A SIGHT RECORD OF A STREAKED SHEARWATER IN OREGON

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On 13 September 1996, while conducting surveys for marine mammals and seabirds aboard the NOAA ship *McArthur* about 57 kilometers off the southern Oregon coast, we found a Streaked Shearwater (*Calonectris leucomelas*), a species familiar to both Force and Rowlett. The bird was seen at 08:40 in a large mixed feeding flock over Heceta Bank, Lane County, Oregon (43° 59.1′ N, 124° 51.4′ W). This constitutes the first record of the Streaked Shearwater for Oregon and the most northeasterly Pacific Ocean occurrence.

We had unobstructed views from the ship's flying bridge, 14 meters above sea level. The bird was seen clearly for about two minutes and passed in front of the ship as close as 250 meters. It patrolled low over the water on the starboard side, passed in front of the ship, and eventually disappeared astern. We had a variety of binoculars available: 20 × 60 prism-stabilized Zeiss (Force), 25 × 150 ship-mounted Fujinons (Rowlett), and 7 × 50 hand-held Fujinons (Grace). The ship was engaged in a line-transect survey of marine mammals whose protocol prevented further investigation. We prepared field notes immediately after the bird was lost from view and before consulting any references. A written report is on file with the Oregon Bird Records Committee.

General Appearance: The bird appeared to be in fresh plumage with no sign of molt, suggesting that it may have been in its first year. Fairly large and long-winged, gleaming white below and brown above with a striking white head when seen at a distance. Pale-tipped back feathers gave it a saddled appearance. *Body*: Underparts from chin to undertail coverts bright white. Back like upperwings but slightly darker with a very faint grayish cast. Rump dark brown, contrasting slightly with back. Mantle and rump feathers narrowly tipped with pale gray or buffy white, creating a faintly scaled effect. *Head*: Forehead and crown white; nape streaked with dusky brown. Darker, diffuse brownish smudge around eye extended posteriorly and coalesced with streaking on hindneck. *Wings*: Underwing coverts bright white. Grayish brown remiges created a dark tip and tailing edge of medium width on the underwing. Grayish brown and white under-primary coverts formed a conspicuous dark patch near the wrist. Upperwings dark brown, slightly paler than the back. *Tail:* Brown, somewhat long and slightly wedge-shaped. *Bill:* Yellowish gray, long and slender, with well defined black tip.

The Streaked Shearwater was part of a large mixed feeding aggregation of more than 1000 birds loosely associating with two nearby fishing vessels. The bulk of the flock consisted of Sooty (*Puffinus griseus*), Pink-footed (*P. creatopus*), and Buller's (*P. bulleri*) shearwaters, Northern Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*), and California Gulls (*Larus californicus*). Western Gulls (*L. occidentalis*) and Western × Glaucous-winged (*L. glaucescens*) gulls were also present. The Streaked Shearwater's overall size appeared to be between that of a Pink-footed and a Buller's, perhaps closer to Buller's. Its buoyant flight consisted of several slow, lazy flaps followed by a long, languid glide with low, wide arcs. The flight style combined with the wings held slightly forward with a prominent angle at the wrist recalled the Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*P. pacificus*), but the bird was larger with wider wings. Its structure and flight were quite different from those of nearby Pink-footed Shearwaters, which appeared chunky and labored by comparison.

The Streaked Shearwater was seen in the neritic province of the pelagic environment (continental shelf waters less than 200 meters deep). Sea-surface temperature was 13.2°C, salinity 32.48 parts per thousand. Approximate water depth obtained from a nautical chart was 108 meters (60 fathoms). The cloud cover had just begun to break after a morning of steady rain so light conditions were good with some glare on the starboard side. Wind was from the south at about 14 knots with a 6-foot southwest swell.

The Streaked Shearwater breeds in the western Pacific on islands along the Japanese and Korean coasts and in the Yellow Sea (including Qingdao Island), south along the coast of China to Taiwan. It is the most abundant nesting seabird in Japan, breeding on small islands from southwestern Hokkaido and the Izu Islands (the location of the largest known colony) south to include the Ryukyu Islands (Brazil 1991, Everett and Pitman 1993). A small but stable population of around 30 pairs on Karamzin Island, in Peter the Great Bay, Vladivostok, is the most northerly colony on the Asian coast (G. Kaiser pers. comm.). It is abundant within its range, with an estimated population of 4 to 5 million, nesting in large dense colonies on forested islands from February to November (peaking in May and June). After breeding the birds disperse south through the East and South China seas with the bulk of the population moving south of the Philippine Sea off New Guinea, where thousands occur November through February (Everett and Pitman 1993, Harrison 1983).

First recorded in Australia in 1974, the Streaked Shearwater is now known to be a regular nonbreeding visitor as far south as coastal Victoria (Blakers et al. 1984, Brazil 1991, Harrison 1983, Lindsey, 1986). A few continue west into the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea and may be regular at least as far as the Maldives and Sri Lanka, with some straying as far west as Eilat, Israel (Harrison 1983, 1987, Morgan and Shirihai 1992, Van den Berg et al. 1982, 1990, Force pers. obs.).

