

**Memorandum to:** The Director of Birds Australia  
**From:** Birds Australia Rarities Committee (BARC)  
**Date:** 21 August 2008

**Voting Members:** Dion Hobcroft                      Glenn Holmes  
Chris Brandis                                      Mike Carter  
Tony Palliser                                      Jamie Matthew  
Rohan Clarke                                      Jeff Davies

cc.

**Submission No. 560: Westland Petrel *Procellaria westlandica*, off Wollongong (34°27'S, 151°16'E) NSW, 24 November 2007 (Unpublished).**

**Verdict: Not Accepted**

This submission concerns the sighting of a dark *Procellaria* petrel off Wollongong, NSW (34°27'S, 151°16'E ) on 24 November 07. The bird was seen and photographed by a number of observers.

The content provided to the committee outlines the circumstances behind the sighting and details how the identification was established. The bird was distinctly larger than comparable species such as Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* and Flesh-footed Shearwater *P. carneipes*. With a larger head, stouter bill, broader wings and feet that were noted to project slightly behind the tail. The bill was large with the sulcus, culmicorn and naricorn appearing all-dark.

Committee members were divided in their opinions with            members voting in favour and four voting against acceptance. Those voting against acceptance did so because they felt (1) there was not enough detail available regarding the extent of black on the bill plates (2) all three dark *Procellaria* petrels do display some variation in size and bill colour and (3) the photographs depict a bird that appears to fit the body bulk more appropriate for a Black Petrel *P. parkinsoni*. Photographs also suggest that the bill tip was not uniformly black as one would expect on a typical Westland Petrel. Indeed careful scrutiny of the photographs prompted several members to suggest that the bird was more likely a Black Petrel; a species that is now reported annually of the NSW central coast at this time of year.

To date, BARC has accepted just six records of the Westland Petrel.

#### **References and Bibliography:**

- Enticott, J. & Tipling, D. 1977. *Photographic Handbook of the Seabirds of the World*, New Holland, London.
- Harrison, P. 1989. *Seabirds of the World: A Photographic Guide*. Christopher Helm, London.
- Marchant, S. & P.J. Higgins. (Eds). 1990. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds*, Volume 1 (part A). Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Tony Palliser  
Chairman, Birds Australia Rarities Committee