

1st let me say these will likely be among the worst rare bird reports submitted, but that does not mean we didn't see and identify these birds. we are not close to the top observers and in the case of storm petrels i did not even look at the head or the bill or any subtleties of wing shape. it is difficult to observe these birds for even 30 seconds, and they are not stationary and we are not stationary. so i hope you will take all that into effect and look at it like sherlock holmes - when all other birds are eliminated, what is left must be the bird. in 9 days we saw well over 1000 leach's storm petrels and many decent individual sightings of fork-tailed storm petrels. i our opinions these birds were definitely not leach's or fork-tailed. we saw a number of birds we were not sure of, but we feel very sure of these birds.

please ask us questions if more is needed.

below i copied the outline from the report and filled it in.

2. BIRD IDENTIFICATION. Write in the name of the species you have identified and information on numbers, sex, plumage, and age.

ASHY STORM PETRAL - 3

3. DATE(S). Month, day, and year. If there are multiple observations, each date.

JULY 14, 2009

4. LOCATION. Be specific; describe habitat.

2 IN CURRY COUNTY, ABOUT 1145 AM, ABOUT 55 MILES NORTH OF CA BORDER, BETWEEN 71 AND 75 MILES OFF SHORE (determined accurately by gps), OCEAN WITH 10 FOOT SWELLS, 30 KNOT NNW WINDS

1 (POSSIBLY 3) IN COOS COUNTY, ABOUT 135 PM, ABOUT 10 MILES NORTH OF CURRY/COOS LINE, BETWEEN 85 AND 95 MILES OFF SHORE, OCEAN WITH 10 FOOT SWELLS, 30 KNOT NNW WINDS

5. DETAILS. Include only what was actually observed, not what should have been seen or heard. Stress field marks: bill, eye, wings, tail, legs, shape, proportions, "jizz", etc. Include behavior: feeding, resting, flying, interactions with other species, etc. Describe voice--song, calls, or notes--if heard.

SEEN FROM CRUISE SHIP, ABOUT 50-100 FEET OFF SIDE OF SHIP, LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOUT 20-30 FEET ABOVE WATER, BEST GUESS IS WE OBSERVED BIRDS FOR CLOSE TO 20 SECONDS BEFORE THEY FLEW AWAY FROM SHIP.

SAW STORM PETRAL SIZE & SHAPE BIRD (HAD SEEN LEACH'S & FORK-TAILED EARLIER AND LATER), AND HERE ARE THE NOTES I TOOK AT THE TIME BEFORE LOOKING AT ANY BOOKS, WITH PHRASES COMPLETED

A. LOOKED LIKE LEACH'S STORM PETRAL, BUT CLEARLY HAD NO WHITE ON RUMP AT ALL.

B. HAD BROWN BACK WITH ESSENTIALLY SAME BROWN TYPE WINDOWS ON WINGS AS LEACH'S.

C. FLEW WITH STIFF WING BEATS, NOT THE BUTTERFLY FLIGHT OF LEACH'S.

D. WE REALIZE THAT LEACH'S EXIST THAT HAVE NO WHITE ON RUMP, BUT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN 1 OF THEM.

E. JIZZ - VERY DIFFERENT FROM LEACH'S AS 1ST NOTICED THE BIRDS BECAUSE OF FLIGHT PATTERN, ONLY THEN SAW NO WHITE


Describe your reasons for your identification: your familiarity with the species, field guides used, similar species that were eliminated, references that were consulted, etc.

SEEN 6 2 YEARS AGO AND THEY WERE ALSO IDENTIFIED BY GILLIGAN, SCHMIDT, OTHERS. ALSO SAW THOUSANDS OFF CALIFORNIA LAST YEAR. USED SIBLEY, SEABIRDS OF WORLD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

ELIMINATED LEACH'S BY A, C, E ABOVE

Describe the circumstances of the observation: light conditions, positions of the sun, distance to the bird, duration of observation, equipment used, time of day, time of tide, etc.

LIGHT WAS CLOUDY, OVERCAST, SUN AT OUR BACK, ABOUT 1015 AM, STABLE STANCE ON CRUISE SHIP, 10-50 EAGLE OPTICS BINOCES, DISTANCE PROBABLY 50-100 FEET (NOT AS CLOSE AS WILSON'S, BUT CLOSER THAN MOST OF BIRDS), ABOUT 15-20 SECONDS OF OBSERVATION.

this is to be added to  report

2. BIRD IDENTIFICATION. Write in the name of the species you have identified and information on numbers, sex, plumage, and age.

ASHY STORM PETREL

3. DATE(S). Month, day, and year. If there are multiple observations, each date.

JULY 14, 2009

4. LOCATION. Be specific; describe habitat.

CURRY COUNTY, ABOUT 30 MILES NORTH OF CA BORDER, BETWEEN 71 AND 80 MILES OFF SHORE, OCEAN WITH 10 FOOT SWELLS, 30 KNOT NNW WINDS. I used my Garmin Legend GPS to calculate the milage from shore and the county coordinates. Most helpful was that the captain of the ship would make a ship-wide announcement at noon verifying my calculations in distance from shore and our speed. My little GPS was quite close to the ship's calculations.

5. DETAILS. Include only what was actually observed, not what should have been seen or heard. Stress field marks: bill, eye, wings, tail, legs, shape, proportions, "jizz", etc. Include behavior: feeding, resting, flying, interactions with other species, etc. Describe voice--song, calls, or notes--if heard.

SEEN FROM CRUISE SHIP, ABOUT 50-100 FEET OFF SIDE OF SHIP, LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOUT 20-30 FEET ABOVE WATER, BEST GUESS IS WE OBSERVED BIRDS FOR CLOSE TO 20 SECONDS BEFORE THEY FLEW AWAY FROM SHIP.

With a morning of pelagic birding I saw several Leach's Storm-petrels, and one, I'm very sure, Wilson's Storm-petrel. At 11:44 am and again at 12:30 am I saw an ASHY-STORM-PETREL.

Here are the notes I took at the time before consulting any field guides:

- A. STORM PETREL SIZE & SHAPED BIRD
- B. Dark brown
- C. clean rump, no white patch
- D. Flying in direction of the ship, fairly close to the water.

Consulting my notes: I observed 5 Leach's Storm-petrels at 11:35 am. I saw a lone Ashy Storm-petrel at 11:44 am. At 12:30pm I saw another Ashy Storm-petrel and in that time frame 5 Leach's Storm-petrels. These two birds had a different rump from the Leach's, lacking the Leach's white rump patch. They were too dark to be considered a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel. They were about the size and shape as a Leach's Storm-petrel. I'm not good enough of a birder to know if they were a dark morph of the Leach's.

Describe your reasons for your identification: your familiarity with the species, field guides used, similar species that were eliminated, references that were consulted, etc.

My experience with Ashy Storm petrels: I saw six Ashy Storm-petrels 2 years ago in 2007, while on a pelagic trip in the company of GILLIGAN, SCHMIDT, OTHERS who identified them and again on a pelagic trip in 2008 where I saw THOUSANDS off the CALIFORNIA coast. Consulted SIBLEY, SEABIRDS OF WORLD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Describe the circumstances of the observation: light conditions, positions of the sun, distance to the bird, duration of observation, equipment used, time of day, time of tide, etc.

Not a dark day, but the light was cloudy, OVERCAST, SUN AT OUR BACK, about (11:44 am and 12:30 pm), STABLE STANCE ON CRUISE SHIP, 8.5X44 Swift Auducon BINOCES, ABOUT 15-20 SECONDS OF OBSERVATION.