

Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association Inc.

" Wildlife Research "



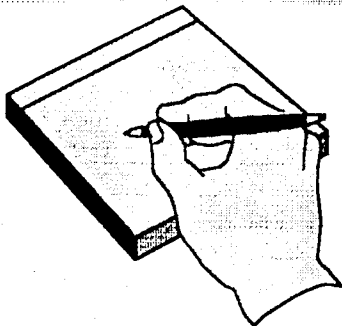
As this is the final newsletter for 1997 we would like to wish you
A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
TO ALL MEMBERS & FRIENDS
FROM THE COMMITTEE & STAFF AT SOSSA



ISSUE No. 16

"ALBATROSS"
NEWSLETTER **DECEMBER**

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EDITORIAL

It's fast approaching Christmas and much has happened since the last edition, August 1997. No 15 no less!

It is the support of a few dedicated souls that has held us together, The SOSSA committee have welcomed the support that has been forthcoming from our membership & our sponsors this year.

The shooting of Wandering Albatrosses at Sydney and Bermagui has bought a tinge of sadness to this issue. The willingness of the Tuna Boat Owners Association to condemn such actions and offer a reward for the conviction of the perpetrators is welcome news. We welcome their support and liaison in this matter.

The discovery of the Gough Is Wanderer in Australian waters, by Captain Carl Loves was a great surprise and created much interest, as did the recovery of several banded mollymawks by the NSWASG.

The second issue of "The Petrel" by the BSSG is a clear indication of the interest being taken in seabirds in Australia. This topped off with the discovery of a Royal Penguin in NSW has made for a very interesting end to the year.

For the first time BHP Port Kembla have sponsored us with the generous donation of a new 3.8 metre aluminium boat a Brooker "Albatross" which was supplied by Bode Bros Marine Wollongong & Brooker Boats.

We have also managed to secure further Sponsorship from "Holts Australia", who in the past have supported the NSW Albatross Study Group by supplying paint, for colour marking Albatrosses off Wollongong. The "FLUORO COLOURS", particularly the yellow and green were found to be outstanding in the field. With this in mind and the safety of our field workers, often ourselves!, we have painted our new boat and trailer in these colours. It certainly stands out !!, thanks to Holts Dupli-colour for the supply of the paint for the boat as well.

To our friends at Coast Guard Port Kembla (Hill 60) volunteers. Thank you once again for your support and diligence in the monitoring our trips to the islands and keeping an eye on our research hut on the island in 1997.

Many thanks to all who have helped out in 1997, Merry Xmas and best wishes for 1998.

Cheers

The SOSSA committee

WANDERING ALBATROSS - " SHOT "**ALBATROSS SHOT AT BERMAGUI**

THURSDAY 25/09/97 Interested birders, must see this. We have been informed of a "Wandering" Albatross ashore at Bares Beach, NSW (200 km south of Wollongong) by the local members of the Wildlife Information Rescue & Emergency Service (W.I.R.E.S). Initially, Pam Bates managed to stabilise the bird by administering first aid but, unfortunately, the bird since has died, succumbing to blood loss and shock.

The carcass of the dead albatross arrived at SOSSA HQ. Saturday 27th September. Post mortem examination conducted by Matthew O'Donnell Veterinary Surgeon (Cannon & Ball, Wollongong), indicated that the bird had been shot by a high powered rifle whilst flying!

From an initial examination it is believed that this bird may be from the Macquarie Island population, which is threatened with extinction (as few as 5 pairs breed annually).

The above incident follows a similar incident east of Sydney on September 13, 1997, which is currently under investigation. In past years there have been several other incidences involving seabirds being shot.

Ross Hunter "Broadbill Charters" reported that he had picked up Six albatrosses which had been shot at Brown's Mountain a well known sea-mount east of Botany Bay in June 1996.

Members of the New South Wales Albatross Study Group (NSWASG) have in the past also collected birds shot at sea off Wollongong.

THIS BARBARIC AND WILFUL SHOOTING OF ALBATROSSES AND OTHER SEABIRDS, MUST STOP!!!.

We would ask that all people who share our concerns make their feelings known by writing to state and federal environment ministers expressing outrage at the current spate of shootings.

At our request, The East Coast Tuna Boat Owners Association Inc & Tuna Boat Owners Association Inc. Have thrown their support behind us by issuing a reward for information leading to the arrest of the offenders.

REWARD

For those that may be interested to know more about the Wandering Albatross that was shot at Bermagui, N.S.W, on the 25th September 1997.

**East Coast Tuna Boat Owners Association Inc.
& Tuna Boat Owners Association Inc.**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE - October 7th 1997

The Australian tuna industry has offered a reward for information leading to the conviction of those responsible for the shooting of two albatrosses in N.S.W. last week.

