

From: Birds Queensland Rarities Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC)

Date: 7th June 2018

Submission No 201 Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* by Elliot Leach

This case involves a juvenile giant petrel (*Macronectes*) observed while seabird watching from Point Lookout, North Stradbroke Island (27° 26' 11.0S; 153° 32' 47.5"E). The petrel was observed about 100 mtrs offshore from Point Lookout through both a spotting scope and binoculars. The petrel was watched for approximately one minute until it was out of sight at a distance of around 1 km away.

The combination of large size, similar to that of a small mollymawk, with a distinctive 'hunchback' large pale bill and overall chocolate brown plumage and lumbering flight identify this petrel as giant petrel, *Macronectes*, and separate it from other similar species of albatross and other large petrels. This left only Southern Giant Petrel, *M. giganteus* and the Northern Giant Petrel *M. halli* as a possible contender (Harrison 1987; Marchant and Higgins 1990; Menkhorst et al. 2017). The observers argued that the bird was a Southern Giant Petrel because there was no sign of a dark tip and the bill appeared totally concolourous and a pale straw colour. Although some committee member agreed with this identification, other committee members thought that there was not sufficient evidence provided to separate the two species and there was a remote possibility that the bird may have been a juvenile Northern Giant Petrel.

References

Harrison, P. 1987. Seabirds of the World. A Photographic Guide. Christopher Helm, London.

Marchant, S. and Higgins, P.J. (Ed.) 1990. Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 1: Ratites to Ducks. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P. and Franklin, K. 2017. The Australian Bird Guide. CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South.

Record with insufficient information provided

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