



**SOUTHERN OCEAN  
SEABIRD STUDY  
ASSOCIATION INC.**

Points of interest:

- Broad-billed Prion ashore.
- Goose Barnacles on a Gannet.
- Wedge-tailed Shearwater fledgling released.
- Gould Petrel sightings

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# The Albatross

Issue No. 59

July 2017

**Broad-billed Prion  
found ashore at Boat Harbour, NSW.**

**By Lindsay Smith**

The Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptile vittata* is rarely recorded from our region. Hoskin et al in "The Birds of Sydney". 1770-1989 state "several specimens have been found on local beaches, usually after stormy weather in winter", without further reference. In their description of the species, they describe the bill as being bluish with darker margins. Note: The Broad-billed Prion is the only member of the of the group that has black bill with bluish margins and distinctive Lemon Lamellae .

On June 4th 2017 Rangers from the NSW Parks & Wildlife Service collected an unusual seabird at Boat Harbour NSW. The bird was collected from them and taken into care by local WIRES Wildlife carers. The bird was given emergency care, before being transported to Betty Spilsted (Senior Rehabilitation Officer) at the Australian Seabird Rescue South Coast Division. (ASR)

Unfortunately the poor bird only weighed 93grams on its arrival in care. This is well below the average weight range of 170-235 grams. It was a young bird, less than one year old. Unfortunately the bird died due to exhaustion and its emaciated condition.



Broad-billed Prion.  
Photo: Janice Jenkin-Smith

Understanding the difficulties involved in prion identification, Betty contacted me to assist with identification of the bird.

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Australia



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Identification of the Broad-billed Prion is straight forward. It is the only prion that has a very large black bill. This is also key to its identity when comparing with the other large prions at sea in our region (Antarctic and Salvin's).

It is also interesting to note that the majority of beach washed Broad-billed Prions from our region have been recorded in July. The Broad-billed Prion was not recorded from any of the 99 pelagic trips from Wollongong between August 1984-1990 (Brandis et al 1992). It is doubtful as to whether the species has been reliably identified at sea in our region since that time. All previous records have been of beach washed derelicts.



Broad-billed Prion bill viewed from above.  
Photo: Janice Jenkin-Smith

Right: View of the bill from side-on. The image shows the Lamellae on the bill.  
Photo: Lindsay Smith



## DONATIONS

### PELAGIC REPORTS

\*\*\*\*\* Please note \*\*\*\*\*

**Pelagic reports will no longer be printed with the newsletter.**

**You will need check to the reports on the web site .**

Thank you to the people below for their very kind donations over \$100.

Donations are integral to allowing the continuation of the valuable work on our precious wildlife. So thanks again to:

**Amazing.**  
**By Betty Spilsted**  
**Photos: Janice Jenkin-Smith**

This very handsome juvenile Australasian Gannet, estimated to be only about a month to six weeks off the nest, had a horrible start to his young life. Possibly on his first flight he has come to grief, maybe colliding with a trawler or a recreational game fishing line (who knows?), breaking his metacarpal (wrist) thus rendering him unable to fly.

He came into my care after being picked up on Minnamurra Beach and weighed only 1.02 Kg. He was covered with lice and generally in very poor condition. The average weight of Australasian Gannets at fledging is 2800 grams or 119% of average adult weight of 2350 grams. The great majority of Australasian Gannets that are found along the Eastern Seaboard of Australia are from New Zealand breeding colonies (Handbook of Australian New Zealand & Antarctic Birds).

What is amazing though – when I picked him up the next morning, I noticed something very strange on his leg, so I immediately rang Lindsay Smith of SOSSA to have a look! They were still alive and Lindsay identified them straight away as Goose Barnacles. In his 40 odd years experience working with seabirds, he had never seen them attached to a bird, indicating this poor bird had been floating around on the water for quite some time. Too weak to even paddle.

The following information on the Goose Barnacles has been supplied by Lindsay for which I am very grateful! Amazing – we never stop learning!

