

Short-tailed Albatross

Bird 4 (we had 4-5 birds this day off Oregon, each will be submitted in separate word docs).

~37 nmi west of Yachats, Lane County (44.355148, -124.97576493411871)

1 December 2017

Circumstances: A large group of birders (30-40 at the time) was on our second day aboard the Star Princess Cruise ship heading north. We started the day just into Oregon waters cruising north at a slower than typical speed. After spending time on the deck 7 port side we had moved up to the bow on deck 8 around 0740. I was set up on the port side of the bow, just down from the very front and was using a Swarovski ATS scope at 20x. After ~1155 I heard a call from the starboard side of a Short-tailed Albatross flying in front of the boat. I was able to get on it for a few seconds before I lost it behind people's heads as it flew off towards the starboard. No idea who spotted this individual.

Description: Bird was flying alone, but despite no direct comparison with Black-footed, it appeared to be larger. It looked nearly uniform brown, with a slightly contrastingly darker head/neck and very slightly paler belly. Mostly I noted the massive pink bill which stood out against the blue background of water. Notes were taken ~1 week after sighting.

Discussion: Though the sighting was brief the massive pink bill was clearly seen and rules out the similar Black-footed Albatross. This along with the uniform brown plumage, except for a darker head/neck and pale on the belly, also helps eliminates other, less likely, dark albatrosses. Though this was only the 4th Short-tailed I had seen I was easily to get on it and had no doubt about the identity. I have seen thousands of Black-footed Albatross as I have spent 200+ days at sea and ~10 years as a leader for Shearwater Journeys out of California.

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Short-tailed Albatross 082-17-20
First-round Vote — February 28, 2018

Accepted: 9

Not Accepted: 0

ACCEPTED: Sight record, single report

I know the reporting observer well and have no questions about his ability to readily separate the reported species from the more expected Black-footed Albatross. The combination of overall dark brown coloration and a solid pale pink bill only fits an immature Short-tailed Albatross. It appears that this is the only report of this individual. Hopefully others will provide reports and/or photos to further support this record.

The massive pink bill on an otherwise brown bird is consistent with a juvenile Short-tailed Albatross. The observer is experienced with pelagic birds.

Description adequate for young Short-tailed Albatross, but it is possibly a repeat of one of the others seen that day.

Credible observer with previous images submitted, so I'm fine with the fact that there are no pictures for this bird.

(no comments)

The description is brief, but the observer is quite experienced and the description of the large size, pink bill and dark brown bird convinces me that a Short-tailed Albatross was seen.

Massive pink bill rules out other species.

A slightly brief report, but this is a very experienced observer, and the description of a large brown albatross with a massive pink bill rules out any other possibilities.

As he's already submitted 3 STAL reports with photo documentation seen earlier the same day, it would be foolish to question his last STAL of the day. He clearly knows what they look like, and it's not a tricky ID problem.

"Massive pink bill" should take care of this one. Well-seen bird by an experienced observer.

Great description of a juvenile Short-tailed Albatross. Owing to the fact that other Short-tailed Albatrosses were seen, well documented, and described by this observer during the course of the pelagic trip he was on, I feel it is safe to accept this record as well.