The offer follows discussion with the Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association which has played a very active role in following up the shootings. The reward will now be discussed with enforcement authorities on how it can most constructively be used.

After monitoring it's own boats, the Tuna Association notes that none of it's members could have been involved in these events. However as part of the marine community, it accepts some of the responsibility for eliminating practices that impact on seabird populations.

The Tuna Association will be contacting other marine user groups to take parallel action. If we all join together on such issues, then those responsible for any act like last week are much more likely to be caught.

The industry looks forward to continuing cooperation with all groups on the issue, including greater penalties if required.

Contact:

Mr. Hans Jusseit, Executive Director, East Coast Tuna Boat Owners Association telephone 079-729870, Mobile 018-020 326.

Brian Jeffriess, President, Tuna Boat Owners Association of Australia. telephone 08-8373 2507, Mobile 0419 840 299. *

"THE PETREL"

Annual Field Report of 1996 Brisbane Seabird Study Group

This the second report of its type produced on the occurrence of seabirds in the Brisbane/Gold Coast waters. The Petrel is an outstanding achievement in it's own right. The dedication and interest shown by the Brisbane Group in acquiring data and producing this document is apparent in the result. From this work we can hopefully learn more of the status of seabirds, their numbers and their movements. An account of the passage migration of the Mottled *Petrel* (*Pterodroma inexpecta*) and the influence of El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) on it's course, is presented by Paul Walbridge and Tony Ashby.

David Stewart presents a detailed account of the identification of the Fregetta Storm-Petrels, Black-bellied and White-bellied.

John Izzard gives an account of the movements of seabirds along the coast at Ballina northern N.S.W.

The Petrel also gives a systematic list of seabirds observed from land based sights in the northern regions. This account shows that a great variety and number of seabirds that can be observed from shore without having to venture out to sea. This will be of interest to those amongst us who would like to observe seabirds but are unable to go to sea for fear of sea sickness.

This project is proudly supported by SEAWORLD on the GOLD COAST and the Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association.

Limited copies of the PETREL - 1st report 1995 are still available.

" SHORE LINES "

"Leopard Seal Comes Ashore"

15th September 1997, at M.M Beach, Port Kembla (Near Wollongong).

There had been several sighting of Australian fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus*) off Wollongong and Sydney in recent weeks. We were advised by local police that a seal had come ashore at Port Kembla. On investigation we expected to find an Australian fur seal. We were very surprised to find that the animal that had come ashore was indeed a Leopard Seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*), possibly a young male it stayed in the region for a few days and was

last sighted on North Wollongong beach before returning to the sea at 22:00 Hrs on September 16th. The animal showed no apparent injuries though it appeared to be a bit light on weight.

Penguins are sometimes included in the Leopard Seals diet. The Little Penguins breeding on the Five Islands had better be quick ! or it could be Oop's there goes another "Little Penguin".

SEA WATCHING and /or GAME FISHING

BOAT TRIPS

Are Run From

Wollongong, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth

Private Charter enquires are welcome

Scheduled Boat Trips For 1998

SANDRA "K" NEXT BOAT TRIPS

28th December 1997

(special Christmas trip)

Sundays

25th January 1998, 22nd February 98,

22nd March 98



Bookings for Wollongong Boat Trips

Contact

CAPTAIN CARL LOVES , 018-423 555 or

Email: fishing@wollongong.starway.net.au
or Phone: International to Australia, 61-18-423-555

Sydney Boat Trips

Contact TONY PALLISER on

palliser@zip.com.au

PH: 02-9427 7563-H.

PH: 02-9900 1678-W.

Western Australia Pelagic Trips

Contact

FRANK O'CONNOR

8 C Hardy Road, Nedlands. W.A. 6009

PH: 08-9386 5694-H.

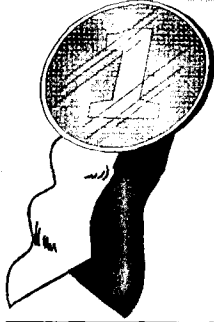
PH: 08-9167 1445-W.

Email: o'connor@argylediamonds.com.au

Boat Trip Data Sheets are on the back page s.

GOUGH ISLAND ALBATROSS

A FIRST FOR AUSTRALIA



Captain Carl Loves of the research vessel Sandra K is claiming a first for Australia.

On September 20th 1997 Captain Carl captured a Wandering Albatross carrying a South African Band. The number - JO 9313. He asked me to follow it up and find out where it came from. In the past the New South Wales Albatross Study Group NSWASG, had captured banded birds carrying South African Bands. These birds had all been tagged by South African scientists on Marion Island (part of the Prince Edward Group), in the South Indian Ocean 46° 54 S 37° 45E. It was suspected that this bird would be of the same origin. We Contacted Lisa Hardy at the Australian Bird & Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS), in regard to the above bird.

