

Species: LAYSAN ALBATA

Record No. 82.1-63-01

Location: 25 MI. W. GARIBALDI, TILLAMOOK CO.

Date(s): OCT. 6, 1963

Observers	details	slides	prints	tapes

Specimen no. & location _____

PUBLISHED RECORD: MURRELET 46:1, 1965

Accepted 9-0

Not accepted _____

verified ✓

origin questionable _____

Single rept. sighting _____

exotic not estab. _____

Multiple rept. sighting _____

Records split _____

Records combined _____

Disposition

Secretary's File

Duplicate File

Main File A

details A

Slide File _____

slides _____

Print File _____

prints _____

Tape File _____

tapes _____

Date observer(s) notified: _____

OBSERVATIONS OF WILDLIFE OFF THE COAST OF WASHINGTON
AND OREGON IN 1963, WITH NOTES ON THE LAYSAN ALBATROSS
(*Diomedea immutabilis*) IN THIS AREA

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INTRODUCTION

During 1963 I spent 110 days on cruises of the University of Washington, Department of Oceanography, in a study of the Columbia River effluent in the northeast Pacific Ocean. The University's R/V *Brown Bear* and the Canadian research vessel, C.N.A.V. *Oshawa* worked in the area from Cape Flattery, Washington, to Cape Blanco, Oregon and offshore to 130° West, with occasional sojourns outside this region. During the cruises, which lasted from three days to five weeks, I noted birds and mammals. Some of these sightings have appeared in unpublished cruise reports, but this paper assembles these data and, together with other information, presents an integrated record.

Sightings were in 1963, unless otherwise indicated, and those at specific locations are plotted in Figure 1. Identifications were aided by Peterson's (1961) field guide and Pike's (1956) booklet. "Miles" are nautical miles and a "station" is any location where the vessel stopped to sample or make measurements.

BIRDS

Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*). Seen on virtually every cruise. Sometimes as many as 15 or more would follow the ship, or gather around while we were on a station. They were usually not noticed until the ship was out of sight of land, but on several occasions a few followed us to within five miles of shore. One was seen a few miles inside the Strait of Juan de Fuca on March 19.

Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*). Observed on four occasions (Table 1). An especially noteworthy time was October 1, when one alighted and swam to within 25 feet of the vessel on a station 25 miles off Tillamook Bay, Oregon. A photograph (Figure 2) is apparently the second record for the species from "Oregon waters" (Fredrich, 1961). While feeding on garbage

TABLE 1
Recent sight records of the Laysan albatross off western North America

Date	Number	Position	
		Lat. North	Long. West
1958 (Love, 1958)			
February 24	1	47° 49'	126° 05'
February 25	1	48° 09'	125° 51'
February 26	1	48° 10'	127° 16'
February 26	3	48° 10'	128° 01'
February 26	1	48° 20'	128° 00'
February 27	2	48° 53'	127° 17'
1963			
March 16	2	45° 14'	127° 31'
October 1	1	45° 36'	124° 36'
December 15	1	44° 10'	135° 45'
December 16	1	44° 45'	132° 00'

00-96

(meat scraps?) which had been dumped into the water, it displayed aggressiveness toward three black-footed albatrosses and some gulls, lunging at them and screaming loudly when they came closer than about five feet. The other birds readily retreated, although the black-foots were larger than the Laysan. This activity lasted about three minutes, although the Laysan stayed in the general area of the ship for at least 30 minutes. The March sighting of two Laysans was also at a station, but they remained at some distance. In the December sightings the Laysans followed the ship a short while when we were underway and tended to stay farther away than the ever-present black-foots.

Notes on the Range of the Laysan Albatross:

The recorded distribution of this species off North America from northern California to Alaska is spotty. General references conspicuously exclude it from coastal areas at these latitudes. Peterson (*op. cit.*, p. 11) states that it is, "A straggler (perhaps regular) far off coast of Oregon, California." The American Ornithologists' Union (1957, p. 9) lists its range in this area as, ". . . the Aleutian Islands, the Gulf of Alaska, and east to the coasts of California . . ." although sight records are not considered in their range descriptions. Reilly's (1962) distribution map depicts the Laysan albatrosses range (see Figure 1). Apparently the sole published sight records for Washington and British Columbia are those of Kenyon (1950). He noted observations by G. D. Alcorn of two Laysans about 25 miles off the northern Washington coast (Destruction Island area) on August 23, 1949 and of one the next day. He listed sightings by H. Hildebrand, between August and October, 1949, 75 miles off northern Vancouver Island and five to ten miles off Moresby Island, in the Queen Charlotte group. Love (1958), in an unpublished cruise report, noted six sightings of this species off southern Vancouver Island and northern Washington in February, 1958 (Table 1). Five sightings were while the vessel was on a station; in view of their proximity, some were possibly of the same individuals. However, the Laysan's usual tendency not to follow ships underway may preclude this. McHugh (1950) indicated that Laysans were seen off northern California and Oregon in February and March, 1949, but positions were not given. On July 13, 1960, a dead specimen was found washed ashore at Clatsop County, Oregon (Fredrich, *op. cit.*), this being that state's first record for the species.

The present records, and the few scattered in the literature, bear out Kenyon's (*op. cit.*) idea that the Laysan albatross may be a casual visitor near our coast. In view of these records, the fringes of the Laysan's range should probably be considered to extend to coastal waters from Oregon to at least southern British Columbia.

