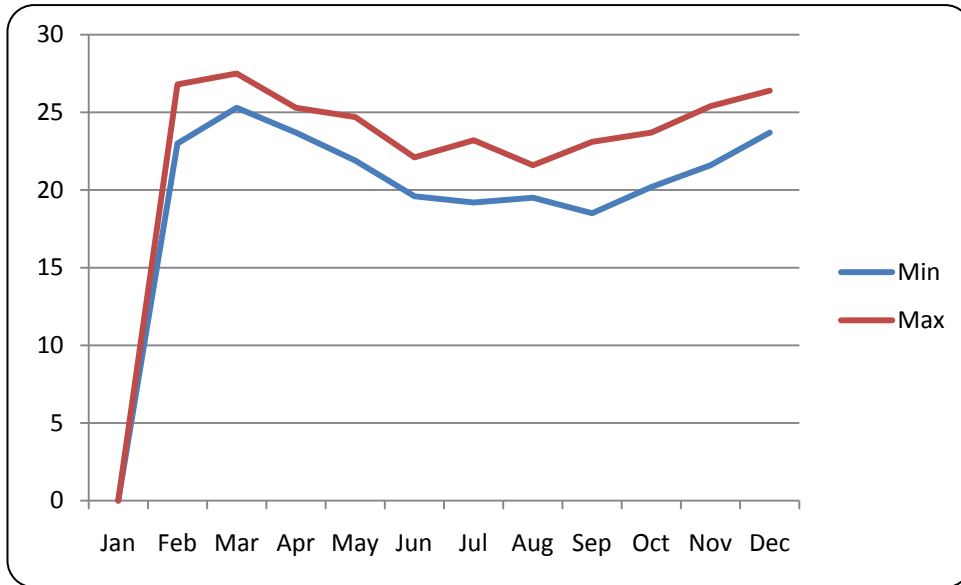
The Region

The area around Southport is situated in the south Coral Sea, with the warm, north/ south moving East Australian Current being the major influential feature. The main offshore underwater structures in this region are a series of Sea-mounts and Guyots, ranging north to south from adjacent to Fraser Island Queensland, down to Ballina, NSW. These are in order north/south, Fraser Seamount, Brisbane Guyot, Moreton Seamount, Queensland Guyot and Stradbroke Seamount, with distances from shore ranging from the widest, Fraser Seamount at 138 nautical miles to the closest the Queensland Guyot at 91.1 nautical miles. The highest of these are the Fraser Seamount, rising to within 359 metres of the sea surface and the Queensland Guyot which comes within 306 metres of the sea surface, it is these areas where upwelling is most likely to occur.

Closer to shore and in the vicinity of Southport, the main offshore structures range from Mick's Mountain, ENE of Southport, moving south through Jim's Mountain, the Riviera Grounds and the Tweed Canyon's south of the Qld/NSW border adjacent to Fingal Head or just to the south. These rises are all around roughly 30 nautical miles offshore but the Tweed Canyons are considerably closer to the coast, however all these sea floor rises lie off the Continental Shelf.

As with any part of the Australian coastline or anywhere else for that matter the Continental Shelf ends at the 100 fathom (or approx. 200 metre) mark, this is also referred to as the Shelf-break. Distance from shore varies greatly around the Australian coastline but off the Gold Coast it is roughly around 23 nm offshore at 153 51.50E ranging further out, moving further north, approaching the southern reaches of the Great Barrier Reef.

Understandably, given the region lies in the southern Coral Sea and not that far south of the world's largest collection of coral reefs, the water temperatures are warm in summer and still relatively warm in winter. During these winter months, May-August, colder water currents from the south push up, forcing the weakening warm current further out wide.



Monthly Max/Min Sea Surface Temps.

Conditions were very similar to 2011 with quite low maximum temperatures towards the end of the year despite the EAC running at 2.5 knots, although the Coral Sea in general, according to the satellite charts was much cooler than it could be, especially compared with the waters off NW Australia in the Indian Ocean. As usual the greatest variation occurred in the winter months. Note that readings were not taken for the month of January.

Participation

A total of 85 birders participated in 13 normal day trips plus an organised 3 day sea mount trip. Of these, the internationals were from Canada (2), New Zealand (2), UK (3) and interstaters from South Australia (4), New South Wales (5), Tasmania (1) and Victoria (8). The balance being from Queensland from various parts of the state but mainly from SEQ, this would appear to show a healthy nucleus of regulars. The sea mount trip carried a full complement of 10 pax. and the regular trips averaged 14 out of a possible 15 an even healthier average than last year, up by one. Over the course of the year as with last year only one person participated in every trip and that was myself the organiser and leader.

The percentages for the day trips changed again this year, with single trippers at 54 rising to 64%, just 1% up from 2011. Of the remainder, just 10 or 12% participated in more than a third of the trips, down 5 percentage points of last year, with 8 or 9% turning up for 50 % or more of the trips, not much change from 2011 in that regard. 31 passengers returned for at least another trip, at just over 36% also not much change from 2011.

Still only one interstate visitor returned for another trip this year and that was John Weigel on his 'Big Year' and this still needs to be addressed but all we can do is be consistent with our round the year coverage and continue to produce the regions iconic birds. Of all the venues around Australia Southport is probably as consistent as any, in regard to trips organised and completed.

Galerie



Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicauda* 17/3/2012. Paul Walbridge.



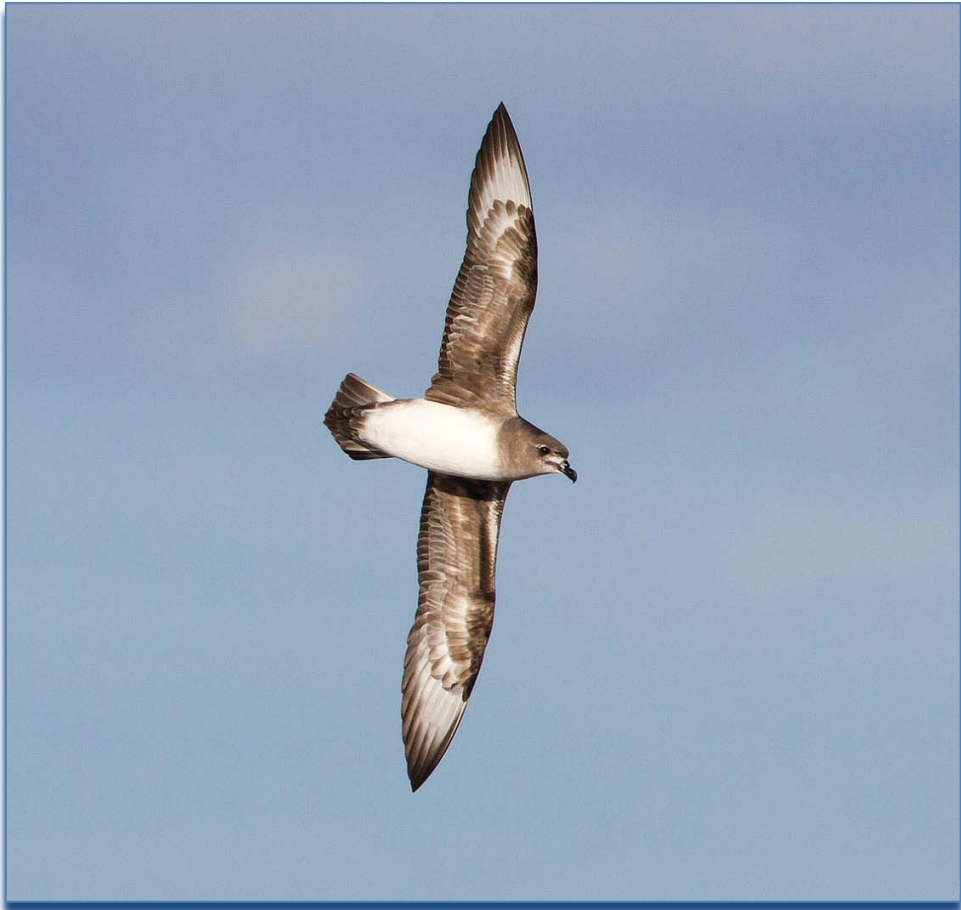
Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* 21/4/12. Paul Walbridge.



White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessonii* 16/6/2012. Paul Walbridge.



Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata* 16/6/2012. Paul Walbridge.



Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta* 15/4/2012. Paul Walbridge.



Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata* 21/4/2012. Paul Walbridge.



Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* 14/4/2012. Paul Walbridge.



Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* 17/3/2012. Rob Morris.



Black Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni* 4/11/2012. Rob Morris.



Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* 16/6/12. Rob. Morris.



Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur* 1/7/12. Rob Morris.



Black-winged Petrel *Pterodroma nigripennis* 15/12/12. Rob Morris.



Providence Petrel *Pterodroma solandri* 16/6/12. Rob Morris.



Cape Petrel *Daption capense australe* 16/6/12. Rob Morris.



Black-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregetta tropica* 19/5/2012. Brian Russell.



Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* 4/11/12. Brian Russell.



Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicauda* 15/12/12. Brian Russell.



Auckland (Gibson's) Albatross *Diomedea gibsoni* 1/7/12. Brian Russell.



Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera gouldi* 14/4/12. Brian Russell.



Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* 14/4/12. Brian Russell.

Systematic List

PHAETHONTIFORMES

Phaethontidae

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*

Breeds on Lady Elliott Island to the north and Lord Howe Island to the southeast but rarely sighted on Southport Pelagics.

A single sub-adult bird on 14th April on the Queensland Sea Mount, 27 31.32S/155 05.25E.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Uncommon visitor, often after strong SE winds, likely any time of year.

A single bird on 14th April on the Queensland Sea Mount 27 37.30S/155 09.10E.

PROCELLARIIFORMES

Oceanitidae

Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

Common Spring and Autumn passage migrant with small numbers over-wintering.

Recorded this year in every month Mar-Nov. with the first sightings on 17th Mar. with 4 birds encountered in slope waters. Peak numbers in Autumn occurred in the week of the Sea Mounts & regular pelagic trip 14-21st April, with a total count of 93 birds, ranging from 27 45.29S/153 54.19E out to 28 44.95S/155 43.64E. Probable passage occurring into May with a total of 22 on the 19th 27 47.35S/153 56.07E to 27 44.21S/154 0053E, all way off the Shelf. As usual small numbers hung around during the winter months, with a peak count of 15 on 1st Jul. from 27 50.86S/153 41.53. As per norm Spring passage commenced in Sept. with numbers rising to 17 on 15th Sept which was a low count for this month and the numbers not peaking until much later than normal on 4th Nov. with 48 counted 27 48.38S/153 50.91E out to 27 44.96S/153 56.79E. The last sighting for the year was 17th Nov. with a single bird on the Shelf, 27 53.81S/153 45.95E.

White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

Once considered rare in the region, sightings becoming increasingly regular, Autumn/Winter.

All records in Apr. with two singles on the 14th on the Queensland Sea Mount, 27 37.93S/155 04.44E & 27 37.58S/155 03.81E. On the 15th on the Britannia Sea Mount, 2 birds 28 43.32S/155 41.92E and a single at 27 43.38S/155 37.50E. On 21st Apr. singles at 27 47.52S/153 55.43E & 27 46.31S/153 54.36E and 2 at 27 45.48S/153 54.17E.

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregetta tropica*

Regular Winter visitor and Spring passage migrant.

A relatively poor year for this species although a single on 15th Apr. on the Queensland Sea Mount 28 47.33S/155 48.36E was the earliest record for SEQ waters. 4 on 19th May ranging from 27 47.04S/153 56.32E out to 27 44.21S/154 00.53E. Singles on 1st Jul. 27 47.15S/153 56.03E and 15th Sept. 27 50.24S/153 52.25E. On 20th Oct 6 sighted from 27 58.85S/153 44.13E to 27 57.70S/153 51.95E.

White-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregetta grallaria*

Although breeds Lord-Howe Island group, and winters in the Coral Sea, only rarely recorded in south east Queensland waters.

A single bird 14th Apr. on Queensland Sea Mount, 27 40.75S/155 09.83E.

New Zealand Storm-Petrel *Fregetta maoriana*

A species only recently rediscovered in New Zealand waters with the breeding grounds still unknown and with as yet just a few Australian sightings and only since 2010.