Subject: South African Albatrosses
Lisa, would you please bother Terry Oatley for the banding details for these South Africans.

Species	Band Number	Location	Date
Wandering Alb.	J10352	34° 26' S, 151° 23' E	20/09/97
Wandering Alb.	J09313	34° 26' S, 151° 23' E	05/10/97

Recovered by SOSSA (8022)

Terry Oatley, Avian Demography Unit South Africa, confirmed that JO 9313 was banded as a chick on Gough Island 40 20S 09 55W, on 30th October 1992. This would indicate that the above mentioned bird was of the race *Diomedea exulans dabbenena*, the Tristan Albatross. The time between banding and recovery was 4 years 11 months 5 days and the bird had moved at least 11,480 km. on a bearing of 164 degrees.

Harry Battam's reply to Terry Oatley, Lisa Hardy & Peter Prince.

J09313 is the first Gough Island bird that we have had. I suspect may be the first recorded in this part of the world. Would you mind checking your recovery records on this point and letting us know.

Reply from Terry Oatley. This is the first Gough Island Wanderer to be recovered in your part of the

5

globe. Prior to this control, there have been only five recoveries of Gough Island Wanderers. Two of these were east Greenwich, one at Tripp seamount 29° 46S 14° 07 E and the other at 34° 18S 17° 28 E.

The other three were at 42° 01S 05 50W in June 1962 (longline), 32° 14 S 49° 52 W in October 1989 and 34° 07 S 50° 58 W in November 1995 (longline).

Reply from, Peter Prince, British Antarctic Survey (BAS). Hi Harry, Thanks for the news of the Gough Island Wanderer off Wollongong - yes I think it is a first and I don't mind admitting that I'm surprised, I would have put my money on Gough Island Wanderers staying in the Atlantic.

1st - GREAT WINGED PETREL - Recovery

Another first for Capt. Carl Loves (Sandra K) and Milburn. On October 26th 1997, they captured a Great-winged Petrel *Macropterus gouldi*. The bird had been banded (E-188020) as an adult on Motuotau Island, North Is N.Z. Lat 37° 38' S. Long 176° 12' E. on May 4th 1995. This is the first recovery ever of a banded G W P in Australia.

THE ROYAL FACTS

"RICKY" THE ROYAL PENGUIN

Edudyptes schlegeli

ANOTHER FIRST FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

Exciting news for SOSSA and all interested birder's. This amazing bird came ashore in a critical condition at Pretty Beach Bateman's Bay on Wednesday the 10th December 97. It was rescued by Christina Allen (WIRES) who contacted us here at SOSSA HQ, for advise and to arrange transport to HQ Lindsay Smith and Peter Andrea drove down to Nowra to meet Chris Miller (WIRES) at 8.00 am on December 11th 97, to bring the bird back for further assessment.

Within an hour of the boys driving down to collect this great bird, the phone calls were constant. We contacted Libby Hall at Taronga Zoo (Sydney), to see if their specialists at the NRMA Clinic would be interested in assisting the rehabilitation of this penguin. Libby was so excited she would have crawled though the telephone if possible. Libby arranged for Dallas of the Native Animal Network Ambulance (NANA) to drive down at 7.30 pm to us here at Wollongong and do the shuffle to the zoo. (We believe Ricky will be getting the ROYAL SPOIL from Libby).

Our SOSSA veterinarian Mike Cannon (Wollongong), made a special trip over to HQ to assess the condition of "Ricky" the Royal penguin.

After assessing that the bird was dehydrated and extremely down on weight. An urgent call to his surgery provided us with the necessary medicines to assist in recovery. A quick trip to the surgery and Lindsay returned with Hartmans solution for the dehydration and Poly-Aid a protein mix to give Ricky a quick upper. The good news is that after 8 hours of constant monitoring and lots of TLC, Ricky seemed to be much brighter and responding well to the treatment. Lots of phone calls to interested people including Tony Palliser, brought many visitors, amongst them Chris Brandis, Chaffer, Bronwyn Jarman (WIRES) & Bert Agostini. The local newspaper the Illawarra Mercury photographed him for a story, to appear in the newspaper today December 12th. Last night the local WIN TV. News ran a story about the discovery of this unusual visitor. This created many more phone calls and visitors. SOSSA also has 8mm video and photos.

Ricky is extremely low on condition, weighing in at only 2.9 Kilos, his weight should be between 4 - 4.5 kilo. His age can only be estimated at over 2 years. The journalist from the Illawarra Mercury (Wollongong), asked the question, "what made him come here"? I replied, "I asked the very same question, but was unable to understand the answer"!

NORTHERN GIANT PETREL

Macronecties halli

Ashore at Bateman's Bay NSW.