The first Streaked Shearwater recorded for North America was an adult female collected from a mixed shearwater flock in Monterey Bay on 3 October 1975 (Morejohn 1978, Luther et al. 1979). Five of the six Streaked Shearwaters currently accepted by the California Bird Records Committee, all supported by a specimen or photograph, are from the Monterey Bay area. The sixth is of one found alive on a parking lot in Red Bluff, Tehama County, on the unusually early date of 13 August 1993 (Garrett and Singer 1998). The concentration of sightings in Monterey Bay may reflect the intense coverage this area receives in comparison to other coastal sites rather than its being an actual focal point for Streaked Shearwaters.

The five accepted Monterey Bay records extend over a brief period in the fall from 7 September to 9 October. Four were in years when Buller's Shearwaters were exceptionally common somewhere along the west coast of North America. It is conceivable that a Streaked Shearwater may occasionally associate with a flock of Buller's Shearwaters, perhaps somewhere in the western Pacific Ocean, increasing its chances of reaching the eastern Pacific. Buller's Shearwater has undergone a strong population increase after introduced pigs were eliminated from Aorangi Island, one of the primary New Zealand nesting colonies (Everett and Pitman 1990). Furthermore, the Streaked Shearwater has expanded its range south in the western Pacific (Blakers et al. 1984, Lindsey 1986). An increase has been documented in Australia with hundreds reported annually off that country's north coast between November and May (Blakers et al. 1984, Lindsey 1986). Similarly, sightings of Buller's Shearwater have increased in Australia, where it is now considered to be a regular visitor off the southeast coast (Lindsey 1986). The Oregon Streaked Shearwater was seen when high numbers of Buller's Shearwaters were being reported off the U.S. west coast. A commercial birding trip to Heceta Bank on 5 October 1996 tallied a record 290 Buller's Shearwaters, surpassing the previous state high by almost 150 (Greg Gillson pers. comm.).

The white face and forehead and the relatively pale appearance of the Streaked Shearwater enabled it to be relocated easily in a distant flock. The prominent dark carpal patch on a mostly white underwing was a useful field character not mentioned in the standard seabird guides. Morgan and Shirihai (1992) considered the carpal patch to be diagnostic, and it is described and readily visible in photographs in Stallcup (1990) and Bevier (1990). The extent and intensity of head streaking is subject to an unknown amount of variation. Since molt and aberrant plumages can cause similar species to appear white-headed in the field, this character should be used with caution.

Stable concentrations of feeding seabirds at such features of the continental shelf as submarine canyons or shallow banks hold high probabilities for future sightings of the Streaked Shearwater. It is gregarious and readily joins mixed feeding flocks (Blakers et al. 1984, Lindsey 1986, Force pers. obs.). Often containing hundreds of birds, these mixed-species assemblages are frequently targeted for scrutiny by an increasing number of commercial pelagic trips. Additional sightings of this attractive and distinctive shearwater are sure to follow.

We thank the officers and crew of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research ship *McArthur* for a comfortable and enjoyable observation platform during the 3-month cruise. We also thank chief scientist Jay Barlow and Lisa Ballance and Stephen Reilly of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, California, for permission to publish the sighting and to be able to collect seabird-abundance data on behalf of the marine-mammal division. Robert Pitman and additional reviewers made useful comments on the manuscript.

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Accepted 30 June 1998

A PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED NESTING COLONY OF THE YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON NEAR MULEGE, BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR

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In Baja California, breeding of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) has been reported from at least five locations, Islas San Benitos (28° 17′ N, 115° 22′ W), Laguna Ojo de Liebre (27° 45′ N, 114° 10′ W), Laguna San Ignacio (26° 50′ N, 113° 10′ W), Bahía Magdalena (24° 40′ N, 112° 00′ W) and Ensenada de La Paz (24° 20′ N, 110° 22′ W) (Wilbur 1987, Carmona et al. 1994, Massey and Palacios 1994, Howell and Webb 1995). Only the last is on the Sea of Cortéz side of the peninsula. During early April 1997, we observed six nests of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron under construction in the top of Mexican Fan Palms (*Washingtonia robusta*, plant names follow Roberts 1989) paralleling the north side of the estuary at Mulegé, on the east coast of Baja California Sur (26° 53′ N, 111° 58′ W). The nests were situated so we could not see their contents, so data on initiation of egg laying, clutch size, and fledging success were not obtainable. However, we saw the birds roosting and bringing nesting material to the nest sites throughout April. During the spring of 1998, we found 14 active nests in a dense stand of mangrove (*Avicennia germinans* and *Rhizophora mangle*) on the south side of the estuary plus three nests on the north side in Mexican Fan Palms. Although one of us has lived in Mulegé seasonally since 1979 these are the first Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests we have identified. Two stick nests in mangroves were reported by a vacationer in 1990 but not identified. Small numbers of overwintering birds, both adults and immatures, occur in the estuary during late fall and early spring (Whitmore and Whitmore 1997). Owing to the fragility and disjunct distribution of wetland habitats in Baja California (Massey and Palacios 1994), further study of this newly formed colony is warranted.

We thank Philip Unitt, Eduardo Palacios, and Daniel Anderson for helpful suggestions and Ruth Whitmore for logistic support. This manuscript is published with the approval of the director, West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station, as scientific paper #2715.