Unprecedented numbers encountered on the Queensland/Britannia Sea Mounts 14-15th Apr. At least 6 individuals on the 14th on the Queensland Sea Mount ranging from 27 34.41S/154.56.82E out to 27 41.41S/155 11.79E. On 15th Apr. on Britannia Sea Mount at least 4 birds ranging from 28 41.90S/155 33.48E to 28 40.63S/155 35.63E.

Diomedeidae

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

Rare winter visitor, not recorded annually.

A single bird around the vessel on 16th Jun. 27 48.45S/153 58.35E

Gibson's Albatross *Diomedea gibsoni*

Uncommon visitor April – October, recorded most years.

Extraordinarily early records from the April Sea Mount trip with a juvenile bird on 14th Apr. 27 39.32S/155 08.00E and on 15th Apr. on the Britannia Sea Mount 4 more birds ranging from 28 44.18S/155 39.73E out to 28 46.30S/155 46.73E. 4 again on 16th Jun. ranging from 27 45.37S/153 57.36E to 27 49.18S/153 58.40E. On 1st Jul. singles at 27 44.87S/153 57.13E & 27 45.73S/153 57.32E.

Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis*

Museum records suggests more frequent than sightings suggest and possibly overlooked in the recent past, with two positive pelagic sightings in recent years.

A single amongst the other 'great' albatrosses on 16th Jun. 27 48.25S/153 58.312E.

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*

Uncommon winter visitor, recorded most years in low numbers.

As with other albatrosses unprecedented numbers and the most numerous albatross species in 2012. On 16th Jun. 11 sighted, easily the highest ever count from Southport, ranging from 27 46.32S/153 57.52E out to 27 49.07S/153 58.36E, with a maximum of 6 around the vessel.

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche carteri*

Uncommon winter visitor, scarcer than in the past, most likely due to large scale long-line mortality.

Surprisingly low numbers considering the numbers of other albatross species present. A single bird on 19th May, 27 54.40S/153 30.37E and a single bird on 1st Jul. 27 50.86S/153 41.53E, both well on the Shelf.

Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata*

Beach-washed specimens suggest an almost annual visitor, mainly in winter and most likely to the Sea Mounts and the sightings this year off both Mooloolaba & Southport are the first pelagic trip sightings.

An adult and two immature birds on 16th Jun. 27 48.45S/153 58.35E, 27 49.18S/153 58.40E & 27 49.25S/153 58.27E.

Procellariidae

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*

Until 1996, almost unknown in this region, now considered an annual winter visitor in low numbers and mainly juvenile birds.

A single juvenile bird on 16th Jun. 27 52.35S/153 36.26E, heading south.

Cape Petrel *Daption capense australe*

A Winter/Spring visitor most years in low numbers

8 birds on 16th Jun. with a maximum of 4 at one time ranging from 27 46.11S/153 57.45E to 27 48.05S/153 58.25E. On 15th Sept. singles at 27 49.63S/153 52.56E and another on the Shelf at 27 54.11S/153 37.52E.

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur*

Erratic winter visitor June-August, some years more numerous than in others, depending on sea-surface temps.

On 16th Jun. a total of 6 sighted from 27 45.07S/153 57.29E out to 27 49.18S/153 58.40E. A single then on 1st Jul. 27 47.28S/153 49.12E.

Black Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni*

Once considered a very rare Spring/Autumn passage migrant, now appearing annually in low numbers. A record year for this species with 4 sighted, a single on 21st Apr. 27 46.16S/153 54.35E, 2 on 4th Nov. 27 44.45S/153 57.14E & 27 45.15S/153 56.68E. For the second year in a row a December record with a single on 15th Dec. 27 49.43S/153 50.62E.

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*

Annual summer visitor to SEQ waters Dec-Apr. usually in inshore waters but sometimes well offshore. A single on 4th Feb. 27 48.43S/153 56.29E and on 18th Feb. 6 birds in amongst large rafts of shearwaters 27 54.40S/153 28.52E. Another single in the Autumn on 21st Apr. 27 45.29S/153 54.05E.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacifica*

Common Summer visitor and local colony breeder August-April, with large local colonies on Mudjimba Island on the Sunshine Coast and on Cook Island off Fingal Head, Tweed Coast, NSW. Large numbers on both Feb. pelagics with 305 on the 4th out to 27 50.10S/153 58.19E & 1290 on 18th Feb. out to 27 47.54S/153 52.29E but with the largest concentration just offshore. A count of 217 on 17th Mar. ranging from just outside the Seaway to 27 53.02S/153 55.37E. Apr. went some way to show how far these birds possibly forage off shore with the 14-15th Sea Mount counts amounting to just 11 birds over the two days, 27 31.32S/155 05.22E out to 28 39.90S/155 33.63E. Conversely, just a few days later, closer inshore on the regular Apr. 21st pelagic, 49 birds sighted, from the Seaway out to 27 47.52S/153 55.43E. No sightings then until extraordinarily early returning records of two singles on 1st Jul. 27 44.69S/153 56.47E & 27 44.50S/153 57.10E, both these birds in fresh plumage, with one still showing some moult in the tail feathers. The 18th Aug. pelagic which would be the normal returning period saw 174 birds ranging from just outside the Seaway to 27 53.96S/153 58.37E. Just low counts of 15, 49 & 76 for Sept, Oct. and Nov. respectively until Dec. 15th when 264 sighted from just outside of the Seaway to 27 54.12S/153 54.16E.

Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*

Rare Spring/Autumn passage migrant and occasional summer visitor. A single bird on 4th Feb. 27 55.49S/153 27.36E.

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*

A once common & numerous summer visitor, September – April, now in much lower numbers. Just 3 birds on 4th Feb. 27 53.32S/153 36.27E out to 27 49.08S/153 56.57E and just a few more when 19 sighted on 18th Feb. 27 54.40S/153 28.52E to 27 48.12S/153 52.56E. A low count again in Mar. of 5 all out wide in Slope waters but the two days on the Sea Mounts in mid-April produced the largest counts since the mid-nineties. On the 14th Apr. on the Queensland Sea Mount, a total of 132 birds 27 30.45S/154 59.81E to 27 33.06S/155 14.36E. Similar numbers the next day on the 15th with 99 counted on the Britannia Sea Mount, 28 41.90S/155 33.48E to 28 47.33S/155 48.36E and so on the regular pelagic on the 21st slightly higher numbers with 26 counted, 27 49.07S/153 44.15E out to 27 45.29S/153 54.19E. The usual month of return is Sept. but this year not recorded until 17th Nov. when 5 singles counted, all in Slope waters out to 27 58.12S/153 57.75E. Finally, a count of 22 birds for Dec. 15th ranging from inshore, 27 55.51S/153 27.52E out to 27 52.80S/153 54.01E.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Rare Autumn/Winter visitor. A single bird on 19th May, 27 48.36S/153 53.06E, heading south.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*

A sometimes numerous Spring passage migrant, with small numbers still trickling through into summer. less so in Autumn. First sighting for the Autumn on Britannia Sea Mount on 15th Apr. with 8 birds sighted, 28 43.38S/155 37.50E to 28 44.218S/155 39.73E with just two singles sighted on the following Saturday, 21st Apr. 27 49.04S/153 51.13S & 27 47.09S/153 55.12E. None recorded then until the Spring, with 4 sighted on 15th Sept.

27 51.50S/153 51.43E to 27 49.10S/153 52.80E. Just 5 single birds counted on 20th Oct. 27 57.41S/153 33.16E to 27 57.70S/153 51.95E & just 6 sighted on 4th Nov. 27 54.27S/153 29.66E out to 27 47.66S/153 48.76E. More substantial numbers starting to pass through on 17th Nov. with 526 counted, 27 52.88S/153 48.65E out to 27 58.12S/153 57.73E & again on 15th Dec. with 67 sighted, all on the Shelf, from just outside the Seaway to 27 55.57S/153 33.01E.

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*

A common, mainly Autumn/ Winter visitor which tends to form large feeding flocks close inshore and not usually encountered in any numbers on pelagic trips.

Just 2 singles on 4th Feb. 27 55.48S/153 27.15E & 27 53.32S/153 36.27E & on 18th Feb just one sighting, 27 48.12S/153 52.56E, the only sighting outside the Shelf for the year. Again just one sighting on Apr. 21st 27 52.53S/153 38.09E and a further 2 on 19th May, not far out from the Seaway. A single bird on 18th Jun. 27 50.29S/153 42.08E and just 2 on 1st Jul. 27 54.97S/153 29.24E & 27 50.76S/153 45.35E. Aug. 18th saw a steep rise in numbers with a some birds in mixed fishing parties and several heading north, with a total of 33 sighted 27 55.86S/153 29.55E out to 27 52.65S/153 39.36E. A single on 15th Sept. just outside the Seaway was the final record for the year.

Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni*

A common visitor from New Zealand, occurring any time of the year. Sighted off the Shelf more often than the preceding species.

As with the preceding species not a particularly productive year, with the first sighting on 4th Feb. with 6, 27 55.49S/153 27.36E out to 27 48.42S/153 54.52E. 10 sighted on 18th Feb. 27 54.25S/153 28.52E to 27 47.25S/153 51.55E. 4 only on 17th Mar. all well on the Shelf, then none until 18th Aug. when highest count for the year of 11, 27 53.00S/153 37.13E out to 27 53.96S/153 58.37E. The last sighting for the year was on 15th Sept. with a single 27 49.63S/153 52.56E

Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata*

A common Summer visitor, mainly September-April but has been recorded every month of the year, numbers usually peaking around Feb/Mar. when birds are returning to breeding sites in New Caledonia. Doesn't usually tolerate water temperatures < 23° C.

A total of 38 on 4th Feb. was an average Feb. count from 27 48.13S/153 55.38E to 27 50.10S/153 58.19E but 18th Feb produced 3 birds only, just outside the shelf-break. A higher count of 12 on 17th Mar. 27 49.37S/153 55.07E to 27 54.00S/153 55.30E. On the Apr. Sea Mount trip with the sea-surface temps. at just 23-24° C not sighted until late on the 15th on the Britannia Sea Mount with just 3 between 28 43.38S/155 37.50E and 28 42.21S/155 42.55E. Just a few days later on 21st Apr. on a regular pelagic and with the surface temp. a warmer 25.3° C a total of 55 birds sighted between 27 49.07S/153 44.13E and 27 47.33S/153 55.29E. None then, until 18th Aug. with a very early returning bird, with the sea-surface at just 21.5° C. Another hiatus then until 17th Nov. with a record count for the month of 72, from 27 57.70S/153 51.16E to 27 58.12S/153 57.73E. with up to 18 birds around the vessel at one time. The final sightings for the year on 15th Dec. with singles at 27 53.08S/153 54.05S & 27 53.67S/153 54.10E.

Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*

With the species now being recorded every month of the year and a pattern of occurrence forming, the status has been raised to common for SEQ waters. See notes later in the report.

A record year for this species; 14th Apr. on the Queensland Sea Mount, 14 ranging from 27 30.03S/155 04.92E out to 27 41.41S/155 11.79E. On 15th Apr. on the Britannia Sea Mount, 15 sighted, 28 40.62S/155 29.96E out to 28 47.75S/155 48.49E. On 21st Apr. a single at 27 45.29S/153 54.19E, 2 birds on 15th Sept. 27 51.28S/153 46.60E & again on 20th Oct. with 2 birds together at 27 57.05S/153 51.82E. A record count for a regular day trip on 15th Dec, with 12 sighted 27 48.67S/153 53.28E to 27 54.12S/153 54.16E.

White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessonii*

Rare Spring/Winter/Autumn visitor.

On 16th Jun. a bird around the vessel for at least half an hour, 27 48.45S/153 58.35E.

Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*

An uncommon, mainly summer visitor but also Autumn/Winter. Another species whose status is under review. Recorded in an incredible six months of the year, with some huge numbers for the region, a year in which a review might be in order for a change of status for this species in the southern Coral Sea. All sightings for the

year were of the NZ *P.m.gouldi*. First sightings for the year were on 18th Feb. with 5 sighted, 27 47.16S/153 51.49E to 27 47.54S/153 52.29E, then a single bird on 17th Mar. 27 48.30S/153 55.08E. Then the big influx on 14th Apr with 113 on the Queensland Sea Mount, 27 30.45S/154 59.81E to 27 43.06S/155 14.36E & the next day on the 15th when 134 recorded between 28 39.76S/155 33.30E and 28 47.33S/155 48.36E on the Britannia Sea Mount. None sighted then until 16th June with an unprecedented winter count of 112, 27 45.05S/153 56.46E out to 27 49.07S/153 58.36E with a max. count of 30. This was followed by just a single on 15th Sept at 27 48.16S/153 53.11E. No further sightings until 15th Dec. when again record numbers of 139, 27 49.32S/153 51.06E out to 27 54.12S/153 54.16E.

