

The "At a Glance" photo quiz for February clearly is a seabird of some type. Gulls of all species can be eliminated by the combination of the black cap (not a hood), the dark borders to the white underwings, the absence of a clearly defined carpal bend (crook in the wings), and the faintly discernible hook and terminal swelling to the bill. This last feature, coupled with the stiff-winged appearance, points to the bird's being a procellariid (tubenosed bird) of some kind.

Knowing that the bird is a shearwater now makes identification relatively simple. The combination of the pronounced, *pale collar separating the dark cap from the back, the dusky smudge on the belly, and the heavily speckled inner wing linings* all indicate that the bird is a Greater Shearwater, *Puffinus gravis*. The similar Cory's Shearwater would be immaculately white below and on the underwings, would not exhibit a collared effect, and would display an evenly dusky face, head, and hindneck. Also, the bill would be longer, heavier, and lighter in color. The Black-capped Petrel, a tropical "gadfly petrel" that only rarely reaches New England waters, is similar in basic pattern to the Greater Shearwater; however, it is slightly smaller, has clear white underparts and wing linings, and a distinctive, dark, diagonal bar on the leading edge of the underwings. Also, its more rapid, towering flight and the rakish bow in its wings when soaring help distinguish it at a distance.

The Greater Shearwater pictured was photographed on Stellwagen Bank off Provincetown during the month of October.

W.R.P.



Greater Shearwater

Photo by Wayne R. Petersen

At a Glance . . .

Photo by Blair Nikula



Can you identify this bird? Identification will be discussed in next issue's *At a Glance*.



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