Fulmar (*Fulmaris glacialis*). Seen regularly in nearshore areas during the September-October cruise, especially north of the Columbia River mouth. Dark color phase birds predominated. On October 10, off Cape Flattery and the Destruction Island area, they were extremely abundant, outnumbering gulls by about 4:1 in perhaps 200-300 birds. While the ship was on a station, the fulmars would alight nearby with the gulls and black-foots; the fulmars were much bolder than these birds and would literally swim right up to the ship for bread and meat scraps. These observations tend to confirm the suggestion by Jewett *et al.* (1953), that the fulmar is abundant off the Washington coast in the fall. They were not noted during other cruises.

Fork-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma furcata*). Seen often in offshore areas during cruises in June and September-October.

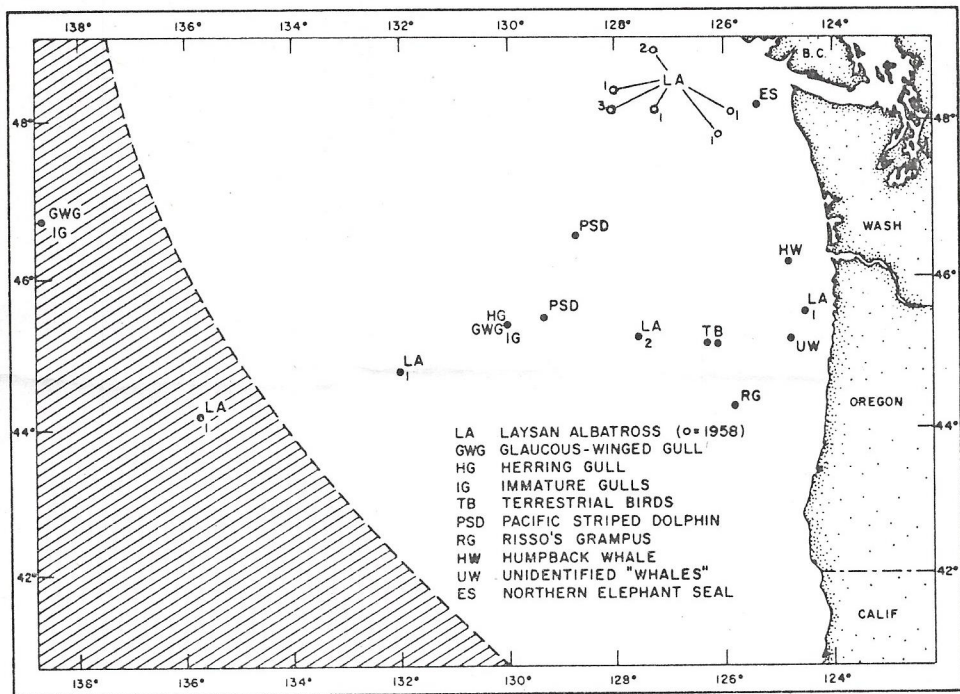


Figure 1. Positions of bird and mammal sightings. The shaded area represents the usual range of the Laysan albatross in this region (approximate from Reilly, 1962).

Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*). Next to the black-footed albatross, the most frequently seen bird in offshore areas on cruises in February-March, May and June. No more than a few were seen at a time, but they were observed consistently (C. M. Love, personal communication).

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*). The most commonly observed gull in nearshore areas. In February-March, several were with us continually to 45° 20' North, 130° 00' West, about 250 miles offshore. Presumably they followed us from near the coast. In December, several were seen west to 46° 46' North, 138° 45' West (600 miles offshore), and then part way toward land again (to at least 44° 00' North, 135° 20' West). It is not known whether the same individuals were seen on consecutive days.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). Frequently seen in nearshore areas. In February-March, several accompanied the glaucous-winged gulls offshore. Yocom (1947) reported a similar offshore occurrence of these two species off California.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*). One or two seen a few times on the September-October cruise within five miles of shore, from Tillamook Head, Oregon, northward. Off Tillamook Head, two participated with other gulls (unidentified) in feeding on meat scraps thrown overboard.

Unidentified immature gulls. Several accompanied the glaucous-winged and herring gulls offshore in the incidents cited above. During the fall and winter cruises, young-of-the-year and immature gulls were more numerous than adults, probably comprising 80% of the total.

Terrestrial birds. On April 5, when the *Brown Bear* was about 90 miles offshore, John Stevens and I observed a flock of land birds on the vessel.

Species present were one male and one female white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), one male Oregon junco (*Junco oregonus*), four song sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*), one male varied thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) and one small, unidentified specimen with a red crown. A few were first noticed at 0557 PST (dawn), at 45° 08' North, 126° 06' West, between stations. Their behavior was noted on a station at 0648 PST, at 45° 08' North, 126° 14' West. Most of them appeared exhausted and hopped or flew only a short distance when closely approached. They spent most of the time protected under a small alcove at the ship's bow, as a heavy mist was falling. Some of them sampled fresh water and bread crumbs which were offered and occasionally they flew about the ship's rigging; the varied thrush was particularly active in this respect. The ship got underway at 0827 PST and over a period of 20 to 30 minutes the birds left, separately or in pairs (not necessarily mates), seeming to head with a southwesterly ten knot wind. This would have taken them toward land, although not at its nearest point. These observations were partially noted in a cruise report (Stevens and Sanger, 1963).

CETACEANS

Pacific Striped Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*). On May 15, at 1730 PST, several were sighted between stations; up to six seen at one time. They were first observed off the starboard side of the ship and a few minutes later played at the bow for about five minutes. The position was 46° 35' North, 128° 46' West. The next day at 1710 PST, seven more were sighted at 45° 25' North, 129° 26' West, when they were observed briefly and



Figure 2. Laysan and black-footed albatrosses off Tillamook Bay, Oregon, October 1, 1963 (by author).