Providence Petrel *Pterodroma solandri*

A common Winter visitor, occurring March- November, breeding on Lord Howe Island some 600 kilometres to the southeast.

An early start this year with 2 sighted on 17th Mar. 27 52.04S/153 55.04E & 27 53.02S/153 55.37E. The next sightings were on the Sea Mounts with 20 on 14th Apr. on the Queensland Sea Mount, 27 30.45S/154 59.81E out to 27 37.93S/155 13.59E & 46 the next day on the 15th on the Britannia Sea Mount, 28 40.62S/155 29.96E to 28 47.33S/155 48.36E. The following weekend on the 21st Apr. 24 sighted, 27 45.29S/153 54.05E out to 27 47.52S/153 55.43E. As usual a bit quieter in May with only 4 sighted on the 19th out to 27 44.21S/154 00.53E. June 16th saw a return in numbers, with 68 recorded between 27 51.53S/153 38.22E, still well on the Shelf, out to 27 49.07S/153 58.36E. Good numbers again on 1st Jul. with 57 counted, 27 46.87S/153 51.29E out to 27 45.73S/153 57.32E but smaller numbers on 18th Aug. with just 10 sighted, 27 48.15S/153 52.75E to 27 52.65S/153 57.78E. Back to good numbers on 15th Sept. with 93 recorded, from 27 53.27S/153 41.75E to 27 48.16S/153 53.11E. Numbers back down to just 12 by Oct. 20th, 27 58.52S/153 48.78E out to 27 57.05S/153 51.82E and last record on 4th Nov. 2 singles out wide well off the Shelf.

Gould's Petrel *Pterodroma leucoptera*

An uncommon Spring/Autumn passage bird and Summer visitor.

Good numbers on the Apr. Sea Mounts trip, on the 14th a total of 32, from 27 34.41S/154 56.82E to 27 43.06S/155 14.36E. On the 15th on the Britannia Sea Mount, a day count of 22 ranging from 28 34.10S/155 11.97E out to 28 47.75S/155 48.49E. None then until 15th Dec. with 3 birds, 27 51.28S/153 53.93E, 27 52.80S/153 54.01E & 27 54.49S/153 52.95E.

White-necked Petrel *Pterodroma cervicalis*

An uncommon, mainly Summer/Autumn visitor.

Sightings confined to the April Sea Mounts trip; on the 14th on the Queensland Sea Mount singles at 27 31.06S/155 05.39E and 27 34.41S/154 56.82E. On the 15th a total of 9 sighted between 28 40.62S/155 29.96E and 28 46.30S/155 46.73E.

Black-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma nigripennis*)

Uncommon Spring/Autumn passage bird and Summer visitor.

A single bird on 15th Dec. 27 50.52S/153 53.92E was the sole record for the year.

PHALACROCORACIFORMES

Sulidae

Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*

Common winter visitor from New Zealand late April-Oct.

First sighting an early one with 3 birds just outside the Seaway on 21st Apr. 27 56.04S/153 26.48E. Recorded each month during the winter, with peak numbers on 16th Jun. when 35 sighted out to as far as 27 46.30S/153 52.56E approx. 24 nautical miles offshore, 58 on 1st Jul. from the seaway out to 27 45.18S/153 57.18E, 28 nautical miles offshore and 47 on 18th Aug. out to 27 52.36S/153 40.68E. Numbers gradually diminishing then until last recorded on 20th Oct. with a single bird 27 53.43S/153 31.15E.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

A rare visitor to SEQ waters most likely from the Coral Sea Territory and sightings on the increase in recent years.

Sighted on two occasions this year with 2 birds on 17th March, 27 55.55S/153 55.19E and a single on 17th Nov. 27 50.00S/153 56.63E.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Uncommon, with sightings most years.

A single on 4th Nov. 27 46.59S/153 56.22E.

Phalacrocoracidae

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

In most years the least frequently seen of the Cormorants outside the Seaway.

A single bird around a returning trawler just outside of the Seaway on 17th Nov.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Regularly sighted, usually on or behind returning trawlers.

Counts of 3 on 4th Feb. singles on 17th Mar, 21st Apr. & 15th Sept. a high count of 6 on 17th Nov. all around or on trawlers up to two miles off the Seaway.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

As with above but usually in smaller numbers.

The most encountered cormorant this year, starting with singles on 18th Feb. 17th Mar. & 16th Jun. respectively, followed by 3 on 1st Jul. 2 then on 20th Oct. followed by a single on 4th Nov. no less than 13 on 17th Nov. and finally a count of 4 on 15th Dec. Most of these birds associated with trawler activity but sometimes individual birds fishing alone outside the Seaway.

CHARADRIIFORMES

Stercorariidae

South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*)

Rare Spring/Autumn passage bird.

A single dark bird, close inshore on 15th Dec. heading south, 27 55.39S/153 29.15E.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

The most often encountered of the group in the region, Spring to Autumn.

3 singles on 4th Feb. from 27 55.08S/153 29.41E out to 27 48.38S/153 56.21E & 3 again on 18th Feb. 27 55.56S/153 27.83E out to 27 48.25S/153 49.07E. Numbers increasing then with 17 on 17th Mar. mostly inshore ranging from just outside the Seaway to 27 53.19S/153 30.13E and associating with several trawlers. 3 encountered on the Britannia Seamount on 15th Apr. 28 34.10S/155 11.97E out to 28 47.23S/155 48.80E. Surprisingly just 2 birds on 21st April, 27 55.32S/153 28.49E & 27 46.01S/153 54.25E. No sightings then until the late date of 4th Nov. when 7 birds sighted, 27 54.27S/153 29.66E to 27 45.78S/153 56.62E and the last birds of the year with 6 on 15th Dec. ranging from 27 55.51S/153 27.52E out to 27 48.70S/153 53.92E.

Arctic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Most often occurs in inshore waters in SEQ and not recorded on trips as often as the above species.

A single bird on 18th Feb. 27 54.40S/153 28.52E and 4 on 17th Mar. again close inshore ranging from 27 55.40S/153 27.13E out to 27 55.01S/153 28.46E. A really wide record for this species on 15th Apr. on the Britannia Sea Mount, 28 34.10S/155 11.97E and obviously a bird on passage. None then until 20th Oct. with a single 27 56.25S/153 27.07E, 2 single birds on 4th Nov. 27 54.66S/153 28.36E & 27 54.27S/153 29.66E. Finally, a single on 15th Dec. 27 54.49S/153 52.95E.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Rare Spring/Autumn passage migrant.

A better than average year of a species that is being increasingly sighted in the region. Two birds together on the water on 17th Mar, 27 56.09S/153 55.16E, one on 21st Apr. 27 51.42S/153 37.26E a single again on 4th Nov. 27 45.66S/153 56.68 & 2 birds on 15 Dec. 27 50.52S/153 53.92E & 27 52.13S/153 53.97E.

Laridae

Common Noddy *Anous stolidus*

Frequent visitor, which can occur any time of year.

The first sightings were on the 14th Apr. on the Queensland Sea Mount with 2 birds, 27 36.17S/155 01.11E & on the 15th Apr. on the Britannia Sea Mount with a single bird at 28 34.10S/155 11.97E. On 21st Apr. a single at 27 46.01S/153 54.25E & on 16th Jun. 3 birds 27 45.52S/153 57.40E to 27 46.45S/153 57.57E. On 1st Jul. a pronounced southerly movement after a strong SE blow and possibly involving Lord Howe Island birds, with a count of 31 birds, 27 47.10S/153 50.68E out to 27 45.18S/153 57.17E.

White Tern (*Gygis alba*)

Uncommon visitor to SEQ waters Jan-Apr.

4 birds on 15th Apr. on the Britannia Sea Mount, 28 41.05S/155 35.59E out to 28 46.30S/155 46.73E.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscata*)

Far more commonly encountered than Bridled Tern, occurring throughout the year but mostly Summer months. Sparse records this year with the first sighting on the Queensland Sea Mount on 14th Apr. with 3, 27 34.41S/154 56.82E. Then none until November with 2 singles 4th Nov. 27 52.18S/153 36.37E & 27 45.35S/153 56.53E, and 2 on 17th Nov. 27 54.36S/153 57.15E. A few more present on 15th Dec. with 16 sighted, 27 54.25S/153 51.54E to 27 54.12S/153 54.16E.

Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*)

Small numbers breeding locally on the larger sand islands but most birds summer visitors from northern Asia. Surprisingly low numbers recorded outside the Seaway with just single birds on 19th May, 27 54.40S/153 30.37E & on 17th Nov. 27 56.05S/153 26.00E.

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Common in SEQ but only rarely sighted outside the Seaway.

Single birds associated with returning trawlers on 16th Jun. and 1st Jul. both just outside the Seaway.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Summer visitor, with small numbers, probably immature birds, overwintering.

On 17th Mar. small foraging groups totalling 22, just outside the Seaway & on 21st Apr. a single bird just outside the Seaway and a feeding party of 30 later in the day at 27 54.37S/153 29.53E. None sighted then until 20th Oct. with a party of 6 foraging a mile or so off the Seaway & 2 likewise on 4th Nov. Finally on 17th Nov. foraging parties of 30 in early morning just outside the Seaway and of 12 again just outside the Seaway, on returning in the afternoon.

Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*)

Common, breeds locally on Cook Island off Fingal Head, NSW.

Biggest counts were in the early part of the year starting on 4th Feb. with a count of 411 ranging from the Seaway out to 27 49.30S/153 57.31E, with the largest concentration of 300 around a trawler. Smaller numbers on 18th Feb. with 107 counted, from the Seaway out to 27 47.38S/153 52.08E but rising again on 17th Mar. with a year high count of 522 from the Seaway out to 27 53.02S/153 55.37E, with the two largest concentrations of 200 & 150 around trawlers. Just low counts Apr. through to Jun. and involving birds entirely on the Shelf but Jul. 1st saw a slight rise in numbers to 64 ranging out to 27 45.09S/153 57.16E. Aug. 18th produced just 6 birds out to 27 53.96S/153 58.37E with Sept. 15th seeing 28 birds out to 27 48.78S/153 52.93E & 20th Oct. producing 126 birds out to 27 55.07S/153 51.40E. Just 5 counted on 4th Nov. but a higher count of 78 on 17th Nov. all close in around trawlers and the same again on 15th Dec. with just 35 sighted, around trawlers close to and just offshore.

Silver Gull (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*)

Common locally, breeds. Mainly associated with trawler activity.

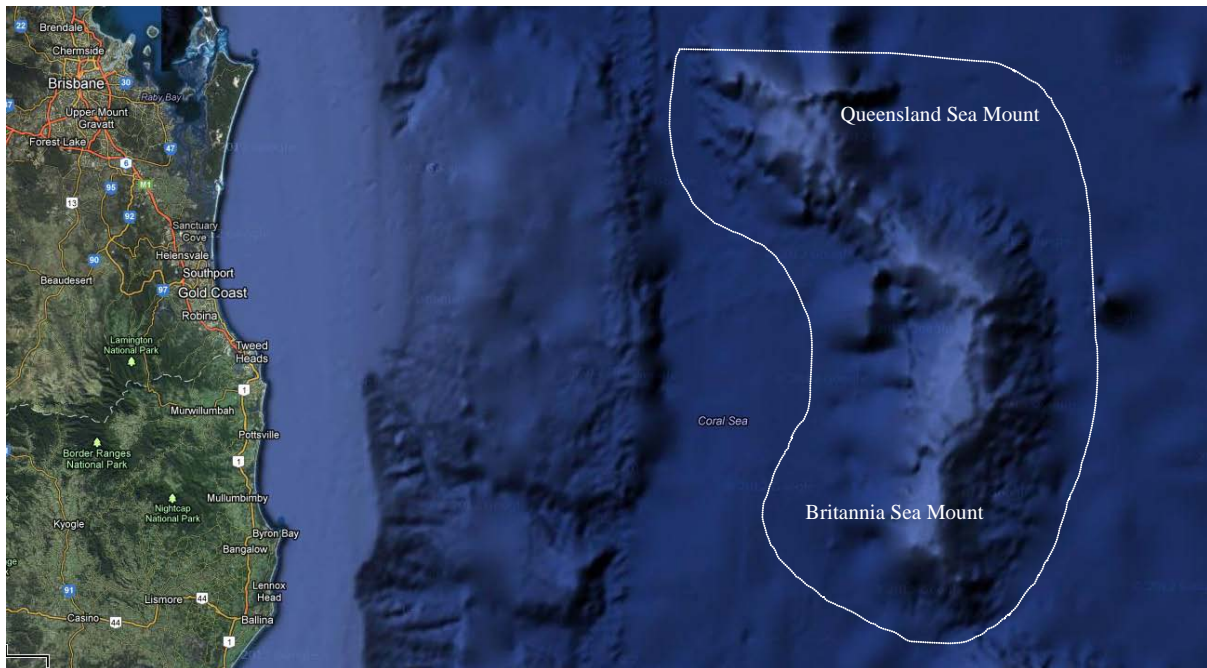
As usual nearly always associated with returning trawlers and sightings involving birds just outside the Seaway to never much more than 10 nautical miles offshore, with peak counts of 22 on 17th Mar. 25 on 19th May, 60 on 16th Jun. 30 on 1st Jul. and 31 on 17th Nov. However on 1st Jul. there was extraordinary sighting of a pair that arrived from seaward at 27 45.18S/153 57.18E or 28 nautical miles ENE of the Southport Seaway. This pair would settle on the water and wait for the Providence Petrels to come in to the berley, at which point they would both come in to harass the petrels away from the food. They even saw off a Gibson's Albatross as it departed from the vessel.

