



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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Species Name: Grey-backed Storm-petrel (GBSP)	Scientific Name: <i>Garrodia nereis</i>
Date(s) and time(s) of observation:	9 July 2011
How long did you watch the bird(s)?	20 min (11:47am-12:07pm)
First and last date of occurrence:	9 July 2011
Distance to bird:	Down to 20 meters

Site Location Continental shelf break, off Sydney, NSW (10-15 nautical miles south of Brown's Mountain?)
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Habitat (describe habitat in which the bird was seen, together with any neighbouring habitats): Pelagic. Continental shelf break.
Sighting conditions (weather, visibility, light conditions etc.): Clear visibility, calm sunny weather, excellent light conditions. See attached pictures.
Optical aids used: Leica 12x50 BA and others; Photos: Canon 7D, Canon 400mm, 5.6

To your knowledge, is the species seen frequently at this site? Rarely.
Did you use a field guide? The bird was identified spontaneously without using a field guide – several observers (NH, RS) 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. http://scillypelagics.com/Oceanites_Puerto_Montt_Chile.html • 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 http://www.birdingnz.net/forum/viewtopic.php?f=15&t=1070 • 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. • PIZZHEY, G. & F. KNIGHT (2007, 8 th 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, 2nd ed.): A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife. London. • SIMPSON, K. & N. DAY (2004, 7th 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 by Edwin Vella who called a “storm-petrel with a white belly”, it was then identified either by David James, Edwin Vella or myself (not sure who was the fastest/loudest), it was also seen by Murray Lord, Nevil Lazarus, 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.

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? This time (as opposed to the 28 May 2011 observation off Wollongong) the bird was seen mostly in its active fast and direct flight with rapid wing beats (combined with the tiny size, almost reminiscent of a hummingbird!). (Note: the feeding behaviour with wings mostly held horizontally and very shallow wing beats (reminiscent of a flying fish) was not obvious in this observation.)

Interestingly, the pattern of the hood at the right lateral chest may indicate that this bird is identical with the Wollongong bird 28th May 2011 (see NSW ORAC submission for this bird).



Figure 1: Pure white lower breast to undertail coverts. Dark square tail (folded). Toe projection. Pure white underwing coverts and primary bases, contrasting to broad black leading edge and dark secondaries. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 2: 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 3: Compact jizz with broad short wings, toe projection and square tail (folded). Dark hood (head, chin, throat to upper breast), sharply demarcated from pure white lower breast to undertail coverts. Conspicuous 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. (The hood/chest pattern may indicate that this bird is identical with the Wollongong bird 28th May 2011.) Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 4: Compact jizz with broad short wings, toe projection and square tail (folded). Dark hood (head, chin, throat to upper breast), sharply demarcated from pure white lower breast to undertail coverts. Pure white underwing coverts and primary bases, contrasting to broad black leading edge and dark secondaries. Photo: Raja Stephenson.



Figure 5: 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: Murray Lord.

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: photographed, taped or video taped? If yes to any of these, by whom?

http://www.adarman.com/Pelagics/2011-July-09-Sydney-Pelagic/17956676_W84tLC#1375196828_w3xFQWw

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

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 once before, he spontaneously identified the bird and knew that it was a rare bird in the area.

Signature:

Date: 9 July 2011