

Submission No 174: Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata* off Southport, South-east Queensland, 16 June 2012. Submitted by Paul Walbridge.

Verdict: Accepted

This submission related three Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, *Phoebetria palpebrata* observed at different locations (27° 48.45'S/153° 58.35'E; 27° 49.18'S/153° 58.40'E and 27° 49.25'S/153° 58.27'E) approximate 29 nautical miles ENE off Southport on the 16 June 2012. The submission was supported with photographs of two of the three individuals. All of the field diagnostic features of Light-mantled Sooty Albatross were described in the written species account including the hooded appearance producing a dark brown head, contrasting strongly with the pearly grey of the upper back and the uniform, slightly darker grey of the upper breast; the concave culminicorn; and for the adult individual, the thin blue sulcus along the lower mandible (Harrison 1985, Marchant and Higgins 1990, Enticott and Tipling 1997).

These Light-mantled Sooty Albatross were separated from the giant-petrels by their more graceful appearance, produced by their slender narrow wings, longer tapering wedge shaped tail and all dark, slender bill. Another species considered, the Sooty Albatross, has a more thickset head/neck appearance, with comparatively shorter wings. The bill of an adult Sooty Albatross also shows a yellow/orange sulcus and in all ages a more robust bill overall, with a straighter culmen, with no apparent concaveness.

Several Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses have been found beach-cast on the beach in south-east Queensland from Fraser Island south to South Stradbroke Island. Prior to this sighting of Southport, Two birds were sighted but not photographed on a Mooloolaba pelagic just two weeks prior to these sightings.

References

- Enticott J. & Tipling D. 1997. *Photographic Handbook of the Seabirds of the World*. New Holland, London.
- Harrison, P. 1985. *Seabirds. An Identification Guide*. Christopher Helm, London.
- Marchant, S. and Higgins, P.J. (Eds) 1990. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 1: Ratites to Ducks*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

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