Monthly Maxima Table

Species	Jan	Feb*	Mar	Apr*	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov*	Dec
Red-tailed Tropicbird		0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White-tailed Tropicbird		0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilson's Storm-Petrel		0	4	93	22	5	15	7	17	13	49	0
New Zealand Storm-Petrel		0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White-faced Storm-Petrel		0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-bellied Storm Petrel		0	0	1	4	0	1	0	1	6	0	0
White-bellied Storm-Petrel		0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wandering Albatross		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gibson's Albatross		0	0	5	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
Antipodean Albatross		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-browed Albatross		0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellow-nosed Albatross		0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Giant Petrel		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cape Petrel		0	0	0	0	8	0	0	2	0	0	0
Fairy Prion		0	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Black Petrel		0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Wedge-tailed Shearwater		1595	217	59	0	0	2	174	15	49	76	264
Buller's Shearwater		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flesh-footed Shearwater		21	5	257	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	22
Sooty Shearwater		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Short-tailed Shearwater		0	0	10	0	0	0	0	4	5	526	67
Streaked Shearwater		7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fluttering Shearwater		3	0	1	2	1	2	33	1	0	0	0
Hutton's Shearwater		16	4	0	0	0	0	11	1	0	0	0
Tahiti Petrel		38	12	58	0	0	0	1	0	0	72	2
Kermadec Petrel		0	0	30	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	12
White-headed Petrel		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great-winged Petrel		5	1	247	0	112	0	0	1	0	0	139
Providence Petrel		0	1	91	4	68	57	10	93	12	2	0
Gould's Petrel		0	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
White-necked Petrel		0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-winged Petrel		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Australasian Gannet		0	0	3	2	35	58	47	6	1	0	0
Red-footed Booby		0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Brown Booby		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Great Cormorant		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Little Black Cormorant		3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0
Pied Cormorant		1	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	14	4
South Polar Skua		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pomarine Jaeger		6	17	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6
Arctic Jaeger		1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Long-tailed Jaeger		0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Common Noddy		0	0	3	0	3	31	0	0	0	0	0
White Tern		0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sooty Tern		0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	16
Little Tern		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Caspian Tern		0	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Common Tern		0	22	31	0	0	0	0	0	6	44	0
Crested Tern		518	522	15	39	19	64	6	28	126	83	35
Silver Gull		52	20	21	25	60	30	1	0	0	38	0

* Denotes more than one trip conducted for the month.

The Queensland and Britannia Sea Mounts Trip 13th-16th April 2012



Target Area: There is a string of Sea Mounts and Guyots off the south Queensland coast, ranging from just off the northern tip of Fraser Island (nearing the southern limit of the Great Barrier Reef) down to south of the Qld/NSW border. Due to the proximity to the Southport pelagic venue, the obvious targets were the Queensland Sea Mount or Guyot and the adjoining Britannia Sea Mount, which are adjacent to the southern Queensland/northern New South Wales coastline.

There appears to have been little work done in the region regarding seabird counts/studies around the local sea mounts. The only work the author could find relates to a days' travel across the Recorder Sea Mount on 3rd October 1985 (D. Eades). For what would be considered a peak migration period, the diversity and numbers from these observations were quite disappointing, with only 12 seabird species positively identified. (research weather patterns)

On the above sat/map, the paler blue area adjacent to the coast represents the Continental Shelf which extends out to the hundred fathom line or roughly 200 metres, this then becomes the Continental Slope, which gradually extends out and drops off to become open ocean. It is from this ocean floor, averaging some 4000 metres in depth that the sea mounts rise from. By definition, a sea mount is an underwater ridge, rising to an almost peak like structure, whereas a Guyot is a more rounded, almost mesa like structure, much like the underwater sites we visit locally, adjacent to Southport. One would expect perhaps, that a Sea Mount, by virtue of its more dramatic change in structure, would produce better results, in regard to cool water upwellings but the following results/figures, over the two days, seem to refute this.

Vessel: 84 ft Monohull 'Texas Tea'. This vessel is a well appointed ocean going cruiser, with full-on facilities, a gross tonnage of 130 tonnes, a cruising speed of 7 knots with a maximum range of 8,000 nautical miles. Viewing conditions all around the vessel are exceptional.

Crew: Jonathon Bodley, (skipper), Craig Newton, Bruce Preston.

Participants: Paul Walbridge (organiser & leader), Andrew Sutherland, Brian Russell, Rod Gardner, Glen Pacey, Grant Penrhyn, Daniel Mantle, Jenny Spry, Kathy Wilson, Steve Murray.

Weather Conditions: On the 14th, light cloud for most of the day with long sunny periods but with the occasional rain squall, visibility very good. Wind, 20-25 knots ESE, max. air temp. 25° C, barometric pressure 1016 hPa. For the 15th, more frequent heavier cloudy periods with some heavier showers but visibility generally still very good. Wind speed dropped slightly to 20 knots, sometimes 15-20 knots, maximum air temp. 25° C.

Sea Conditions: Early on the 14th, seas of 1 metre on a 1.5 metre swell, with the swell increasing to 2.5 metres plus by mid morning. On the 15th conditions had abated somewhat with seas much calmer on up to 1.5 metre swell. The vessels' temperature measuring device was faulty so sea-surface temps. were obtained from the Point & Click website on returning to shore, with a range over the two days showing 23-24° C. There was at times visible evidence of upwelling where the Sea Mounts rose closest to the sea surface, a change in water colour and presence of detritus but without the ability to accurately measure the SST this cannot be proven.

13/4/12

The 10 of us met at the Sanctuary Cove car park, where the vehicles were to be securely parked for free for the next 3 nights and after loading our gear on board the Texas Tea, we all had our evening meal at one of the many restaurants in Sanctuary Cove Village. The vessel had to be slipped by 1900 hrs as it was on a falling tide and nearly an hour to our exit from the Southport Seaway and the upper reaches of the passage down not regularly dredged. The Texas Tea has a gross draft of 2.5 metres. Exited the Seaway at 2000 hrs and headed NE to the Queensland Seamount or Guyot.

14/4/12

Woke up early and already, even before the pre-dawn light, birds could be seen crossing the wake, visible in the ships lights. Started recording birds in earnest at 0538 hrs when over the deeper contours of the Queensland Seamount and still heading NE toward the shallowest area of around 400 metres, which we reached at approx. 0620 hrs at a fix of 27 29.39S/155 04.03E. The first birds of the day around this time and area were Great-winged Petrel, Providence Petrel and Flesh-footed Shearwaters in small numbers soon followed by the appearance of Gould's Petrels and Wilson's Storm-Petrels as we neared the northernmost highest contour. After breakfast, we steamed slowly ESE at 3-4 knots over the seamount to the southernmost highest contour at 420 metres.

Craig Newton by now was 'chumming' with the pre-cubed shark liver and at 0642 hrs the increasing numbers of Flesh-footed Shearwaters were joined by the first Kermadec Petrels (3) and another Gould's Petrel. Over the next hour much the same with small numbers of Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Great-winged and Providence Petrel and Flesh-footed Shearwater being joined by the first of what was to be quite low numbers of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters for the trip. At 0759 hours however the first real excitement for the trip occurred with the appearance astern of the vessel of two probable New Zealand Storm-Petrels (yet to be confirmed by BARC) and these birds followed the vessel for some length of time, along with by now up to 20 Great-winged Petrel and 30 Flesh-footed Shearwater with increasing numbers of Wilson's Storm-Petrel (6) and a couple more Gould's Petrels, also what was to be the highest count of Wedge-tailed Shearwater for the trip (6).

At 0825 hrs the first White-necked Petrel of the trip joined the throng along with another couple of Gould's Petrels and at least 10 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. By 0947 hrs the Gould's Petrel numbers had risen to 4, with at least 12 Great-winged Petrels and 6 Wilson's Storm-Petrels present when a sub-adult Red-tailed Tropicbird approached the vessel and thrilled all on the vessel for several minutes as it made several approaches. Still pressing slowly but steadily southeast over the top of the seamount with a procession of birds coming and going with by now up to 20 Great-winged Petrels present behind the vessel, when at 1038 hrs a small white bird was seen up ahead to rise up from the sea-surface, an adult White-tailed Tropicbird.

By 1144 hrs Flesh-footed Shearwaters behind the vessel had risen to 40, with up to 4 of both Gould's and Providence Petrels with another Kermadec Petrel approaching the vessel when at 1237 hrs another 2 New Zealand Storm-Petrels appeared astern, these remaining around the boat for some period of time as with the first two earlier in the day. At 1324 hrs, with 2 Kermadec Petrels flying around the vessel we were joined by a very young juvenile Wandering Albatross type, most likely as with the birds seen on the second day Gibson's Albatross. Numbers of petrels were beginning to build up again behind the vessel in the chum slick with up to 40 Great-winged and 5 Providence Petrels but also 40 Flesh-footed Shearwaters. At 1433 hrs the first White-faced Storm-Petrel appeared followed a bit later by the first Common Noddies (2) of the trip. At 1655 hrs a White-necked Petrel cruised in along with 3 Gould's Petrels, 3 Sooty Terns and yet another 2 New Zealand Storm-Petrels, after at least a three hour hiatus.

At approx. 1315 hrs we had changed direction and cruised back northward to finish at the southern peak of the Sea Mount at 420 metres. Adjourned then for drinks and discussions on the day's events and then the evening meal. Meantime the skipper and crew had got together and with the moderating conditions it was decided to steam 74 nautical miles south overnight to the southern end of the Britannia Seamount, adjacent to the New South Wales coastline, south of Byron Bay.

15/4/2012

Reached the northern peak at 440 metres of the Britannia Sea Mount at 0500 hrs fix. 28 38.33S/155 34.45E. The count on the second day started at just after 0600 hrs fix 28 39.76S/155 33.30E and heading southeast at c.4 knots, with just singles of Providence, Great-winged and Kermadec Petrels present and Wedge-tailed and Flesh-footed Shearwaters, soon to be joined by a single Gould's Petrel. It wasn't long before the first New Zealand Storm-Petrels (2) appeared astern at 0645 hrs along with a Wilson's Storm-Petrel for comparison, fix 28 40.63S/155 35.63E. At 0704 hrs the first White Tern for the trip appeared and by then bird numbers had gradually started to build with up to 20 Great-winged Petrels and 30 Flesh-footed Shearwaters following the vessel. By the time the second White Tern showed up at 0809 hrs, there were now up to 20 Providence Petrels and 40 Great-winged Petrels.