Goose barnacles have long rubbery stalks and are usually found in large groups either attached to floating objects in the open ocean or on wharfs and piers or washed up on the shore attached to flotsam and debris.



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Two major types of barnacles are found in Australian waters the Goose Barnacle and the Acorn Barnacle. Both have a tough shell covering on the outside, which may lead some people to believe that barnacles are more closely related to snails than they are to crabs and lobsters. However, on the inside barnacles are very much crustaceans, having jointed legs, which they use to catch small particles of food.

Goose Barnacles are common along the Australian coast line and in surrounding seas. They are also common overseas. Throughout the "Middle Ages" (before bird migration was understood) a legend evolved that Goose Barnacles were in fact goose eggs. It was believed that when geese disappeared in winter, their 'eggs' (or Goose Barnacles) floated back to shore to reappear the following spring as Barnacle Geese.

Many thanks to Lindsay (SOSSA) for their help!



### Sad News

The passing of a long term SOSSA Member and supporter Keith Gallagher passed away on the 1st of March this year. Truly a wonderful man!

Keith will be sadly missed by many friends and colleagues particularly in the world of aviculture.

So sorry for the late notice.

## Lost Fledglings banded before release at Hill Sixty, Port Kembla, NSW By Lindsay Smith

Wedge-tailed shearwaters began fledging from the Five Islands breeding colonies in mid April. The first fledgling was found ashore on April 12th 2017. As in past years a number of chicks have become disoriented by the bright lights of the Illawarra. The birds have been found on roadways sporting fields and suburban back yards throughout the region.

Members of Australian Seabird Rescue and other Wildlife carers have been kept busy collecting these poor misguided birds. Most of the fledglings were in good condition and a number of them were banded by the SOSA banding team prior to their release.

The birds were released at Hill Sixty, opposite Big Island, where many Wedge-tailed Shearwaters breed and possibly from where these birds had fledged. In the mid 1950s Wedge-tailed shearwaters were known to have had colonies at the site, also known as Red Point.

Australian Seabird Rescue member Betty Spilsted releasing Wedge-tailed Shearwater fledglings from Hill 60 Port Kembla NSW.

Photo: Lindsay E. Smith



Wedge-tailed shearwater chick launches off Fisherman's Beach.  
Photo: Lindsay E. Smith





**Abnormal number of Gould Petrel sightings.  
Text and photos: Brook Whyllie**

Gould's Petrels are a rare sighting on pelagic trips from Wollongong/Kiama. In the 15 years prior to December 2016 there had been only two trips where Gould's Petrels had been recorded. The pelagic trips further north record them far more frequently, even just the short distance to Sydney makes a difference with 8+ sightings in the same period of time. Regardless, 8 sightings in 15 years still means they are uncommon.

With this small number of historic sightings recorded in mind, from December 2016 through to March 2017 Kiama pelagic trips recorded Gould's Petrels every month and Sydney had sightings in February and March. These were not brief sightings either, with the birds making repeated passes of the boat. It will be interesting to see if these sightings continue over the 2017/18 summer period.



A Gould's Petrel from the December 2016 SOSSA Kiama trip.



Above, a Gould's Petrel from the March 2006 trip, the last time the author had sighted a Gould's Petrel from a regular SOSSA day trip.

Left, a Gould's from the March 2017 trip.

## Interesting Band recovery

By Lindsay Smith

A Flesh-footed Shearwater, originally banded aboard the Sandra K off Wollongong, has been re-sighted on Lord Howe Island.

### BANDING DETAILS:

The SOSSA banding team placed this band on a: Flesh-footed Shearwater, scientific name: *Ardenna carneipes*, on board the Sandra K On the 22/03/2014.

At: TASMAN SEA EAST OF WOLLONGONG NSW

Latitude: 34deg 25min 0sec S; Longitude: 151deg 0min 0sec E;

The bird was age code: FIRST YR OR OLDER, sex code: UNKNOWN

### Recovery details:

Band Number: 380-00234 was sighted on 08/05/2017

At: NED'S BEACH LORD HOWE ISLAND NSW.