Greg Henry of the Wildlife Information Rescue & Education Service (WIRES) contacted Janice at HQ., in regard to a very sick Albatross which Janice identified over the telephone as Northern Giant Petrel.

Well done Janice and Greg. With the assistance of the NSW P&WS, WIRES and SOSSA the ailing bird was transferred the 200+ kilometres to HQ.

Unfortunately the bird died after 4 hrs of care. An autopsy was conducted by Mike Cannon, Veterinarian (avian specialist). Initial cause of death starvation due to blockage in the gizzard preventing food entering the stomach.

The Northern Giant Petrel (NGP) has recently been placed on the New South Wales rarities list. All sightings should be reported to relevant authorities or SOSSA.

NGP's have also been listed under the Threat Abatement Plan as threatened species. Longline fishing has been identified as a key threatening process. Total world breeding population is only 8500 pairs.

FIVE ISLANDS REPORT

The Silver Gulls (*Larus noveahollandia*) returned to Big Island to breed on August the 17th 1997. The numbers had been building up with rafts forming off shore around the Islands in the evenings for up to two weeks previously. Ed.

Little Penguins were back and breeding our study burrows were checked and the results recorded, by Damien Stanioch & Mark Jenkin. Further shed refurbishing carried out by Ed.

Noel Wonson reported that approx 450 pairs of Crested Terns were sitting on eggs in the saddle of No. 2 in the same sight as last season, within a week the colony had grown to approximately 600+pairs.

Australian Pelicans have established a colony on Big Is No. 1, approximately 500+ pairs in November 1997. Whilst the Pelicans stay on No. 1 Island there is hope for the Crested Terns breeding on No. 2, which appear to be having a successful season with a colony of <150 pairs on Bass Island. 7 Pairs of Sooty Oystercatchers were recorded nesting on Flinders Island in mid October, 1 pair had 2 small chicks <1 week old.

Wollongong NSWASG. "MOLLIES" & "ODD JOBS"

Albatross Season Report 1996-1997

Friday the 9th of September 1997 proved to be a very productive and exciting day aboard the Sandra K for the New South Wales Albatross Study Group. Captain Carl Loves, Dr P.J Milburn, Dr Clifton E. Barry the 3rd and I were catching and banding Mollies (small albatrosses) and other petrels along the edge of the continental shelf east of Wollongong. Amongst the birds captured were 5 Juvenile Black-browed Albatrosses 3 off which had previously been banded.

Lisa Hardy at the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS), advises that all three were banded as nestlings, at BULL ROCK, CAMPBELL ISLAND NEW ZEALAND by the New Zealand Banding Scheme in February 1997.

Perhaps our Summer visitor Peter Prince (See Albatross Newsletter No. 14), had something to do with banding these birds. From date of banding they had moved at least 2469 Kilometres in 7 months and 11 days.

The fledglings of the Campbell Island Albatross depart Campbell Island from mid April - 7th of May (Sorenson and Baily 1962). This would indicate that the chicks were banded 8-9 weeks prior to fledging, thus the 2469 Kilometres travelled from place of banding took 5 months. Where have they been?, How did they reach Wollongong?, What route did they take?.

Other birds captured and banded on the day:
Wandering Albatross 3, Buller's Albatross 1, Great Skua 1, Southern Giant Petrel 1.

Interesting sightings for day included Northern Giant Petrels 3 together, Westland Black Petrel 1, Cape Petrels 20 in sight at once including both races.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WORK EXPERIENCE

Again SOSSA has committed to the education of young people, interested in learning more about the marine environment and it's inhabitants. A busy week, was spent assisting 3 local high school students interested in doing work experience in Wildlife Research. All the students expressed an interest in becoming Marine Biologists.

They were as follows:

Sam Luccitti, John Wells & Justin Sheen
Year 10 Berkeley High School NSW
Monday 27.10.97 to Friday 31.10.97

Comments:

All the students were very interested, punctual, and appropriately dressed to conduct field survey work, all were very polite and attentive. We enjoyed having them.

We managed to keep them interested in a few of our projects and asked if they would like to write a few words sharing their SOSSA work experience with the members. You can read their pieces below.

Lindsay Smith & Janice Jenkin-Smith. SOSSA

My Work Experience with SOSSA from John Wells

My work experience with SOSSA was a very enjoyable and informative week. It was a week of experiences that will not be forgotten. The trip to the Sydney museum was good, we were shown many species of birds that were only ever seen in books or on TV.

The trips to the islands were very enjoyable experiences. The Little Penguins were unique seabirds and the packs of pelicans were majestic. The boat ride around Bass Island and landing on Flinders Island was something I will probably never do again and seeing the Sooty Oystercatcher chicks was great.

We were made aware of just how hard SOSSA have worked and the many years spent dealing with the Government pushing for the protection of all seabirds for our grandchildren and their grandchildren for them to be able to enjoy these fascinating creatures.