0843 hrs saw the arrival of 2 White-faced Storm-Petrels in the slick along with a couple of Wilson's Storm-Petrels. During this mid morning period apart from numbers of the ever present Great-winged and Providence Petrels there were just singles of Gould's, Kermadec, and White-necked Petrel lingering around for a while. At 1012 hrs the first Wandering Albatross (Gibson's) for the day turned up followed shortly after by a second bird, both young adults. A third and fourth White Tern turned up around this time along with another Kermadec Petrel and White-necked Petrel, with the first Pomarine Jaeger for the trip, which had a fine time harassing the other birds. Around 1145 hrs a partially leucistic Providence Petrel arrived, with a white triangle of feathering on the lower breast and it stayed for several minutes. The random count at 1157 hrs really hotted up with the only Black-bellied Storm Petrel of the trip making a show for some minutes (possibly the earliest recording for Queensland waters). Other birds present at this position 28 47.33S/155 48.36E, were 3 Kermadec Petrels, 3 Gould's Petrels 40 Great-winged Petrels, 6 Providence Petrels and 40 Flesh-footed Shearwaters. There could have been some evidence of upwelling here (pointed out by Craig Newton) as there was obvious current showing visibly on the sea-surface and turbulence, hard to prove though without proper temperature measuring device. A bathythermograph really should be used in a trip such as this but one would need a vessel with such a device and all the associated gear. Just after midday the vessel turned around and headed in a NNW direction.

Just before 1300 hrs, the first Tahiti Petrels arrived on the scene after a day and a half of seeing none, an indication of the cooler water on the Sea Mounts, as just a few days later, in warmer water closer to the coast we saw dozens. The Gould's Petrel numbers had risen to 5 around the vessel at a time along with up to a dozen Wilson's Storm-Petrels. Shortly afterwards a fifth Gibson's Albatross appeared, along with the first Short-tailed Shearwater of the trip (expected to see a lot more). A random count at 1345 hrs fix 28 43.38S/155 37.50E produced 7 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, another single White-faced Storm-Petrel, 7 more Short-tailed Shearwaters and further singles of Tahiti, Gould's, Kermadec and White-necked Petrels.

Travelling slowly north and at 1430 hrs another 2 New Zealand Storm-Petrels approached the stern along with 3 Providence, 2 White-necked, 3 Gould's Petrels and 20 Flesh-footed Shearwaters. From then until just after 1700 hrs when the counting terminated there were more Providence, Kermadec, Gould's and White-necked Petrels added to the count, along with a couple more Pomarine Jaegers and the only Arctic Jaeger for the voyage plus a single Common Noddy. Sunday night was then spent travelling back to Southport.

16/4/2012

There wasn't much to see as we arrived back near the coast south of the Seaway still in darkness and as daylight broke just a few Crested Terns, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Australasian Gannets noted before entering the Seaway and the slow trip back up the Broadwater to Sanctuary Cove, where we berthed sometime after 0800 hours. All in all we had covered a considerable amount of territory, ranging from a point just south of adjacent to Pt. Lookout on North Stradbroke Island, Queensland to a point just north of Lennox Head, New south Wales.

Species:

Red-tailed Tropicbird – 1
White-tailed Tropicbird – 1
Wilson's Storm-Petrel – 63 (12)
New Zealand Storm-Petrel – 10 (2)
White-Faced Storm-Petrel – 5 (2)

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel – 1
White-bellied Storm-Petrel – 1
Gibson's Albatross – 5 (2)
Wedge-tailed Shearwater – 11 (6)
Flesh-footed Shearwater – 231 (40)
Short-tailed Shearwater – 8 (7)
Tahiti Petrel – 3 (2)
Kermadec Petrel – 29 (3)
Great-winged Petrel (*P. m. gouldi*) – 247 (40)
Providence Petrel – 67 (20)
Gould's Petrel – 54 (5)
White-necked Petrel – 11 (2)
Pomarine Jaeger – 3 (1)
Arctic Jaeger – 1
Common Noddy – 3 (2)
White Tern – 4 (1)
Sooty Tern – 3

Judging from the numbers of some of the species observed, it would seem patently obvious that the regular monthly pelagics conducted out of Southport are just scratching the surface and are just receiving overspill if you will from the main destination, the string of sea mounts, roughly some 100 nautical miles off the southern Queensland/northern New South Wales coast. Five species of storm-petrel in a day on an Australian pelagic is quite extraordinary as was the number of New Zealand Storm-Petrels present, the figure of 10 was totally unexpected. The presence yet again of White-faced Storm-Petrel and backed up the following weekend with numbers on a regular Southport trip would seem to reveal a more regular presence of this species in southeast Queensland waters during the Autumn/Winter months than was usually thought to be. Whether these birds are of Australian or New Zealand origin remains to be seen, we did observe one particular individual with a very white rump (suspected Kermadec bird) but could not obtain satisfactory photos of it.

Further evidence of New Zealand influence, apart from the extremely early appearance for this region of Gibson's Albatross was the unprecedented number of Great-winged Petrel of the New Zealand race *P. m. gouldi* a species, at best considered uncommon for this region. The numbers of Flesh-footed Shearwater were also high for this area for recent times and maybe these weren't purely of Lord Howe Island origin but possibly also from New Zealand. The relatively high numbers of Kermadec Petrels and White-necked Petrels present would seem to reinforce the view that birds from as wide afield as the Kermadec Island group winter in the Coral Sea region. Another surprising factor (or maybe not) was the complete absence of Tahiti Petrel until late in the second day and then only 3 sighted. Just a week later and closer inshore in Continental Slope waters where the sea surface temp. was nearly two degrees Celsius warmer, a total of 55 individuals were counted.

All the above account tells us is that a certain amount of birds of a number of species were sighted over a two day time frame at a certain time of year after a particular set of weather patterns. A real pattern or trend can only unfold after the four seasons are covered over a number of years or even decades. Of course, we are obtaining this sort of data closer inshore, albeit gradually. It would be more useful however, if we could cover this, what we consider to be a major food source region and more important to the various species occurring here than closer inshore, if we could be more proactive in our coverage. The main problem lies with the availability of a suitable vessel and not necessarily with the availability of suitably interested observers and even the costs involved. I had no problem gathering enough dedicated seabirders together at reasonably short notice. The amazing vessel we used for this trip is currently in Asia for the rest of the year and we hope to use her again. Meantime, our skipper Craig is on the hunt locally, for a vessel that is in survey to carry a certain amount of people out to the local seamounts.

Whilst the joint submission of the ten New Zealand Storm-Petrels from Dan Mantle and myself to BARC has been accepted, we both openly discussed in the submission the possibility of these and previous records as being more similar in appearance to the birds being sighted south of New Caledonia, as opposed to the birds being sighted in the Hauraki Gulf. I've had discussions with several people such as Brent Stephenson and Chris Gaskin from New Zealand and Peter Harrison and Chris Collins from the UK re; the importance of conducting another SEQ sea mount trip, and hopefully capturing one or more of these enigmatic birds and solving the riddle.

Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta* (Schlegel, 1863)

Paul Walbridge

Introduction

A couple of years ago I was approached to do a few profiles of seabird species for a threatened species book which I duly delivered and the volume has since been published. One of those species was Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta* and I was approached to profile it due to my considerable experience with the species up and down the east coast of Australia but mainly in south east Queensland waters, where I have conducted offshore excursions for more than two decades. At the time, I was limited, as one would expect for a work where many species were involved, to just 1,200 words and a photograph. That was never going to be enough to describe a bird with such a variable plumage and huge distribution range, a much sought after species by birdwatchers as it is rarely encountered on the Continental Shelf and especially from land based platforms.

In Australia, many birders travel out to Lord Howe Island, usually by air, hoping to arrange a boat trip out to Ball's Pyramid where the species breeds in the summer months. This is weather dependant as the boat won't go in anything but good weather but most trips that do get to the pinnacle like rock, do get to see the bird. However there is a region much closer to home where the species can be seen at any time of year, some months more reliable than others. That region is in the southern Coral Sea, in continental slope waters off south east Queensland/northern New South Wales.

Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*

Current IUCN listing: Least concern.

Specifically named as 'forgotten/overlooked' as three type specimens from Raoul Island collected in July 1854 were incorrectly labelled and not corrected until nine years later when Schlegel was handed the skins.

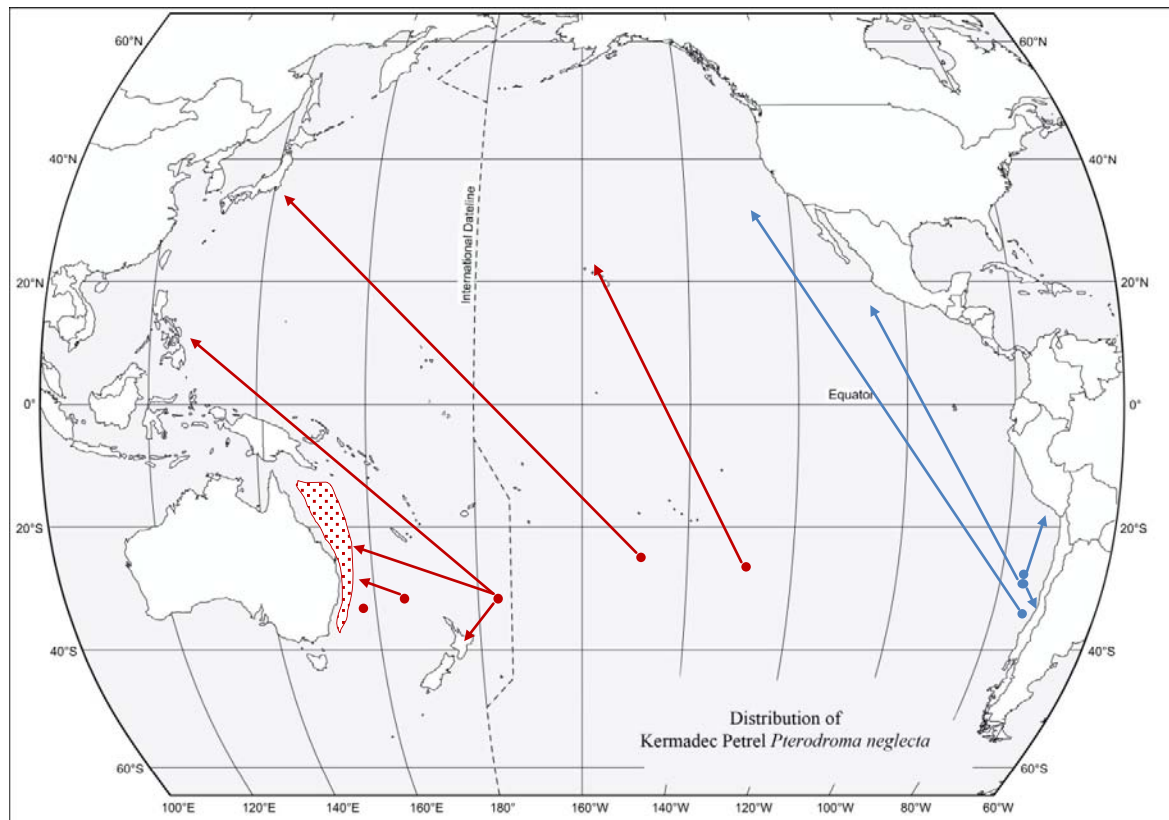
Distribution:

Kermadec Petrel occurs right across the tropical/subtropical Pacific Ocean, with the nominate *Pterodroma n. neglecta* ranging from Lord Howe Island, Norfolk Island and the Kermadec group in the western Pacific, across to the Austral and Pitcairn groups in the central and central eastern Pacific. Sub-species *Pterodroma n. juana* breeds on Juan Fernandez, San Ambrosia and San Felix Islands off the southern western coast of South America, in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

The birds of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean are generally thought to disperse post-breeding, over the equator and into the north Pacific Ocean, with sightings in the Hawaiian region and off the Californian and Mexican coasts. There are also suspected sightings off the Philippines and as far north as Japan. The map/graphic below, is purely an interpretation of the information available and the main focus of these notes is with the occurrence of the species in east Australian waters and to the better enabling of birders to identify the species in the field and to separate it from similar looking species that also occur in the region.

There have been relatively recent reports from the Indian Ocean, first reported at Round Island in 1986 and confirmed in 1994, with breeding proven not long after (Brooke 2004). Kermadec Petrel now appears to be hybridising extensively with Trindade Petrel *P. arminjoniana* on Round Island (Brown et al. 2010). A single bird had been present at a nest site on Cousin Island in the Seychelles since 2003. Also, there are now sightings with photographs provided, of Kermadec Petrels in the Atlantic Ocean as far north as the Azores, in the North Atlantic in 2006.

