



## Birds Australia 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).

<b>Full Name:</b> Dr. Nikolas K. Haass	Office Use
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<b>Species Name:</b> Westland Petrel	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <i>Procellaria westlandica</i>
Date(s) and time(s) of observation:	24/11/2007; 10:35am, then again 10:38am
How long did you watch the bird(s)?	A few minutes
First and last date of occurrence:	24/11/2007
Distance to bird:	First overhead, then again parallel to boat, 30 m

<b>Site Location</b> (e.g 3km SE of Lavers Hill, Victoria) Wollongong Pelagic: 34° 27'S : 151° 16'E
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<b>Habitat</b> (describe habitat in which the bird was seen, together with any neighbouring habitats): pelagic
<b>Sighting conditions</b> (weather, visibility, light conditions etc.): Sea conditions: calm at first then SSE 1.0 to 2.0 m, Swell: NE 2.0 to 3.0m offshore, Weather: heavy rain squalls early remaining cloudy in the afternoon, Temperature range: 19.6 to 21.1°C, Barometric pressure: 1004 hPa rising, Wind: SSE 10 to 15 knots, Sea surface temperature: 20.3 to 22.5°C, clear visibility (see photographs)
<b>Optical aids used:</b> Leica 12x50 BA

<b>To your knowledge, is the species seen frequently at this site?</b> Apparently Westland Petrel has been recorded off of NSW
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<b>Did you use a field guide?</b> (or any other references for help with identification). The bird was identified spontaneously without using a field guide. For confirmation PIZZEY & KNIGHT (2007), SIMPSON & DAY (2004) and ONLEY & SCOFIELD (2007) were consulted immediately on the boat. Moreover, previously and subsequently NH has read following references: ENTICOTT, J. & D. TIPLING (1997): Seabirds of the World. London. • HARRISON, P. (1983): Seabirds, an identification guide. Beckenham • HARRISON, P. (1987): Seabirds of the World. A Photographic Guide. London. • HOWELL, S.N.G. (2006): Identification of "Black Petrels", Genus <i>Procellaria</i> . Birding 38: 52-64. • DEL HOYO, J., A. ELLIOTT & J. SARGATAL (1992): Handbook of the Birds of the World. Vol. 1. - Barcelona. • 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. • SIMPSON, K. & N. DAY (2004, 7 <sup>th</sup> ed.): Birds of Australia. Princeton.
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<b>Were other observers present Do any of the other observers disagree with your identification, if so, who?</b> (please give names, addresses and phone numbers)? Peter Milburn, Lindsey Smith, Martin Gottschling, Grant Penrhyn and others
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**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? *If more space is needed for any section, please attach with your notes.*

Apparently Westland Petrel has been recorded off of NSW

**Physical Description of Bird - Please describe only what you saw:** (1) No. of individuals present (living or dead); (2) age (adult, juvenile, immature) and sex; (3) size and shape; (4) plumage colour and pattern (including any details of moult); (5) colour of bill, eyes and legs/feet; (6) calls; (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? *Please also state whether you saw the complete bird or only part of it?* (e.g. upper/lower/front/rear of bird).

(1) one individual; (2) age and sex unknown; (3) distinctly larger and bulkier than large shearwaters (see [1A] for comparison with Wedge-tailed Shearwater), with larger head, stouter bill and broader wings, feet projecting behind short tail (see [1B]) ; TL:WS ratio=1:3 (measured in Fig. 2); (4) overall blackish brown – including chin, bases to primaries paler; (5) large bill; sulcus, culmicorn and naricorn appear dark, naricorn, latericorn and unguis appear pale in [1B], unguis appear darker in [1A; 2]; nostrils appear very long [B]; legs and feet blackish; iris dark; (6) no calls were heard; (7) crossed the boat twice soaring in the high winds, there were no direct interactions with other birds (Flesh-footed, Wedge-tailed, Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters as well as Great-winged/Grey-faced Petrels were around).

*(Attach a description and where possible a copy your field notes)*

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

White-chinned Petrel: very similar, should show paler tip to the bill and some white at the chin, but in some white on chin is lacking

Spectacled Petrel: very similar, should show paler tip to the bill and conspicuous white facial markings

Parkinson's Petrel: should be notably smaller, being more-or-less the same size as a large shearwater, such as Flesh-footed (Howell 2006) or Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Parkinson's has a smaller and more-rounded head, a smaller bill; in flight its wings often look relatively long and narrow compared to the broader-winged "big three". Relative to Flesh-footed Shearwater, the bill of Parkinson's Petrel is about the same length but averages deeper (Howell 2006).

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*: notably smaller, being more-or-less the same size as a Wedge-tailed Shearwater; smaller head and more slender bill.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *P. pacifica*: notably smaller; smaller head and more slender dark bill.

Sooty *P. griseus* and Short-tailed Shearwaters *P. tenuirostris*: notably smaller; smaller head and more slender dark bill

Great-winged/Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma (macroptera) gouldi*: smaller, less bulky; small dark bill

Giant-petrels *Macronectes spec.*: very large; more humpbacked appearance; relatively slimmer and longer wings; massive bill

Short-tailed Albatross *Phoebastria albatrus*: very large; relatively more slender and longer wings; pale feet

Other dark shearwaters and petrels ruled out by the description above.

*(Please append your comments / views following your description)*

**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?

Photos by Martin Gottschling (Fig. 1) and Grant Penrhyn (Fig. 2)



Fig. 1: both photographs by Martin Gottschling



Fig. 2: photograph by Grant Penrhyn

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

This was the first time, NH & MG saw a Westland Petrel. NH has extensive experience with seabirds having been pelagic trip leader on many trips off of California, New Jersey and Delaware and having participated on many pelagic trips off of North Carolina, Galapagos and New South Wales. NH has been an active member in the Rare Birds Committees of Hessen, Germany, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, and – most recently – New Jersey, USA. NH & MG immediately knew that it was a rare bird.

**Signature:**

**Date:** 26/11/2007 \_\_\_\_\_

Sent by e-mail

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Hart', written over the 'Sent by e-mail' text.

Please forward all material to: The Secretary, Birds Australia Rarities Committee, Birds Australia HQ, Riverside Road, East Hawthorn, VIC 3123