Thank you SOSSA for allowing us to do work experience with you.

My Work Experience with SOSSA from Justin Sheen

The work experience I did with Janice & Lindsay Smith and SOSSA was a lot of fun and really interesting.

On the first day we just stayed at Janice & Lindsay's house (HQ), and discussed what the job entails and how to get a job in that field. In the afternoon we went to Port Kembla to look for Sooty Oystercatchers.

The second day we caught the train up to the Sydney Museum to see the bird department. It was really interesting, looking at bird specimens, especially the rare ones.

The third day was probably the best when we went out to Big Island off Port Kembla and helped to tag, weigh and measure Little Penguins. This was a lot of fun.

That night we travelled to a creek in the mountain and went fishing with hand nets, caught many fish and shrimps and took them back to Lindsay's house and fed the shrimps to the fish.

On Thursday we went out to Big Island again and helped build the interior of the shed which was hard work but good fun.

On the final day we went to the University of Wollongong and had a look through the biology department.

Overall, I learnt a variety of new things relating to work and the job SOSSA does.

MYSTERY ALBATROSS

An unusual Albatross was observed and photographed on the Sydney boat trip in September. From a number of photos taken the description is as follows:

The bird had mostly dark underwings a white head with very faint suggestions of grey shading from the faint collar upwards. There was almost no eyebrow. Primary wing feathers and tail feathers showed severe wear. The head and most of the rest of the bird also showed heavy feather wear.

The bill was the most interesting part. It had a mostly black tip ie. maxillary unguis and mandibular unguis. The maxillary unguis had a small pale tip and pale yellowy horn top adjacent to the culminicor. The latericor was jet black. The culminicor had pale yellowy horn coloured lines along each side from the maxillary unguis to the base of the bill. This colouration covered the top of the culminicor at the maxillary unguis end. Towards the base it passed above the nostrils. The ramicor was mostly black. It had a broad yellowy horn coloured patch adjacent to the mandibular unguis and then a fine line underneath to the base of the bill. The base of the mandibular unguis was pale yellowy horn coloured.

The options considered were:

1. Grey-headed Albatross.
2. Black-browed Albatross.

Due to the feather wear, the normal head colouration of either species would not be evident, so this cannot be used as a diagnostic. However, the bird must be in generally poor condition as it should have moulted. It would therefore be most likely a 2 year old.

The bill is not typical of either species, however it is obvious that it is a juvenile. The bill is unusual in colouration, though its structure appears to be that of a Black-browed Albatross especially shape of the base of the culminicor which was broad and "spoon" shaped. On close inspection of a live immature impavida temporarily located at SOSSA HQ, the pale markings on the bill described above could be seen, even though the bill was horn coloured with a dark tip. These lines would be difficult to see in the field.

Conclusion a two year old Black-browed Albatross in very poor condition, with its original feathers and an unusual perhaps aberrant bill.

Cheers

John Reidy

** SIGHTINGS OF SPECIAL INTEREST **

Wollongong, NSW

Grey-headed albatross (*Diomedea chrysostroma*)
 Southern Royal albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*)
 Buller's albatross (*Diomedea bullen*)
 Yellow-nosed albatross (*Diomedea chlororhynchus*)
 nominate race.
 Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*) : P.J. Milburn

Sydney

Grey-headed albatross (*Diomedea chrysostroma*)
 Black petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*)
 Mottled petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*)
 Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*)

VISITORS TO THE SOSSA HILTON

Pav, the impavida, a Campbell Island Albatross N.Z. Black-browed Albatross, *Diomedea melanophis impavida*.

A Campbell Island Albatross came ashore at Race Course Beach, Ulladulla on the south coast of NSW on November 19th 1997, it was rescued by members of the Native Animal Network Ambulance, (NANA). With the assistance of Ulladulla Veterinary, NSW NP&WS and local couriers "Ulladulla Messengers" the bird was transported to SOSSA HQ.

After initial examination the bird showed no visible sign of injury though appeared to be well down on condition. In the past we have found Black-browed Albatrosses to be the most aggressive of any albatrosses that we have rehabilitated or banded. This bird was no exception!. After initial force feeding with garfish and Hartman's solution the condition of the bird stabilised within hours.

After 40 hours in care the bird was cautiously taking food from our hand and well on the road to recovery. For those interested in the outcome of the rescue, the results, condition including his release will be in the next newsletter.

To those who assisted in this rescue, your expedience in this has saved this threatened species life. Many thanks Ed.

Visitors

Allen Keast & Steve Anyon-Smith

26/11/97, We collected Allen from the train station at 5.00 pm, fed him threw him in the waterbed for the night, (the waterbed a first for Allen). Next day an early start, Steve Anyon-Smith arrived and it was off for their big adventure to the islands. This was a first for Steve.