Pacific Ocean distribution of Kermadec Petrel



Legend:

- *Pterodroma n. neglecta*
- *Pterodroma n. juana*

Occurrence in Australasian waters:

New Zealand:

Few mainland sightings and considered a vagrant despite proximity to the Kermadec Island group, with just two beach-washed specimens on the North Island prior to 1955, one in 1981 and also 1986. A lone bird was observed over a period of years on Cuvier Island to attempt to nest but failed to attract a mate. However, as is the case with east Australian pelagics, the Wrybill Tours trips out to Three Kings Islands, in the Autumn over the last six years, have produced a number of sightings. Over the three day period of these trips 2-5 birds have been sighted with sometimes up to 18 birds counted (Brent Stephenson, pers. comm.). It would appear safe to assume that the majority of sightings of this species in New Zealand waters would be of Kermadec Island group origin but also perhaps from further east.

Australia:

According to HANZAB a rare visitor with none recorded during the Australian Atlas period of 1975-8. From New South Wales, single beachcast specimens, Kingscliff, 27th Jan. 1974, Tuggerah Beach, 16th Mar. 1968 and Steamers Beach, Jervis Bay, 20th June 1976. Early records off Wollongong, NSW and six sighted off Point Lookout QLD, 19th Aug. 1986 (published) were not substantiated with notes and considered unacceptable. Queensland Museum specimens consist of single beachcast birds, Southport Spit, 13th April 1988 and Deadmans Beach, South Stradbroke Island, 15th December 1996. Kermadec Petrel was considered a submittable species to BARC up until about 2001-2002, at least two submissions were sent from Southport sightings which were accepted. What was surprising though, was that these were actually the first that had been sent to BARC

for appraisal, it also became apparent that through the sheer volume of sightings and after some deliberation that Kermadec Petrel should no longer be subject to appraisal by BARC, at least from Southport.

However, since pelagic trips began on the east coast of Australia in the mid 1980s, early 1990s and thus getting out into Continental Slope waters and beyond, the overall picture changed dramatically. The species has now been recorded from south east Queensland right down the east Australian coast to Eden in southern New South Wales. Wollongong sightings (SOSSA) Port Stephens and Newcastle (Mick Roderick) and Sydney (Nicolas Haas) seem to be mainly concentrated around Feb-Apr. a period of probable Austral Autumn passage movement.

On Southport Pelagics:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
13	5	15	42	1	3	7	6	17	6	2	18

Monthly Incidence of sightings off Southport since 1995

The above chart does not show an entirely accurate record of occurrence, as some records between 2004 and 2009 were misplaced/lost. During the early days of south-east Queensland pelagics the trips were conducted out of Brisbane from the late 1970s to the early 1990s and although the trips were less regular, Kermadec Petrels were recorded with up to 3 sighted per trip and were considered probably rare at best and most sightings seemed to be in the Austral Autumn/Winter period. The vast majority of the birds sighted since 1995 were in Continental Slope waters, with just 12, or roughly 9% sighted on the Shelf. The majority of these shelf sightings occurred during moderate onshore south east winds or after periods of strong south east winds, with the closest encountered just 5 nautical miles offshore. This raises the distinct possibility of this species being sighted from a land based platform like Pt. Lookout on North Stradbroke Island during strong or gale force south east onshore winds – see above, last paragraph page 31.

With the increased frequency in pelagic cruises, particularly in the last six years or so with the current vessel M.V. Grinner, the species has become increasingly more commonly sighted, probably due to this vessel spending more time drifting beyond the Shelf-break. It has now been recorded in every month of the year, with numbers loaded to the summer months but with spikes in April and September, suggesting some sort of passage movement, possibly to and from the Coral Sea Territories but with low numbers in the winter months. The species breeds at different times of the year at some grounds particularly in the Kermadec Island group and a couple of accompanying photographs would appear to bear this out, showing birds in moult at different times of the year, mainly April and December.

Basic Description:

Kermadec Petrel is a polymorphic petrel, with probably the most variable plumage of any tube-nose, in fact the only other seabird species that comes near it in plumage diversity is from another Order of birds, that is the Red-footed Booby. Howell, (2012) divides the plumages into various forms of light or dark birds but other publications divide this polymorphism into three rough intergrades, eg; dark, intermediate and light morphs. My interpretation is somewhere in between, Very dark birds at one end, with a continuum of intermediate plumages, lightening off until the very palest of birds. Apparently juvenile and immature birds are indistinguishable from adults and there is no difference between the sexes, except probably bill dimensions.

Size & build; A medium to large *pterodroma*, stockily built and rather front heavy, with a shortish, fast tapered or squared off tail. The wings are long and broad and depending on flight mode, held straight out from the body when in typical *pterodroma* arcing flight or with wings held more forward, with a more gull or jaeger like flapping motion when in more level flight, such as when approaching a feeding flock of other seabirds. The bill is of medium size for a *pterodroma*, shortish and stubby, more robust than for a ‘cookilaria’ petrel but finer than for the larger *pterodromas*, such as Great-winged Petrel. Photographs show some variation in size of the bill and this probably sexual.

Plumage:

Bare parts; iris dark brown, bill black and legs blackish on the darker & intermediate birds and some of the lighter birds but pink legs and inner webbing of the feet on most of the palest birds. Head and neck, variable from all dark brown to almost white on the very palest birds, with the latter showing some fine greyish barring on top of the head. There is a pale, whitish loreal line between the bill base and to just below the eye in all but the very darkest and obviously the very palest headed birds.

Upperparts; varies from dark blackish brown to dark greyish brown in colour, with the tail ranging from blackish to dark greyish brown, primaries darker and showing diagnostic, characteristic pale shafts at the bases, varying from two to as many as eight primaries, when often easily seen with the naked eye at close quarters but this apparent variation could also be due to the flight mode of the individual birds at the time, as this is based on field observations. In some of the intermediate plumages the nape can appear paler giving the bird a capped appearance. Also, in some birds when the tail is fanned, when changing direction for instance, the bases of the outer retrices can show whitish.

Underparts; along with the head, the area of most variability, with the darkest birds showing uniform dark brown, from the chin to the undertail coverts and dark tail. The underparts then gradually lighten off in hue to where it can be a uniform pale greyish brown and then graduating to pure white, with a darkish chin and dark undertail coverts. The undertail coverts in all but the darkest birds have pale fringing in fresh plumaged birds.

The underwing is highly variable, with most birds showing mainly dark underwing coverts and always with dark secondaries, however there are examples of birds with quite pale underwings. Another area of high variability is in the inner forewing, with the very darkest of birds showing uniformly dark coverts but with lightening off of the plumage with other birds, this area shows an increasing white triangular area from the breast to inside the carpal joint, it is very variable though. The most striking feature of the underwing is a white flash on the base of the primaries, the tips of the primaries being dark grey and below this, in the primary coverts is a whitish, meniscal patch. When this marking is present the configuration is highly reminiscent of Providence Petrel *P. solandri*, which always shows this underwing pattern, however this smaller covert marking is not always present in *P. neglecta* and also varies in extent. See accompanying photographs.

General notes:

A cliché yes but I'd like a dollar for every time I've heard the call 'jaeger' or 'skua' and the incoming bird suddenly transforms into a Kermadec Petrel and I don't mean from inexperienced beginners. I'm talking about hardened seabirders and usually referring to the two smaller jaegers, Arctic and Long-tailed. Most publications stress that Kermadec Petrels do not follow moving vessels and from my personal observations that is probably true but I have witnessed them at least approaching to investigate before moving on, as many seabird species are wont to do, they are opportunistic feeders. However, with an established slick behind the vessel and attendant birds, especially when in some numbers, Kermadec Petrels will come in to the boat, or at least to the other feeding birds and can remain for some time.

On several occasions I have witnessed terns, shearwater and petrels scatter when a Kermadec Petrel has come charging in and in a purposeful manner. I feel it is no accident that the Kermadec Petrel has evolved into this plumage and habits. Note also that they not only mimic the wing flashes above and below but also the highly variable plumages of the jaegers and the stocky body shape. I have witnessed the Kermadec Petrels picking up scraps from the sea-surface whilst flying and photographed individual birds landing and actively feeding among the other birds. Tahiti Petrel for example will land and aggressively chase off larger species but Kermadec Petrel lacks the weaponry (bill) of that species and I think it uses the plumage and aggressive flight mode more as a bluff, to either scare other birds into dropping food or to scare them off a food source. Also, similar species such as Providence Petrel and Great-winged Petrel tend to flock more when coming to feed behind a vessel, whereas Kermadec Petrel seems to travel in the main, alone another jaeger like trait. These observations of course are only from local south east Queensland waters, feeding patterns around the breeding grounds maybe quite different.



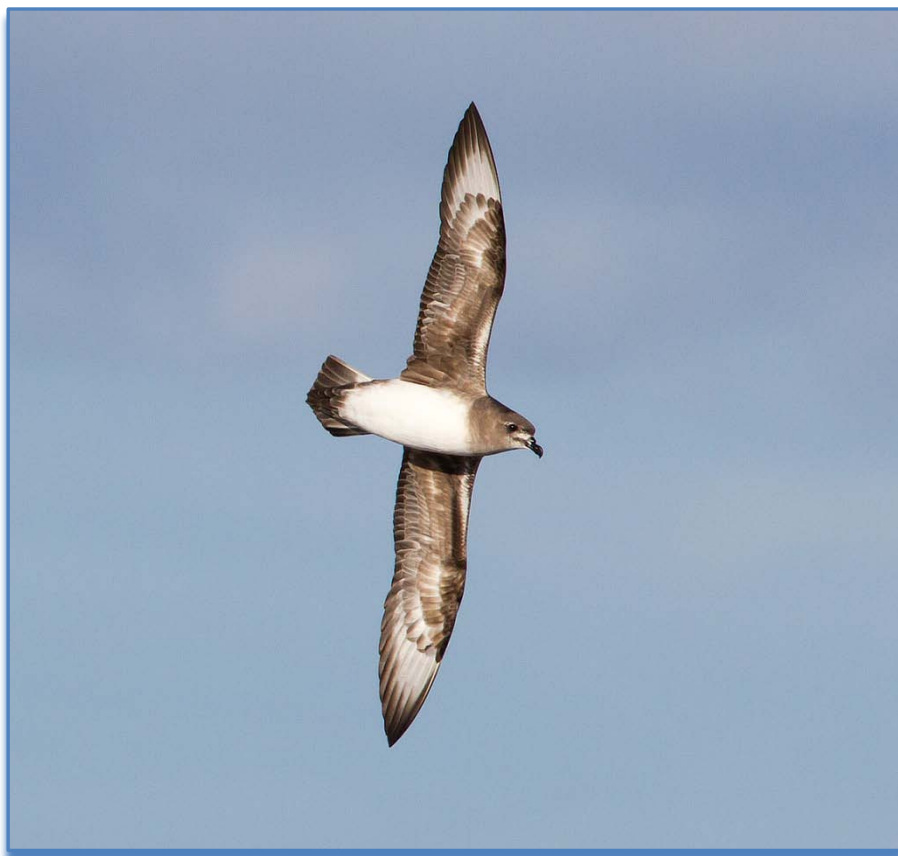
The above images represent two separate birds, the top bird from 14th April 2012 and the lower bird from 15th December 2012, with both considered to be dark intermediate examples, note the greyish collar on the nape of both birds, giving a darker capped appearance. The bill and tail shape of both these examples are consistent with Kermadec Petrel as are the diagnostic upperwing primary wing-flashes. The top bird was flying into 25 – 30 knot winds, hence the more closed, narrower winged appearance, compared with the broader winged looking bird below, which was observed in more benign conditions. Note also, the difference in extent of the primary flash on the upperwing, this could be due either to less pale shaft bases or simply because of the primaries being more closed and the bases not showing. Either way the primary flash was far easier to pick up on the lower bird in the field. This is a fine example of how the jizz of a bird in flight can change with the prevailing conditions.



The above two images represent dark birds, the top image of a bird representing the darkest form of the species photographed on 18th September 2010, the lower image of a bird sighted on 19th January 2013. Both birds show the characteristic front heavy body and short squared off tail. Note, the uniform dark brown plumage of the upper bird, particularly the lack of a pale loréal line, the image doesn't show it but the underwing was a uniform dark brown except for the primary flash and just a slight meniscal bar in the coverts. The lower bird shows just a hint of a loréal line between the bill base and the eye, also there is a hint of pale feathering beginning to appear on the inner forewing. This bird also shows the barest minimum of pale feathering in the primary coverts (meniscal mark) even less than for the above all dark bird and wouldn't be evident in the field.



