

035.2-81-06
~~1981-677~~

rec'd 9-22-81

Species: Skua

Date: September 15, 1981

Locality: Cape Arago State Park, Coos County, Oregon

Habitat: Open ocean observed from cliffs at Cape Arago

Observation: The bird was observed for about thirty seconds as it flew south past the cape. The sky was overcast, and the bird was observed at about 150 yards with Swift Audubon 8.5x44 binoculars. The observation was made at 1:15 PM with a temperature of about 60° F and a 10-15 MPH breeze blowing in from the ocean.

Description: The bird was the size of a large gull, but appeared much thicker in the body. The color was a uniform brown with the exception of distinct white patches toward the end of each wing. I was unable to determine whether the head was lighter than the body as in Catharacta maccormicki, but I feel the distance and lack of good sunlight were limiting factors. Skuas I have observed at close range on pelagic trips off Montauk Point, New York, all have shown a head lighter than the body. Skuas I have observed in the Orkney Islands, U.K., were uniform in color throughout and were Catharacta skua.

Behavior: The bird flew at a slow, steady pace past the cape. It did not glide, but, rather, maintained deep, slow, steady wing beats. I did not hear the bird make any sound.

Date of report: September 19, 1981