Allen Keast is one of the chaps who first began work on the Five Islands in 1938 - 42 alongside Consett Davis, hence the "Consett Davis Hut". This was his first return visit to the islands after 55 years so he certainly noticed lots of changes. The Consett Davis Research Hut was a real bonus for him. (Allen is a charming 75 years young at present). Lindsay and the boys stayed over working on banding penguins and shearwaters for 2 nights.

The most noticeable change according to Allen was the large increase in Silver Gull numbers, in 1942 there were approximately 400 pairs nesting on the islands, today the population is in the order of 20,000 pairs.

Allen was also very impressed by the numbers of Australian Pelicans breeding on the islands presently about 500 pairs. Allen & Steve returned to Sydney on November 29th, promising to write a note for the next newsletter.

RESCUE TIPS

for Albatrosses and other large Petrels

A few tips on caring for rescued albatrosses. Albatrosses generally resent being handled and should not be physically restrained, though for the safety of rescuers, it is recommended that an elastic band be placed firmly NOT TOO TIGHT around the bill for transport. The birds will generally settle if placed in a large cardboard box for initial transport. It is our experience that the box should be as large as possible, deep enough that the bird can't jump out and have the lid removed so that the bird can see its surroundings.

Beware Albatrosses are very susceptible to heat stroke, they appear to regulate body temperature by pumping blood through their feet and /or panting. If birds begin panting, spray with a fine spray from a garden hose till the bird is quite wet, not sodden. Then move to a shady well ventilated location to dry.

Air conditioned vehicles are recommended for transport in hot weather.

AUSTRALIAN PELICANS

BREEDING IN THE GIPPSLAND LAKES

Further indication of increasing pelican population in coastal areas of eastern Australia. Peter and Barbara of Rotamah Island Bird Observatory report that for the first time on record Australian Pelicans are breeding in the main part of the Gippsland Lakes not far from the observatory. In August 1997, about 250 Pelicans were gathered on

Albifrons Island near steamer landing. All had bright bills and were rippling pouches. When they visited the island there were 12 nests on the highest point of the island, with one or two eggs in each nest. Nests consisted of scraps of seaweed and one, the skeleton off a swan. Over the next few weeks, numbers of nests increased, all very close together. They did not enter the colony in case eggs were broken by retreating birds. On the latest count they estimated around 100 nests. The early eggs have hatched and the chicks are beginning to creche. They have found that they can approach to within about 20 metres without causing obvious disturbance, the view from the boat is excellent. This may be your only opportunity to visit a pelican colony with relative ease.

Peter and Barbara can be contacted at

Rotamah Island Bird Observatory
P.O. Box 75, Paynesville 3880. Phone (03)-
5156398

"TALL TALES"

Ross Hunter - Broadbill Charters

Pleased to report several sightings of Wandering albatrosses, including a giant 3.5 metre wingspan big white job (*Diomedea e. chionoptera*). Heaps of FAIRY PRIONS, a few Giant Petrels both Northern and Southern. The birds appear very hungry and I was able to hand feed a Shy Alby the other day. Very large flocks, containing several thousands of Fluttering Shearwaters and increasing numbers of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters are feeding on small baitfish, around the 50 fathom mark. With every trip to sea we are seeing a smattering of Providence and Great-winged Petrels. I observed another Light-mantled Albatross about three weeks ago, strangely enough the bird was in about 60 fathoms approximately the same area as the one I spotted last year. The water temperature on the shelf break is cold 17.8°C and there is not a lot of surface nutrient for the albies, however on any one day we see Yellow-nosed, Black-browed and the occasional Shy.

I had a funny experience the other day. I spotted three what appeared to be Jaegers, as it turned out it was two Jaegers attacking a Domestic Pigeon. We were on anchor, fishing for Snapper in 30 fathoms as the three birds got overhead of the boat. The pigeon did a 90° vertical dive, flew into the cabin of Broadbill to alight on the bench in front of the television. My son Glen, walked over to the bird, who wasn't leaving the boat for all the tea in China. I don't think he thought that the intentions of the Jaegers waiting outside were honourable.

Cheers Ross Hunter (Broadbill).

NEW MEMBERS

97-98 new memberships only

Jack Finney, Cliff Barry the (3rd), Mike Archer BHP Steel, Geoff Duggan, Illawarra Central Rotoract Club, Simon Crisp, Catherine Townsend, Steve Anyon-Smith, Allen Keast, Mr & Mrs G Reidy (Gift Subscription from their son John Reidy).

Thanks John that was a very nice idea.

SPONSORS & DONATIONS

BHP PORT KEMBLA NSW.