Plumage progressively lightens off in the darker intermediate birds, becoming greyer as in the case of these two individuals from April 15th 2012 or at times a more sandy colour. Note that the undertail coverts are still uniformly dark. Also, the belly lightens off first leaving a darker collar around the neck, more evident in the lower bird. Both these birds have a fairly obvious white area in the coverts below the primary flash, quite similar to Providence Petrel, which also has a contrasting paler lower body compared to the head but *P. neglecta* has a less robust head, finer bill and a shorter less tapered tail.



Here are two more from 15th April 2012 showing white bellies, the above bird showing slightly more darker plumage on the underparts. Fine barring is now showing on the paler undertail coverts and more white is appearing on the inner forewing. Overall the underwing is still fairly dark, the lower bird looks paler on the underwing due to strong, late afternoon light. Note also the white bases to the outer retrices on the lower bird.



The above bird photographed on 14th April 2012 represents the palest of intermediate birds, with almost completely white underparts, apart from an indistinct collar around the neck and the head and nape a pale brownish grey. The lower bird, photographed on 15th April 2012 is as close as it gets to a fully pale plumaged bird. There is just a hint of fine greyish barring around the shoulder and on top of the head. This bird is showing some degree of moult but the underwing appears to be mainly dark apart from the obvious primary flash and white on the innerwing.



Some Kermadec Petrel populations have birds breeding at different times of the year (Raoul Island, Kermadec Island Group) and with these images of two birds showing obvious wing moult, one could assume is evidence of this. The top image is of a dark intermediate bird photographed on the sea mount trip off southeast Queensland on 15th April 2012 and the lower image is of a dark plumaged bird off Southport, Queensland on 15th December 2012, some four months apart. The April bird coming off the Austral summer and the December bird coming out of the Austral winter.



The topmost image from 15th April 2012 depicts a median intermediate bird, flying alongside a Flesh-footed Shearwater to give a rough indication of relative size, the Flesh-footed Shearwater being one of the larger species of shearwater and being a bit bigger than Kermadec Petrel. The lower image is of a bird photographed off Southport on 15th December 2012 showing perfectly the upperwing and underwing primary flashes and capped appearance, almost jaeger like. Not only that but the photo has captured the deep jaeger/gull like flapping motion as the bird approached the vessel and feeding birds.



Kermadec Petrels will approach vessels when they see other birds feeding and they will land on the sea surface to feed on whatever is on offer as evidenced by this bird on 23rd March 2013, when several were present and stayed around the vessel for some period of time.

Similar species to discount:

The following images are only of species that occur in Australian waters both regularly and rarely, so other similar Pacific Ocean species such as Phoenix Petrel and Henderson Petrel for example, are not included here.

Herald Petrel *Pterodroma heraldica*





The above three images were taken by Jack Shick off Lord Howe Island on 28/4/2012.

Of all the other species of *Pterodroma* this is the most similar and easily confused with Kermadec Petrel. Adding to this confusion is the fact that what was once considered to be one polymorphic species has now become much more complicated. Basically, there is also Trindade Petrel *P. arminjoniana* of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, which at this point in time is still considered to be polymorphic. In the Pacific Ocean there is the Herald Petrel, *P. heraldica* which now are thought to occur only as pale birds, such as the bird depicted in the above images. What was once thought to be dark morph birds are now considered to be Henderson Petrel *P. atrata* of the eastern Pacific.

Although extremely similar to Kermadec Petrel *P. heraldica* has one obvious difference and several more subtle differences. The obvious difference can be gleaned from the image directly above, which shows uniform greyish brown upperparts, more importantly uniform upperwing except for darker primaries but with no hint of primary 'wing-flash'. Overall, Herald Petrel is a slightly smaller bird than Kermadec Petrel, less front heavy and of generally slimmer build, with a smaller head, finer bill and slimmer body, leading into a longer, more finely tapered tail. On the one occasion I have observed Herald Petrel off Southport it was present with an intermediate Kermadec Petrel and the Herald Petrel appeared to have the more buoyant flight of the two, as they both repeatedly circled around the vessel.

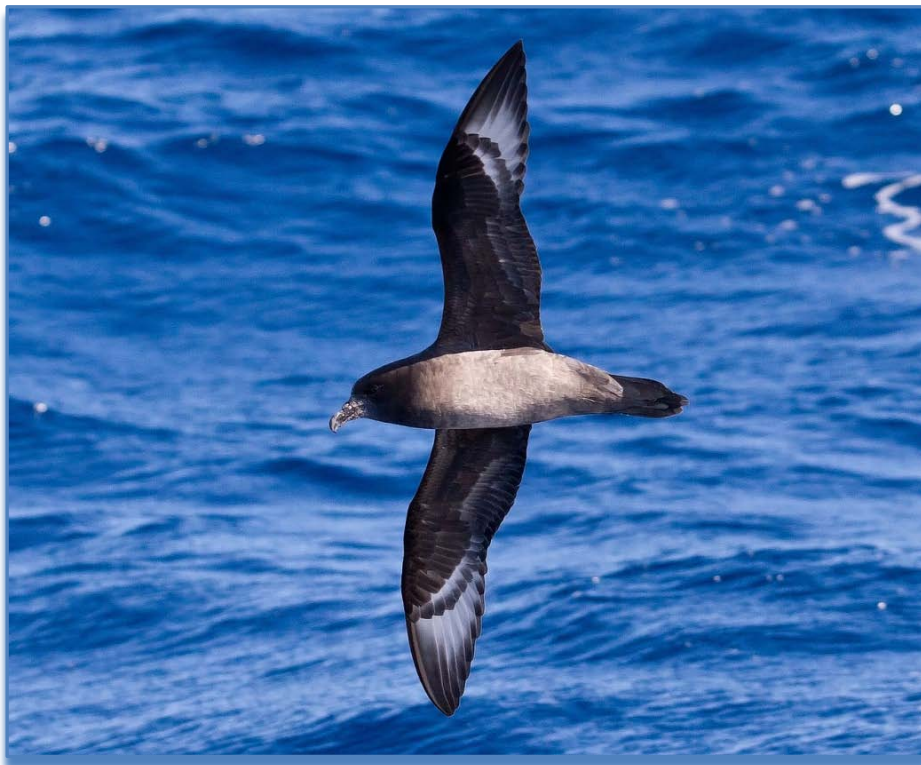
Plumage wise, the Herald Petrel resembles a pale intermediate Kermadec Petrel, much like the birds on page 36. As mentioned above the upperparts including wings and head are a uniform greyish brown, with a white chin/throat and a variable greyish/brown collar. The rest of the underparts are white, including the undertail coverts, tail blackish brown. The underwing is very similar to Kermadec Petrel, with a similar white primary flash and variable whitish wedge on the inner forewing. However, the secondaries are generally paler sometimes flashing more silvery, giving the impression of a darker broad bar intruding up through the centre of the wing.

Providence Petrel *Pterodroma solandri*





Providence Petrel is slightly larger than Kermadec Petrel but with a much more robust head and bill and a longer more tapered tail. The main confusion can occur late in the season in the Austral Spring, when worn adults, post breeding can show more uniform dark brownish grey upperparts and the feathering around the primary shafts on the upperwing can become worn. It can be even more extreme than on the uppermost bird and give the appearance of an upperwing flash. The above bird depicts either a returning adult in the Austral Autumn Mar-May, in fresh plumage or a young bird Oct-Nov., in this case an adult bird. Note the much greyer upperparts with the beautiful scaly plumage, only Murphy's Petrel of the central Pacific shows anything remotely like this.





The underwing of Providence Petrel can also be extremely similar to Kermadec Petrel but always lacks the white wedge on the inner forewing. The heavier head and bill plus the longer, more tapered tail is also evident and the overall dark brownish grey head contrasts with the more uniform greyish underparts as shown in the upper bird. As the plumage becomes more worn, particularly in breeding adults the lower belly can look really pale. The lower bird depicts another complication to look out for, Providence Petrels that actually show white feathering in all stages of plumage and this is not particularly rare and is variable. The lower bird photographed in fresh plumage in April shows white all the way from the chin to the upper head and a white triangle on the lower belly. I have seen one individual that showed an almost Tahiti Petrel like configuration.

Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*





The top two images show the age variation in the New Zealand race of Great-winged Petrel *P. m. gouldi* re; extent of white on the face, the uppermost image depicting a mature bird. Note the far more robust head and bill compared to Kermadec Petrel and the lack of a primary flash on the upperwing. The lowest of the three images shows a silvery flash on the primaries and coverts but this is reflective plumage only and not white feathering. Also known as the Grey-faced Petrel, it is the more commonly found taxon on the east coast of Australia and is gathering ground to become a full species. *P. m. macroptera* is more commonly sighted on the southern coasts of Australia and it differs from the New Zealand birds in having a generally darker face in all age groups and a slightly finer bill and overall jizz but the same differences apply re; *P. neglecta*.

White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessoni*



The White-headed Petrel is generally a more southerly, colder water bird than Kermadec Petrel but can occur right into the tropics, such as the above bird photographed off Southport in June 2012. This species could only be possibly confused with the very lightest plumaged Kermadec Petrels and then only briefly so. The jizz of *P. lessoni* is different, with a more tapered rear end and less front heavy looking. The underwing, although superficially similar, lacks the contrasting primary flash and the undertail coverts are entirely white. The head and neck are generally even whiter than the palest of Kermadec Petrels and the upperparts are a much paler grey, particularly the mantle, uppertail coverts and tail. There is also no upperwing primary flash. **All of the above images in this article, apart from Jack Schicks' images of Herald Petrel were taken by P.Walbridge.**

The Southport List – its current status, recent new additions and future predictions for new species - Robert Morris 2013

This brief note sets out the current list of species recorded on Southport pelagic trips, highlights some of the recent additions to the list and, for a bit of fun, speculates on what new species we may record from Southport in future years.

The current Southport list

The current Southport list is set out below in Table 1. It sets out the 83 species of seabird which have been recorded on trips, outside the Southport Seaway up until February 2013. There are a few comments which should be made on the current list.

Firstly, the list contains Polynesian Storm-Petrel which was seen and photographed off Southport on January 19th 2013. Whilst the record has not yet formally been accepted by BARC, I think it is fair to say that given the photographs obtained, its addition to the list will not be controversial.

Secondly, I have not attempted to go into the taxonomy of certain groups too deeply. For example you will note in the list below that Black-browed Albatross and Campbell Albatross, and Shy and White-capped Albatross have been recorded as separate species. This was discussed with Paul Walbridge and follows the taxonomy set out of the SOSSA website (<http://www.sossa-international.org/forum/content.php>).

An additional, possible split which I have not added here is Great-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera macroptera*) from Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*) – both of which have been recorded from Southport, the former only once and the latter commonly.