Latitude: 31deg 31min 5sec S; Longitude: 159deg 3min 54sec E.

The bird was: Band Number Read In Field (Bird Not Trapped) And: Was Alive In The Wild With The Band.



A Flesh-footed Shearwater, taken on the March 2014 trip on the Sandra K.  
Photo: Brook Whyllie

### Some Figures you may be interested in:-

Net Result is not good:

Humane Society International Technical Bulletin Issue No.28 2017

In the eight month season of 2015/2016, statistics show an alarming number of marine species captured and killed in shark nets. A total of 748 animals were caught, with 49% killed.

### These Include:

- 19 Grey Nurse Sharks
- 31 Great White Sharks
- 100 Harmless Sharks
- 14 Dolphins
- 19 Turtles (Green, Hawksbill, Leather-back, and Loggerhead – All threatened with extinction nationally and internationally)

Devastating – Where will it end ?



**SOUTHERN OCEAN  
SEABIRD STUDY  
ASSOCIATION INC.**

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## Newsletter Contributions

All are invited to contribute to our newsletter 'Albatross'. We do prefer electronic copies of any material. Send it by email to

[sossa@tpg.com.au](mailto:sossa@tpg.com.au)

Alternatively mail it to us on a disk, which we will return.

**We're on the web!**  
[www.sossa-international.org](http://www.sossa-international.org)

## New Members...

### NEXT SOSSA MEETING

**26th August 2017 AGM**  
6.30 pm Saturday  
held at HQ

Plus Sausage Sizzle  
10 Jenkins Street - Unanderra.  
NSW.

We only supply the Coffee or Tea!!!

### PELAGIC TRIP PRICES 2017

**Current price is:**

**Members: \$130**

**Visitors: \$130**

**Australian Dollars**

**Price is subject to change.**

### **BOOKING NOTE:**

**Please be sure to add your contact phone/mobile number, plus the names of any additional passengers.**  
**Thank You.**

The editor welcomes (is desperate for!) articles from members and friends on issues relating to pelagic seabirding, seabird research and marine conservation. Please advise the editor if you intend to submit an article and submit the piece at least two weeks before the start of a publication month. Thank you!

To save SOSSA postage costs and receive 'The Albatross' as a colourful pdf or web file then please send your email address and current membership number to : [sossa@tpg.com.au](mailto:sossa@tpg.com.au)

## **WOLLONGONG/KIAMA PELAGIC BOAT TRIP DIARY DATES 2017**

**\*\*\*\* Please Book Early As Trips Fill**

**Up Very Quickly \*\*\*\***

**\*Addition Dates will be added to the Website**

26th August (Saturday) 7.30am-4.00pm

26th August (Saturday) SOSSA AGM  
6.30pm

27th August (Sunday) 7.30am-4.00pm

23rd September (Saturday) 7.30am-4.00pm

26th September (Tuesday) 7.30am-4.00pm

9th October (Monday) Inala Tours 7.30am-4.00pm

28th October (Saturday) 7.30am-4.00pm

29th October (Sunday) 7.30am-4.00pm

25th November (Saturday) 7.30am-4.00pm

9th December (Saturday) 7.30am-4.00pm

**(December Trip will be the 2nd Saturday not the usual 4<sup>th</sup> due to Christmas).**

### **AGM Guest Speaker - 26th August 2017**

**Tony Hunt - President - ABSA**

**"Bird Banding On Boigu Island,  
Torres Strait"**

"In February 2015 Tony had the good fortune to take part in an expedition to Boigu, a tiny island at the northern edge of the Torres Strait, one of Australia's northernmost islands. With New Guinea just a few kilometres away the bird fauna is very exotic, and in ten days of intensive bird banding a remarkable range of birds were seen and caught. Tony will tell the story of the trip including the science, the highs and the lows, and especially the birds".

### **Please help...**

SOSSA membership fees remain unchanged even though costs have increased greatly across the board. We would really appreciate any donations from those whom may be able to afford it.

Thanks again for your support!!