BHP has kindly donated a new 3.8 metre aluminium boat to replace our ageing island craft. This now means we don't have to bail the water out on the way across to the islands. The old boat was 30+ years old and had lots & lots of holes which we use to be constantly repairing with KNEAD IT putty, it was getting to the stage where you could see more putty than aluminium. Thank you to Mike Archer & David McDonald for your backing and support.

HENDRY & JONES ENGINEERING - UNANDERRA

Again have made a wonderful donation to SOSSA. This year they have supplied us with a new boat trailer to carry the new boat. In the past we would put the "Old Tinny", with more holes than a "Tea strainer", on top of our box trailer and have to physically carry the boat and equipment down to the beach to launch. This new trailer is a "God Send" and has certainly made the island work a lot easier and safer. Thank you Kevin Jones, what a great guy !!!

HOLTS LLOYD AUSTRALIA (Paints)

Have donated more paint, this time for the new vessel. For safety reasons we have decided to paint the boat in "FLOURO" colours. Yellow, Blue and Green. In the past Holts have donated FLUORO paint to mark albatrosses, we have found these colours to be outstanding at sea allowing us to identify the marked birds at a great distance. Hopefully our little boat will stand out equally as well, should anything happen to it and we need assistance.

BETTER FLOORS - WOLLONGONG

What a deal !, Janice approached the guys at Better Floors for a piece of new vinyl for the floor of the Consett Davis hut on the island. Times are tough but they gave it to us for less than cost price, so we now have something reasonable on the floor instead of the patched up vinyl recovered from our kitchen many years ago. Since the hut was been extended half of the floor was bare boards, which

will be greatly improved with repairs the new piece of vinyl.

Thanks for all the donations & helping us out Guys.

DAMIEN STANIOCH

Taxidermist Extraordinaire

28th September 97, Damien came down to collect the Wandering Albatross that had been shot. Damien said, "It saddens me greatly to have to do the work on this albatross, one that some senseless person has shot. I know what I would like to do to them"!

December 2nd 1997, Another a visit from Damien, this time with a wooden display cabinet with a perspex front. In which he had mounted Short-tailed & Wedge-tailed Shearwaters with their eggs and a skeleton skull for comparison. This display will be a great asset in educating people to the differences between these two commonly beach-washed species, both of which breed locally on the Five Islands Nature Reserve.

Damien certainly is good at his work.

NEXT SOSSA MEETING

Saturday's 24th January 1998, 21st February 98, 21st March 98, all held at HQ. 7.30 pm. 10 Jenkins Street - Unanderra. NSW. We only supply the Coffee, Tea and Biscuits !!!



NEXT NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1998

(providing there are no major hold ups)

OUR TAX DEDUCIBILITY HAS BEEN APPROVED
AS FROM THE 25TH OF JUNE 1997

DONATIONS \$2.00 and OVER
ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE.

PLEASE NOTE:

NEW PHONE NUMBERS - FOR SOSSA

Phone: 02 - 4271 6004

Fax: (02) - 4272 4626 - Mobile: 0418-603 007

BOAT TRIP DATA SHEET - DSOSSA-BTDS-V1.7-04021997

SOSSA - (02) 4271 6004 - Fax: (02) 4272 4626. PO. Box 142 UNANDERRA NSW 2526

E-mail address: sossa@ozemail.com.au

Seabird Records 1997

WOLLONGONG BRISBANE PORTLAND SYDNEY BUSSELLTON PERTH TASMANIA

Species	Brisbane			Wollongong			Portland			Sydney			Busselton			Perth			Tasmania		
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Nov
Little Penguin, <i>Eudyptula minor</i>				1	3		2	1	1	2						1					
Common Diving Petrel, <i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>							2wp	2	2	1	2										3
Southern Giant-Petrel, <i>Macronectes giganteus</i>				1			3	1		2											2
Northern Giant-Petrel, <i>Macronectes halli</i>				2	1		125	40	80	3	11	4									3
Cape Petrel, <i>Daption capense</i>	1			30	100+	30	30	25	15	12	20	2	70	14		1	9				5
Great-winged Petrel, <i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>										5	9		12	2		1					1
White-headed Petrel, <i>Pterodroma lessonii</i>				10	20	1					22	35									
Providence Petrel, <i>Pterodroma solandri</i>	4		2																		
Tahiti Petrel, <i>Pseudo bulweria rostrata</i>																					
Soft-plumaged Petrel, <i>Pterodroma mollis</i>															4						6
Mottled Petrel, <i>Pterodroma inexpectata</i>																					12
Gould's Petrel, <i>Pterodroma leucopetra</i>																					15
White-clinned Petrel, <i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>						2		1	2					2							
Black Petrel, <i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>													4	1							1
Grey Petrel, <i>Procellaria cinereus</i>									1												
Bulwer's Petrel, <i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>									1												
Great shearwater <i>Puffinus gravis</i>																					
Streaked Shearwater, <i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>																					
Wedge-tailed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus pacificus</i>	500+	460+	280+	200	1000+	500+					200	120	100								
Buller's Shearwater, <i>Puffinus bullerii</i>																					
Flesh-footed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	20+		50		1	10			1	2	1		7	250	5	45	250+				
Sooty Shearwater, <i>Puffinus griseus</i>				5	6	50+	2	1	3	2											4
Short-tailed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>			75	500	1000+	200+		4	2000+	100,000	1	130	500+								100,000
Fluttering Shearwater, <i>Puffinus gavia</i>				20	100+	30+			2	23	240	60	20								
Hutton's Shearwater, <i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	1			2	50+	40+			1	1	8	5				20					
<i>Fluttering/Hutton's</i>	1							7					4								
Fairy Prion, <i>Pachyptila turtur</i>							7	3	200+	15	1										11
Salvins Prion <i>Pachyptila salvini</i>																					
Wandering Albatross, <i>Diomedea exulans</i>				5	8	3		3		2	17	5	9								12
Royal Albatross, <i>Diomedea epomophora</i>							2	3		50											5
Black-browed Albatross, <i>Diomedea melanophrys</i>				25		2	40	80	20		12	10	2								
Shy Albatross, <i>Diomedea cauta</i>				70	1		30	120	250	40	4									1	400
Grey-headed Albatross, <i>Diomedea chrysostoma</i>																					
Yellow-nosed Albatross, <i>Diomedea chlororhynchus</i>				1			35	4	3	30	2			24	2	13	200+				1
Salvins Albatross				1																	

Species	month	Brisbane			Wollongong			Portland			Sydney			Busselton			Perth Tasmania		
		Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Oct	Nov	Sept	Nov
Wilson's Storm-Petrel, <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	1	21			45		2			5			6					5	
Grey-backed Storm-Petrel, <i>Nereis garrodia</i>								20	2	50								1	
White-faced Storm-Petrel, <i>Pelagodroma marina</i>									3	30			2					2	
Black-bellied Storm-Petrel, <i>Fregatta tropica</i>	6				1	2							1						
<i>Fregatta</i> sps.	1																		
Australasian Gannet, <i>Morus serrator</i>	3				5	20	3	3000+	8000	8000		8	35	1	81	2	21	500+	175
Great Skua, <i>Catharacta skua</i>						1		11	1	1								5	
Arctic Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>					1	1	4								2		1		
Pomarine Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>							12												
Long-tailed Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius longicauda</i>						2	1							3					
Silver Gull, <i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	30				100	100	100+	4	10	2		50	20	30+	✓	✓	✓	20	5
Kelp Gull, <i>Larus dominicanus</i>					10		2											4	
Pacific Gull, <i>Larus pacificus</i>								1	1	2								1	
Common Tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	115																		
Arctic Tern, <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>																		1	
White-fronted Tern, <i>Sterna striata</i>								1											
Sooty Tern, <i>Sterna fuscata</i>							1												
Crested Tern, <i>Sterna bergii</i>	7	30			20	20	15	6	6	10		20	10	10+	✓	✓	✓	50	
Little Tern, <i>Sterna albiglans</i>	1	1																	
Common Noddy, <i>Anous stolidus</i>	2																		
Little Pied Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>						2		1				3							
Black-faced Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax fuscescens</i>								48	75	140									
Pied Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	1	3																	
Little black Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>		1													✓	✓	✓	10	
Great Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>						2	2		1	1		2							
Australian Pelican, <i>Pelicanus conspicillatus</i>						1	3					1							

Illawarra Boat Charter. P.O. Box. 148 Fairy Meadow NSW 2519 Ph: -018-423 555

Captain. Carl Loves (SOSSA) (Sandra K) Ph: -61-18-423 555-International (outside Australia)

Email: Bookings for Sandra K: fishing@wollongong.starway.net.au

Email: Bookings for Wollongong or Sydney: Tony Palliser (SOSSA) palliser@zip.com.au

Pelagic Reports On Home Page Website Address: http://www.zip.com.au/~palliser

Brisbane Trip Bookings: Ph: 073- 3918 839

Paul Walbridge. (SOSSA) 135 Lytton Road East Brisbane QLD 4169 Fax: 073- 3918 839

Portland Trip Bookings: Mike Carter. (SOSSA) 30 Canadian Bay Road Mt. Eliza VIC 3930 Ph: 03- 9787 7136

Busselton Information: Ross Payton. (SOSSA) 20 Bayview Crescent Dunsborough. W.A. 6281 Ph: 097- 553 263

Perth Information: Frank O'Connor. (SOSSA) 8c Hardy Road, Nedlands. W.A. 6009 Ph: 08-9386 5694-H. Ph: 08-9167 1445-W.

Email: Bookings for Perth: o'connor@argylediamonds.com.au