Table 1 Current list of seabirds recorded from Southport Pelagic Trips to February 2013			
No.	Species	Specific name	Brief indication of Status (see key below)
1	Red-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>	S&W V
2	White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	Sp-S-A Sc
3	Wilson's Storm-Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	A-W-Sp C. Sc in S
4	White-faced Storm-Petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	A-W R
5	Black-bellied Storm-Petrel	<i>Fregatta tropica</i>	A-W-Sp F
6	White-bellied Storm-Petrel	<i>Fregatta gralaria</i>	A V
7	New Zealand Storm-Petrel	<i>Fregatta maoriana</i>	A,W & Sp V
8	Polynesian Storm-Petrel	<i>Nesofregatta fuliginosa</i>	S V
9	Wandering Albatross	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	W-Sp Sc
10	Antipodean Albatross	<i>Diomedea antipodensis</i>	W V
11	Gibson's Albatross	<i>Diomedea gibsoni</i>	A-W-Sp Sc
12	Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophrys</i>	W Sc
13	Campbell Albatross	<i>Thalassarche impavida</i>	W V
14	Buller's Albatross	<i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>	W V
15	Shy Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	W-Sp Sc
16	White-capped Albatross	<i>Thalassarche steadi</i>	W V
17	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>	A-W Sc
18	Light-mantled Sooty Albatross	<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>	W V
19	Southern Giant-Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	W-Sp Sc (declining)
20	Northern Giant-Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>	W-Sp Sc

21	Cape Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>	W-Sp Sc
22	Broad-billed Prion	<i>Pachyptila vittata</i>	W V
23	Antarctic Prion	<i>Pachyptila desolata</i>	W R
24	Slender-billed Prion	<i>Pachyptila belcheri</i>	W V
25	Salvin's Prion	<i>Pachyptila salvini</i>	W V
26	Fairy Prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>	W F
27	White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	W V
28	Westland Petrel	<i>Procellaria westlandica</i>	W V
29	Black Petrel	<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>	Sp-S-A R
30	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus pacifica</i>	Sp-S-A C
31	Buller's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bulleri</i>	S R
32	Flesh-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	Sp-S-A F
33	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus grisea</i>	A-W V
34	Short-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>	Sp-S C, A Sc
35	Streaked Shearwater	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	S-A Sc
36	Fluttering Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gavius</i>	All seasons C
37	Hutton's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	All Seasons C
38	Little Shearwater	<i>Puffinus assimilis</i>	W V
39	Tahiti Petrel	<i>Pseudobulweria rostrata</i>	All Seasons C V W
40	Kermadec Petrel	<i>Pterodroma neglecta</i>	All seasons, C
41	Herald Petrel	<i>Pterodroma heraldica</i>	A-W V
42	Soft-plumaged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	Sp V
43	White-headed Petrel	<i>Pterodroma lesson</i>	A-W-Sp V
44	Great-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera macroptera</i>	W V
44a	Grey-faced Petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera gouldi</i>	All seasons Sc-C
45	Providence Petrel	<i>Pterodroma solandri</i>	A-W-Sp C
46	Mottled Petrel	<i>Pterodroma inexpectata</i>	Sp V
47	Gould's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>	Sp-S-A Sc
48	White-necked Petrel	<i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>	Sp-S Sc
49	Black-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma nigripennis</i>	Sp-S Sc
50	Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>	S-A Sc
51	Greater Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>	S V
52	Australasian Gannet	<i>Morus serrator</i>	A-W-Sp C
53	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>	A-W R
54	Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>	S-A R
55	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	All seasons R
56	Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Microcarba melanoleucos</i>	S-A-W Sc
57	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Sp-S-A Sc
58	Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	All seasons C
59	Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	All seasons C

60	South Polar Skua	<i>Stercorarius maccormicki</i>	Sp-S-A R
61	Brown Skua	<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>	W-Sp R
62	Pomarine Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Sp-S-A F
63	Arctic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Sp-S-A Sc
64	Long-tailed Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Sp-S-A R
65	Common Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	All seasons Sc
66	Black Noddy	<i>Anous minutes</i>	Sp-S-A R
67	White Tern	<i>Gygis alba</i>	Sp-S-A R
68	Grey Ternlet	<i>Procelsterna cerulea</i>	S&W V
69	Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	W-Sp-S Sc
70	Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscata</i>	Sp-S-A F
71	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Sp-S-A Sc
72	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	S-A R
73	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	A-W-Sp Sc
74	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrid</i>	S V
75	White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	A V
76	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	S V
77	White-fronted Tern	<i>Sterna striata</i>	W V
78	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Sp-S-A F
79	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	W V
80	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	W V
81	Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	All seasons C
82	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	A V
83	Silver Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>	All seasons C

Key	Status
Season	C – Common
S – Summer	F – Frequent
A – Autumn	Sc – Scarce
W - Winter	R – Rare
Sp Spring	V – Vagrant

Recent additions to the Southport List

A number of new species of seabird have been added to the Southport list over the last decade or so. These include:

- Broad-billed Prion – 2 records (June / July)
- Salvin's Prion – 1 record (July)
- Westland Petrel – 1 record (August)
- New Zealand Storm-petrel – 3 records ((2 accepted to date) January, April, June.
- Polynesian Storm-petrel – 1 record (yet to be accepted, January)
- White-faced Storm-petrel – multiple records (April, May, June)
- Campbell Albatross – 1 record (June)
- Light-mantled Sooty Albatross – 1 record of 3 birds (June)
- White-capped Albatross – 1 record (August)

Some Photos of recent additions to the Southport List



Light-mantled Sooty Albatross - June 2012
Rob Morris



New Zealand Storm Petrel - June 2011
Rob Morris



White-capped Albatross –August 2011
Rob Morris



White-faced Storm-Petrel – April 2009
Rob Morris

A Prediction for new species which could be recorded from Southport

The January 2013 Polynesian Storm-Petrel was a widely predicted species from Southport, and even in the week leading up to the trip, which occurred just after Cyclone Freda went through New Caledonia and headed south towards New Zealand, Paul Walbridge had said to me “may be we’ll get a Polynesian Storm-petrel on this trip”. These discussions about new species which we could or should record off Southport led to me writing this note which is mainly a light-hearted prediction of the next possible new species for Southport:

1. **Cook’s Petrel** – this is my number one! A rare but regular east coast visitor from New Zealand. There is one sight record from North Stradbroke Island and it is sure to be seen in October or November in the coming years.



Cook's Petrel – will this be the next new species for Southport? Rob Morris

2. **Black-naped Tern** – this is a locally common bird in Queensland breeding as close to Southport as Lady Elliot Island. Birds occasionally occur along the east coast of Australia with a recent records on North Stradbroke Island and in northern NSW. Surely this species will turn up on one summer or early autumn trip?



**Black-naped Tern Lady Elliot Island
Rob Morris**

3. **Salvin's Albatross** – this very attractive cousin of the Shy Albatross is a regular visitor to the east coast of Australia from New Zealand and its sub-Antarctic Islands. A Salvin's Albatross was found alive on South Stradbroke Island in November 2010, and with regular evidence of birds arriving in South-East Queensland's (SEQ's) waters from New Zealand, this has to be a top candidate.



Salvin's Albatross – Kaikoura Rob Morris

4. **Sooty Albatross** – I can almost hear the doubters on this one now. Well there are records of beached washed birds on North Stradbroke Island and of a live bird on Fraser Island. With last year’s multiple sighting of Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses in SEQ’s waters, this highly sought-after gem has to be on the list.



Sooty Albatross – Port MacDonnell
Rob Morris

5. **Grey-headed Albatross** – another cold water albatross which is still a rare bird, even in the far south-east of Australia. Despite this there are historical beached washed records from North Stradbroke island from July, September and October and they have also been recorded on Fraser island.
6. **Northern Royal Albatross** – another cold water albatross which is seen annually in south-eastern Australia. Whilst as far as I can ascertain it has never been recorded in Queensland, its occurrence following an east coast low or severe weather further south in the winter or early spring remains a possibility. It is also worth noting a Southern Royal Albatross was seen and photographed off Townsville in 2010!



Northern Royal Albatross – Eaglehawk Neck
Rob Morris

7. **Collared Petrel** – this species inhabits tropical waters to the north east of Southport, the closest populations occurring around New Caledonia and Vanuatu. In recent years there have been at least three records from waters north of Norfolk Island in Australian waters. With increasing numbers of tropical species occurring off SEQ, this is certainly one we're on the lookout for.
8. **Common Diving Petrel** – a cold water species and one which has only ventured to Queensland once – a beach washed record on North Stradbroke Island in August 1961. Whilst this is an outside bet, should we have a surge of cold water up the east coast of Australia, this seabird could be seen again in SEQ.



Common Diving Petrel – Eaglehawk Neck
Rob Morris

9. **Little Penguin** – this is a species which occurs regularly north to the central coast of NSW. There are beach washed records from Fraser Island and North Stradbroke Island, and records of live birds being taken into care at SeaWorld on the Gold Coast. It would seem that it is only a matter of time before we get our first penguin on a Southport Pelagic.
10. **Bulwer's Petrel** – this species is recorded in the summer months in the northern Coral Sea and recently one was found inland near Oakey, near Toowoomba (SEQ), following the passing of ex Cyclone Oswald. This species is certainly something we have thought about seeing in the summer months, particularly following lows and cyclones.

What else could occur?

- Southern ocean visitors also recorded in SEQ waters include **Blue Petrel**, **Kerguelen Petrel** and **Southern Fulmar** all found beached washed on Fraser Island! In theory, any of these 3 species could occur in extreme conditions but all seem highly unlikely given how scarce they are further south.
- **Pacific Gull** – this rare visitor to SEQ could easily be encountered close in with gull flocks following a trawler. They have been found a number of times in SEQ mostly as immatures in the winter.
- **Vanuatu Petrel** which has been recorded beach washed in northern NSW. The main problem with recording this taxa (*Pterodroma occulta*) will be separating it from White-necked Petrel at sea.
- **Phoenix Petrel** – there are a number of records of this stunning petrel from the Kermadec Islands (north-east of New Zealand) and it has a broad tropical and sub-tropical distribution in the Pacific Ocean).
- **Magenta Petrel** – this species is an extremely rare breeder on the Chatham Islands of New Zealand. Whilst unlikely to occur off SEQ, it should be noted that a bird was recently satellite tracked crossing the Tasman Sea and it came close to Lord Howe Island before heading back east.

- **Pycroft's Petrel** – This scarce breeding species from the North Island of New Zealand could, like Cook's Petrel, turn up one day along the east coast of Australia, possibly off Southport! But at this stage, I understand that there are still no accepted records. Identification will be an issue for this tricky species as separation from Cook's Petrel can be problematic.
- **Stejneger's Petrel** – following the record off the Sunshine Coast in the spring of 2011, this species could in theory occur again, particularly in a passage of Mottled Petrels. Fingers crossed for those of us who missed the last one!
- **Northern Pacific Storm Petrels** – Any of the 3 all dark northern Pacific storm-petrels could in theory reach SEQ. Whilst **Swinhoe's** and **Matsudaira's Storm-petrels** occur regularly off the north-west coast of Australia, one could get caught up in a spring or summer weather system and visit us in Queensland. It should also be noted that a **Tristram's Storm-petrel** has made it all the way south to Sydney and could thus someday visit SEQ. **Madeiran** or **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** was sighted in some numbers on the recent 2013 Western Pacific Odyssey Expedition, somewhere to the north of PNG.

Some last thoughts....

Like many seabird enthusiasts, you will have already realised by now, in reading this note, that I am an eternal optimist! Every time we go to sea I know there is a chance, even if it is a small one, that something amazing will appear behind the boat! So far eighty-three species have been recorded from Southport trips and new species are recorded in most years. Ninety, and in the long term, perhaps even 100 species are possible from these trips. One 'thing' that has greatly enhanced our ability to identify and add new species of seabird on this (and other) pelagic trips is digital photography. I thoroughly recommend that you photograph all unusual birds and closely examine the photographs during and after the pelagic trips. A number of species which 20 years ago would have remained unidentified have been identified from photos after the trip including new species for Australia – such as the 2011 Sunshine Coast Stejneger's Petrel.

Rarities Submissions (with some carried over from previous years)

Species	Submitter	Sighting Date	Case No.	Verdict
Brown Skua <i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>	P. Walbridge	17/7/2011	BQRAC	Pending
Buller's Albatross <i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>	P. Walbridge	17/7/2011	BQRAC 163	Accepted
Mottled Petrel <i>Pterodroma inexpectata</i> *	P. Walbridge	5/11/2011	BQRAC 162	Accepted
Stejneger's Petrel <i>Pterodroma longirostris</i> *	P. Walbridge	5/11/2011	BARC 720	Accepted
Long-tailed Jaeger <i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	P. Walbridge	17/3/2012	BQRAC	Pending
New Zealand Storm-Petrel <i>Fregatta maoriana</i>	P. Walbridge	14-15/4/2012	BARC 755	Accepted
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross <i>P. palpebrata</i>	P. Walbridge	16/6/2012	BQRAC	Submitted
Polynesian Storm-Petrel <i>Nesofregatta fuliginosa</i>	P. Walbridge	19/1/2013	BARC 774	Submitted

* Records from Mooloolaba, Qld.

Acknowledgements

First of all of course, I would like to thank all the patrons that braved the conditions throughout the year and would hope that they enjoyed themselves enough out in the vast Blue Paddock enough to come out again. Despite what the figures suggest, there is a core of enthusiasts here in SEQ (some, SOSSA members) that have participated in the pelagics for some years. I would also like to thank the continued support of SOSSA, both with the website and the showing of patrons our way, also with technical support when needed. Finally but not least, the continued, tireless support from our skipper, Craig Newton, who takes great effort in making sure our trips go ahead, even when the conditions are less than favourable. His vessel the 'Grinner' is a reliable, well appointed, stable vessel that can move at speed if we need it to. Thanks also, to the owners of the Texas Tea, the

well appointed vessel that we used for the highly successful Sea Mounts expedition. Also, many thanks to Jack Shick of Lord Howe for his splendid images of Herald Petrel, which greatly enhanced the notes on Kermadec Petrel.

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