

SUPPOSED NORTHERN RECORDS OF THE SOUTHERN FULMAR

RICHARD C. BANKS, National Ecology Research Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. 20560

The Southern or Slender-billed Fulmar, *Fulmarus glacialoides*, has variously been on primary (American Ornithologists' Union [A. O. U.] 1910, 1983) or hypothetical (A. O. U. 1931, 1957) lists of North American birds. Its fluctuating status results both from acceptance versus rejection of particular records and from recent expansion of the A. O. U. check-list's geographic coverage to include Mexico and Central America. [One searching those lists will note that the bird has been treated also in the genus *Prionocella* and under the specific name *antarctica*.] This breeding species of the antarctic continent and far southern islands ranges northward in its nonbreeding season to about 40°S (Jouanin and Mougín 1979) or to the northern end of the Humboldt Current at about 6°S (Murphy 1936:598). Murphy (1936) noted that there are more records of this species in the North Pacific than of any other southern petrel, presumably alluding to the several reports from the west coast of North America. Bourne (1967:150-151), however, rejected all northern hemisphere records; of the three that he discussed, none seemed "remotely acceptable." There are actually six reports of this antarctic species in the northwest Pacific, i.e., from the west coast of North America. The evidence for or against some of them has not previously been discussed, and never have they been considered together.

The first North Pacific record, of a bird collected by J. K. Townsend supposedly off Oregon, within a day's sail of the mouth of the Columbia River, was reported by Audubon (1839) under the name *Procellaria tenuirostris*. This record was long accepted (A. O. U. 1910) but eventually was shown to be probably erroneous by Stone (1930). According to Stone, "Townsend had no clear idea of the identity of the various species of Tubinares nor of where he secured the several specimens" that he sent to Audubon. Townsend had ample opportunity to collect the Southern Fulmar during a prolonged stay in Chile, and probably he did not label his specimens. On this basis, the Southern Fulmar was transferred to the hypothetical list by the A. O. U. (1931, 1957). This "Columbia River" specimen is apparently also the basis for early statements that the species ranged north along the Pacific coast to Washington (A. O. U. 1895) or Washington Territory (see Jewett et al. 1953:671). The specimen is presently in the National Museum of Natural History (USNM 2032), having come from Audubon through Spencer F. Baird. There are no data on the earliest label, which is Baird's.

Cassin (1858:410) wrote that the only specimen of *Procellaria tenuirostris* taken by the Wilkes [U.S.] Exploring Expedition (of 1838-1842) "is labelled as having been obtained on the coast of Oregon." This report was repeated by Baird et al. (1884:374). However, the catalog of specimens taken on that expedition (Cassin 1858:452) lists no *P. tenuirostris* but does mention a *P. glacialoides* from the "Atlantic Ocean"; the latter species or specimen is not included in any account in the main text. Peale's (1848:338) earlier catalog of the Exploring Expedition's specimens similarly listed a single *P. glacialoides*, but gave the locality as the "South Pacific Ocean." The one specimen of *Fulmarus glacialoides* from the U.S. Exploring Expedition now in the National Museum of Natural History (USNM 15439) has no original label; the present label bears the locality "Atlantic O."

Loomis (1918:90) attempted to verify the U. S. Exploring Expedition's specimen from Oregon, without success. He was told that the specimen, USNM 15707, was no longer in the collection. However, USNM 15707 and 15439 seem to be duplicate entries for the same specimen, albeit with different original identifications and localities; both have the "original number" given as "757." Unfortunately, this confusion regarding the origin of the Exploring Expedition's specimens is not uncommon. The true

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provenance of this specimen remains unknown, but there is no evidence that it was the coast of Oregon.

J. G. Cooper found a skeleton on [Santa] Catalina Island, California, in June, 1863, that he ascribed to this species (Baird et al. 1884:374). Cooper (1887) also attributed that specimen to Ventura County, California, accounting for the apparently separate occurrence noted by Willett (1912). No basis for Cooper's identification of the skeleton was ever given, and the depository for the specimen was never stated. The species was placed on hypothetical lists by Willett (1912), Grinnell (1915), and Howell (1917). Grinnell and Miller (1944:557) further suggested that Cooper "misidentified or confused" some of the shearwaters with which he reportedly saw this species along the California coast. None of Cooper's reports can be verified.

A record of this species from Kotzebue Sound, Alaska (Nelson 1883), listed as *Priocella tenuirostris*, was shown to be based on a misidentification of *Puffinus tenuirostris* (Stejneger 1884), then called the Slender-billed Shearwater. This error resulted more from confusion of the names than from actual misidentification (Nelson 1887:63).

Coues (1903:1030) listed Vancouver Island, British Columbia, as the northern limit of *F. glacialoides* on the Pacific coast, without reference. This record is not mentioned elsewhere, to my knowledge. Fannin (1898) recorded a specimen of *Puffinus tenuirostris* taken near Victoria, Vancouver Island, in 1891, which may, by a slip similar to Nelson's, have been the basis for Coues' listing.

The most persistent northern hemisphere record of the Southern Fulmar is from Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico, and is based on a specimen in the British Museum (Natural History) from the Salvin-Godman collection (Salvin 1896). The specimen from Mazatlan formed the basis for Salvin and Godman's (1904) description of the species and was also the model for the plate in Godman's (1908:165, pl. 43) monograph of the petrels. Nonetheless, those authors did not provide any additional information about the specimen or its occurrence so far out of range. Although they recognized the antarctic nature of the species, the reports accepted then from even farther north—to "Washington Territory," based on Townsend's specimen and perhaps other records (Baird et al. 1884)—undoubtedly persuaded them that the Mazatlan record was not exceptional. This record is the basis for inclusion of the species by Friedmann et al. (1950) and in the main list of the sixth edition of the A. O. U. Check-list (A. O. U. 1983).

Bourne (1967:150-151) noted that the Salvin-Godman specimen had been listed, without any other data, in the British Museum catalog, but he could not trace it. The specimen is still in the British Museum (Natural History), catalogued as 1888-5-18-94, and is properly identified as *Fulmarus glacialoides* (fide Alan Knox). There is no original collector's label, but the specimen bears a label of "Maison Verreaux," whence Salvin and Godman must have obtained it. According to Sharpe (1906:503), "The Maison Verreaux was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, emporium of natural history that the world has ever seen. . . . The specimens were often issued without any exact indication of locality, but had attached to them in Jules' [Verreaux] handwriting a large label giving the synonymy from Bonaparte's 'Conspectus'" This is the situation with the present specimen. The Verreaux brothers received specimens from the world over. The added handwritten locality "Mazatlan" and probably the sex symbol (for male) cannot be considered definitive, and this record is not acceptable.

In summary, none of the records of *Fulmarus glacialoides* off the Pacific coast of North America can be considered valid. Uncritical acceptance of the earliest reports made subsequent reports seem equally acceptable. Dubious localities were not questioned, and birds of similar name were confused. The Southern Fulmar should appear only as hypothetical on lists of North American birds.

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