



## NSW Rarities Committee Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission for a major rarity in Australia. (It is not a mandatory requirement) Please complete all sections ensuring that you attach all relevant information including copies of your notes, photographs or other supportive material. (PLEASE USE BLACK INK).

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<b>Species Name:</b> <b>Grey-backed Storm-petrel (GBSP)</b>	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <b><i>Garrodia nereis</i></b>
Date(s) and time(s) of observation:	13 August 2011
How long did you watch the bird(s)?	10 min (approx. 10:10am-10:20am)
First and last date of occurrence:	13 August 2011
Distance to bird:	Down to 20 meters

<b>Site Location</b> Continental shelf break, off Sydney, NSW
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<b>Habitat</b> (describe habitat in which the bird was seen, together with any neighbouring habitats): Pelagic. Continental shelf break.
<b>Sighting conditions</b> (weather, visibility, light conditions etc.): Clear visibility, calm weather, overcast, excellent light conditions. See attached pictures.
<b>Optical aids used:</b> Leica 12x50 BA and others; Photos: Canon 7D, Canon 400mm, 5.6

<b>To your knowledge, is the species seen frequently at this site?</b> Rarely.
<b>Did you use a field guide?</b> The bird was identified spontaneously without using a field guide – RH, RS and NH had previously studied all available literature and were involved in a discussion with international experts on white/streak-bellied storm-petrels. References: ENTICOTT, J. & D. TIPLING (1997): Seabirds of the World. London. • DOWDALL, J., S. ENRIGHT, K. FAHY, J. GILLIGAN, G. LILLIE, M. O'KEEFE (2009): Unidentified Storm-Petrels, Puerto Montt, Chile, February, 2009. <a href="http://scillypelagics.com/Oceanites_Puerto_Montt_Chile.html">http://scillypelagics.com/Oceanites_Puerto_Montt_Chile.html</a> • FLOOD, B. (2003): The New Zealand Storm-petrel is not extinct. <i>Birding World</i> 16: 479-482. • FLOOD, B. (2009): A quest for storm-petrels. <i>Birding World</i> 22: 125-127. • GASKIN, C. & K. BAIRD (2005): Observations of black and white storm petrels in the Hauraki Gulf, November 2003 to June 2005. Were they of New Zealand Storm-petrels? <i>Notornis</i> 52: 181-194. • HARRISON, P. (1983): Seabirds, an identification guide. Beckenham • HARRISON, P. (1987): Seabirds of the World. A Photographic Guide. London. • HARRISON, P. (2011): A New Species of Seabird - A new species of storm-petrel found in Chile <a href="http://www.birdingnz.net/forum/viewtopic.php?f=15&amp;t=1070">http://www.birdingnz.net/forum/viewtopic.php?f=15&amp;t=1070</a> • HOWELL, S.N.G. & C. COLLINS (2008). A possible New Zealand Storm-petrel off New Caledonia, southwest Pacific. <i>Birding World</i> 21: 207-209 • DEL HOYO, J., A. ELLIOTT & J. SARGATAL (1992): Handbook of the Birds of the World. Vol. 1. - Barcelona. • MARCHANT, S. & P.J. HIGGINS (eds) (1990). Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 1: Ratites to Ducks. Melbourne. • MARTIN, J.P. (2009): The Fregetta petrel in Avon – a bird new to Europe. <i>Birding World</i> 22: 457-458. • MURPHY, R.C. & J.P. SNYDER (1952): The "Pealea" phenomenon and other notes on storm petrels. <i>American Museum Novitates</i> 1506: 1-16. • ONLEY, D. & P. SCOFIELD (2007): Albatrosses, Petrels & Shearwaters of the World. Princeton. • PIZZEY, G. & F. KNIGHT (2007, 8 <sup>th</sup> ed.): The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. Sydney. • SAVILLE, S., B. STEPHENSON & I. SOUTHEY (2003):

A possible sighting of an 'extinct' bird – the New Zealand Storm-petrel. *Birding World* 16: 173-175. • SHIRIHAI, H. (2007, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.): A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife. London. • SIMPSON, K. & N. DAY (2004, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.): Birds of Australia. Princeton. • STEPHENSON, B.M., C.P. GASKIN, R. GRIFFITHS, K.A. BAIRD, R.L. PALMA & M.J. IMBER (2008): The New Zealand storm-petrel (*Pealeornis maoriana* Mathews, 1932): first live capture and species assessment of an enigmatic seabird. *Notornis* 55: 191-206.

**Were other observers present Do any of the other observers disagree with your identification, if so, who?** (please give names, addresses and phone numbers)?

Other observers: The bird was first seen and called by RH it was also seen by RS (see photos), NH, David James, Troy Mutton, Steve Anyon-Smith, Hal Epstein and more participants of the Sydney pelagic. Nobody disagreed with the ID.

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

**Other details:** e.g. Do you have historical and or anecdotal information/comments relating to the prior occurrence/status of the species within or near this location?

This species is a rare visitor of the area (there was one 9<sup>th</sup> July off Sydney and another 28<sup>th</sup> May off Wollongong)

### Physical Description.

(1) one individual was observed;

(2) age and sex: unknown;

(3) size and shape: tiny storm-petrel; compact jizz with broad, short wings and square (folded) to rounded (spread) tail. Legs short, but toes projected beyond tail.

