

From: Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC)

Date: 11 July 2015

Submission No 184: Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* Submitted by Elliot Leach

This submission related to a Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis*, seen during an organised trip off Mooloolaba, SEQ. This petrel was observed on the slope waters, approximately 30 km east off Mooloolaba at 27° 54.47' S; 153° 35.67' E. All observers on-board the boat agreed with the identification. The submission was supported by a number of quality photographs and a detailed description of the petrel. Information within the description and the photographs were diagnostic for a Soft-plumaged Petrel, with a combination of grey upperparts with dark 'M' mark across the upperwings, largely grey underwing, complete, narrow, grey breast-band and otherwise entirely white underparts are sufficient to rule out any of the other gadfly petrels (Harrison 1985, Marchant and Higgins 1990). Details provided of the white outer uppertail rectrices, the dark smudge over, beneath and behind the eye, and the pale forehead with grey flecking simply serve to add further weight to the identification being correct. This species was separated from similar species included White-headed Petrel *P. lessonii* by characters such as the size of the petrel and the grey collar and from the pale phase Kermadec Petrel *P. neglecta* by the absence of wing flashes. This is the 2nd record of Soft-plumaged Petrel accepted by the Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee.

Unanimously accepted.

Although there was no hesitation in accept the identification of this petrel to specific level by BQ RAC members, there has been some hesitation in accepting that the individual belonged to the subspecies *P.m. mollis*, as opposed to *P.m. dubia*. Some members suggesting that we waiting until further information become available to enabling these races to be separated in the field

References

Harrison, P. 1985. *Seabirds. An Identification Guide.* Christopher Helm, London.

Marchant, S. and P. Higgins. (eds). 1990. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*, Vol. 1 Part A: Ratites to Petrels, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

From: Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC)

Date: 11 July 2015

Submission No 180: White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* Submitted by Elliot Leach

This submission related to a **White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis***, seen during an organised trip off Mooloolaba, SEQ. This petrel was observed on the slope waters, approximately 30 km east off Mooloolaba. All observers on-board the boat agreed with the identification. The submission was supported by a number of quality photographs and a detailed description of the petrel. Information within the description and the photographs were diagnostic for a White-chinned Petrel, including the combination of uniformly dark plumage, large size (at one stage, mistaken by at least one observer as a giant-petrel *Macronectes* spp.), and overall pale bill (including most of the unguis), but with black saddle and sulcus, would be sufficient to be sure the bird in question was White-chinned Petrel. The final characteristic to confirm the identity of this petrel was the small white chin patch, visible in all photographs. No other species possesses this plumage feature (Marchant and Higgins 1990).

This species was separated from other species in the similar species, in particular the other species in the *Procellaria* complex and were methodically ruled out leaving only White-chinned Petrel.

This is the 2nd record of White-chinned Petrel accepted by the Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee.

Unanimously accepted.

References

Harrison, P. 1985. *Seabirds. An Identification Guide.* Christopher Helm, London.

Marchant, S. and P. Higgins. (eds). 1990. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*, Vol. 1 Part A: Ratites to Petrels, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.