

From: Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC)

Memorandum to Paul Walbridge

c.c. Birds Queensland president
Birds Queensland sightings officer

Date: 1st June 2023

Submission No 222: Little Shearwater, *Puffinus assimilis*, Submitted by Paul Walbridge

This case relates to two (2) Little Shearwaters, *Puffinus assimilis* seen during an organised pelagic seabird watching trip off Southport, southeastern Queensland. These shearwaters were observed on the slope waters, at 27°49.65'S 153°56.51'E and 27°47.43'S 153°55.63'E on the 16th July 2022. The submission was supported by both a detailed description and photographs of these shearwaters. The author separated this species from other similar species, including Fluttering, *P. gavia* and Hutton's Shearwater, *P. huttoni*, Tropical Shearwater, *P. bailloni* and Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*. It was also argued that these two shearwaters were from the locally breeding nominate race, *P. a. assimilis* based on some plumage characteristics and the close proximity of the breeding colonies for this race (Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island).

Although, there are numerous records of beach derelict specimens of Little Shearwaters from K'gari (Fraser Island) south to the NSW border, this species is rarely observed alive in Queensland waters. This is only the second observation to be reported to the Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC) and the first to be accepted. Unfortunately, with previously Little Shearwater report to the BQ RAC was not supported with sufficient information to rule out other similar species and because of this it could not be accepted without further information.

accepted

Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P. & Franklin, K. 2017. *The Australian Bird Guide*, CSIRO, Victoria, Australia.

David Stewart
Birds Queensland
Rarities Appraisal Committee
Chairperson