

Memorandum to: The Director of Birds Australia
From: Birdlife Australia Rarities Committee (BARC)
Date: 31st January 2012

Voting Members: Danny Rogers Andrew Silcocks
 Jeff Davies Chris Brandis
 Tony Palliser Mike Carter
 David Bishop Rohan Clarke

Cc.

Submission No 691: New Zealand Storm Petrel *Pealeornis maoriana* at sea off Wollongong, NSW 24th April 2010 (Unpublished) Submitted by: Nikolas Haass.

Verdict: Accepted

This case involves the occurrence of a New Zealand Storm Petrel *Pealeornis maoriana* seen and photographed on the continental shelf break off Wollongong, NSW on the 24th April 2010.

The description outlines a small-medium, square-tailed, long-winged storm-petrel with a dark head and upper breast and white belly with dark streaks on flanks, lateral belly, and lower breast. The long, broad white underwing panels extended well onto the primary coverts and the bird displayed a large white rump that wrapped around to the white underparts. The feet protruded well beyond the tail.

The submission was careful to rule out all possible confusion species including: White-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta grallaria*, Black-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta tropica*, Wilson's Storm Petrel (white bellied form) *Oceanites oceanicus* and Elliot's Storm Petrel *Oceanites gracilis*. Also, given the magnitude of the find the authors were careful to eliminate little known museum specimens that have been loosely labelled as 'Striped Storm Petrel *Thalassidroma lineata* or *Fregetta lineata*.

Members found the submission well-constructed and voted unanimously in favour of acceptance. The photographs & description being entirely consistent with New Zealand Storm Petrel as we know and understand their structure and plumage from the Hauraki Gulf in New Zealand.

This is the second record to be accepted for Australia, the first was a record a month earlier from Port Stephens, NSW (BARC Case No. 636) on the 28th March 2010. A series of sightings from 2003 to the present indicate the presence of a previously unknown colony most likely breeding somewhere within the Hauraki Gulf in New Zealand

Suggested Bibliography:

- BARC Case No. 636. New Zealand Storm Petrel, Port Stephens, NSW.
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- Harrison, P. (1983), *Seabirds: an identification guide*, Croom Helm, Beckenham, Kent.

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- Robertson, Bruce; Brent M. Stephenson & Sharyn J. Goldstien (2011). "When rediscovery is not enough: Taxonomic uncertainty hinders conservation of a critically endangered bird".
- Gaskin, C.P.; Baird, K.A. (2005). "Observations of black and white storm petrels in the Hauraki Gulf, November 2003 to June 2005; were they of New Zealand storm petrels?". *Notornis* **52**: 181–194.
- Saville, S.; Stephenson, B.; Southey, I. (2003). "A possible sighting of an 'extinct' bird – the New Zealand storm petrel". *Birding World* **16**: 173–175.

Tony Palliser

Chair: Birdlife Australia Rarities Committee.