(4) plumage colour and pattern (including any details of moult): **Underparts:** Dark hood (head, chin, throat to upper breast), sharply demarcated from pure white lower breast to undertail coverts. Dark tail. Pure white underwing coverts and primary bases, contrasting to broad black leading edge and dark secondaries. **Upperparts:** Dark hood, conspicuous grey mantle, back and upperwing coverts and pale grey rump, uppertail coverts and rectrix bases, contrasting to dark terminal tail band. White tips to greater and median upperwing coverts formed a double wing bar.

(5) colour of bill, eyes and legs/feet: black

(6) calls: none heard

(7) behaviour, movements, flight pattern, and anything else that might help to identify the bird e.g. feeding, interactions with other birds, describe where the bird was – on ground, in canopy, flying etc. Were comparisons made with other species? While feeding/pattering wings were mostly held horizontally with very shallow wing beats (more reminiscent of a flying fish rather than a butterfly). Active flight fast and direct.



Figure 1: Compact jizz with broad short wings and toe projection. Dark hood, conspicuous grey mantle, back and upperwing coverts and pale grey rump, uppertail coverts and rectrix bases, contrasting to dark terminal tail band. White tips to greater and median upperwing coverts formed a double wing bar. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 2: See Fig. 1. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 3: Compact jizz with broad short wings and toe projection. Dark hood (head, chin, throat to upper breast), sharply demarcated from pure white lower breast to barred undertail coverts. Pure white underwing coverts and primary bases, contrasting to broad black leading edge and dark secondaries. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 4: Flight with wings held horizontally. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 5: Flight with wings held horizontally. Photo: Raja Stephenson.





Figure 6: Comparison to Black-browed Albatross. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 7: While feeding/pattering wings were mostly held horizontally with very shallow wing beats (more reminiscent of a flying fish rather than a butterfly). Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 8: See Fig. 7. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 9: See Fig. 7. Photo: Raja Stephenson.

**Other species with which you think it might be confused and how these were eliminated?**

White-bellied form of Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (e.g. Puerto Montt) and Elliot's Storm-Petrel *O. gracilis*: More butterfly-like flight style. White rump, black tail. White on underparts not as extensive and clear-cut.

New Zealand Storm-Petrel *Pealeornis maoriana* (NZSP): More Wilson's-like jizz and flight style. Streaks instead of sharp demarcation between dark and white underparts. White rump, black tail. Very long legs (projecting further beyond tail).

White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta grallaria* (WBSP): Larger and bulkier body, shorter legs, more triangular wings, white rump, black tail. Very different flight and feeding behaviour.

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregetta tropica* (BBSP): Larger and bulkier body, longer legs, more triangular wings, white rump, black tail. If not showing typical black central belly line, usually shows at least a more v-shaped dark upper breast extending further down and dark under tail coverts. Usually shows whitish chin/throat. White underwing coverts usually appear "dirtier". Very different flight and feeding behaviour.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina* (WFSP): Much larger, very long legs. Except for grey rump very different plumage pattern. Very different flight and feeding behaviour.

**Was the description written from notes and/or sketches made** (tick box):

during the observation or;  shortly after the observation or;  from memory?

**Please indicate supportive evidence available.**

Was the bird: X photographed,  taped or  video taped? If yes to any of these, by whom?

[http://www.adarman.com/Pelagics/2011-August-13-Sydney-Pelagic/18525451\\_4CF4hR#1430019402\\_PC4cw7j](http://www.adarman.com/Pelagics/2011-August-13-Sydney-Pelagic/18525451_4CF4hR#1430019402_PC4cw7j)

**What experience have you had with the species in question?** (Did you know it was a Rare bird when you first saw it?)

RH has extensive experience with storm-petrels having participated in many pelagic trips off California, Washington State, New Jersey/New York, Delaware/Maryland, North Carolina, New South Wales, Lord Howe and Queensland. RH has seen GBSP on 28<sup>th</sup> May off Wollongong. Although he had seen GBSP only once before, he spontaneously identified the bird and knew that it was a rare bird in the area.

RS has extensive experience with storm-petrels having participated in many pelagic trips off New Jersey/New York, Delaware/Maryland, North Carolina, New South Wales and Queensland. RS has seen GBSP on 28<sup>th</sup> May off Wollongong and on 9<sup>th</sup> July off Sydney. Although she had seen GBSP only twice before, she spontaneously identified the bird and knew that it was a rare bird in the area.

NH has been an active member in the Rare Birds Committees of Hessen, Germany, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, and New Jersey, USA. NH has extensive experience with seabirds having been pelagic trip leader on many trips off California, New Jersey/New York and Delaware/Maryland and having participated on many pelagic trips off North Carolina, Galapagos, New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand. NH has seen a total of 15 species of storm-petrels, including GBSP and similar species such as Wilson's, Elliot's, NZSP, WFSP, WBSP and BBSP. Although he had seen GBSP only twice before, he spontaneously identified the bird and knew that it was a rare bird in the area.

**Signature:**



**Date: 13 August 2011**

Please forward all material to: The Secretary, NSW Rarities Committee, 1/67, Cremorne Road, Cremorne, NSW 2090