

**From:** Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC)

**Date:** 05 November 2016

**Submission No 188: Wandering Albatross, Submitted by Paul Walbridge.**

This submission related to a single Wandering Albatross, *Diomedea exulans*, observed during an organised pelagic seabird watching trip of Southport, south-eastern Queensland, on the 28<sup>th</sup>, June, 2015. The albatross was observed approximately 23 nautical miles ENE of Southport (27° 52.07'S /153° 52.18'E) with everyone on board seeing the albatross.

The submission was supported by several photographs and a detailed description of the bird. Although the albatross observed was one of the great albatross, *Diomedea*, the lack of a black cutting edge on the upper mandible ruled out both species of Royal Albatross and the endangered Amsterdam Island Albatross, leaving one of the species within the Wandering Albatross species, *D. exulans*, complex. The identification of albatrosses within this complex is challenging because of the similarity between several species and reference books not being having sufficient detail to separate these albatrosses in the field. Because of these difficulties, outside expertise was sort for this submission. This outside expert, confirmed that the albatross as observed and photographed for this submission was a Wandering Albatross and not a Gibson's Albatross, *D. antipodensis gibsoni* or Antipodean Albatross, *D. a. antipodensis*.

The Wandering Albatross could be separated from these other two great albatrosses by a longer bill, which has a deeper junction to the face thus making a smooth connection to the forehead. Whereas both the Gibson's and Antipodean Albatrosses show more of forehead bump. In addition bill profile is different, with Wandering Albatrosses having a flat culmen profile, whereas both Gibson's and Antipodean Albatross show a 'ski jump' bill profile.

Unanimously accepted

David Stewart  
Chairperson

Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee