

General Field Notes

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Second Record of the Cape Petrel in the Western North Atlantic

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On 26 July 1985 Captain Allen Foreman and his mate John Gallup saw a bird they identified as a Cape Petrel (*Daption capense*). It was flying 42 miles ENE of Oregon Inlet, Dare County, N.C., and was over water 200 fathoms in depth. The bird was watched for a minute or more while near a Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*). The captain and mate each independently described the size, plumage, and behavior of the bird to me in late July of 1985 and again in June of 1986. Although neither was aware of the significance of the record, on both occasions they were able to recognize the species from illustrations in standard field and seabird guides. Because of the distinctive plumage of the species in question and their familiarity with local marine birds (Captain Foreman has been accompanying me during my seabird studies for the last 9 years), I have confidence in the authenticity of this record. For example, Foreman and his mate Dick Harris provided sight descriptions of Masked Boobies (*Sula dactylatra*) from off the North Carolina coast (Lee and Platania 1979) several years prior to the "official" recognition of their occurrence presented by bird watchers (Davis and Needham 1983). Likewise, they alerted me to the presence of two types of tropicbirds off the North Carolina coast prior to confirmation that Red-billed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon aethereus*) were in the North Atlantic off the Carolina coast. While there is always some question of the validity of records not documented by specimens or photographs, in this particular case, the fact that this sight record is not corroborated by someone with a formal background in bird study has little, if any, bearing on judging the validity of the identification.

The only other record for the Cape Petrel [formerly Cape Pigeon] for eastern North America is of a single bird collected in June of 1873 at Harpswell, Cumberland County, Maine (Norton 1922). Several sight records are available for the region off the coast of California, with a 1963 report off Monterey being the best documented (see A.O.U. 1983). There are several reports of Cape Petrels off the European coast, at least five of which are fairly well substantiated. Single specimens were shot in the Mediterranean off France in October 1844, off Wales in 1879, and off Ireland in October 1881. A skull was found on a Netherlands beach in 1930, and an immature was captured off Sicily in September 1964 (Cramp and Simmons 1974). Nevertheless, most, if not all, records from

the northern hemisphere have been treated as suspect by some authors for various reasons.

Cape Petrels are abundant in the southern hemisphere and are highly migratory, with birds exhibiting circumpolar movements and moving northward regularly into subtropical seas, occasionally north to the equator. As in subantarctic albatrosses and South Polar Skuas (*Catharacta maccormicki*), small numbers apparently range north of the equator during the austral winter. Furthermore, the Cape Petrel's habit of following ships for long distances could account for the occasional records of this species in the northern hemisphere. Murphy (1936) cites one example of a bird following a ship across the equator in the Pacific Ocean to 16°N and King (1839) commented on a marked bird that followed a British Navy ship for 5000 miles.

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Leach's Storm-Petrel on Lake Marion, S.C.: Second Specimen for State; First Record for Interior of Carolinas

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On 25 July 1986 at about 1300 as we were crossing Lake Marion, at a point about 10 km NE of Eutawville, we flushed a Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) from the water surface. The bird circled our boat, and we were able to secure it. The collection point is in Clarendon County, near the center of the lake and about equidistant (2 km) from the northern and southern shores. This point is 90 km from the coast. We assume that the bird was blown inland by Hurricane Bob, which passed over southern Charleston County and then moved inland, over Lakes Moultrie and Marion, on 24 July.

The petrel is a male, with fully ossified skull, small testes (< 1 x 2 mm) no subcutaneous fat, and an empty stomach. The weight was 35.8 g. and wing length is 149.2 mm. The bird was prepared as a study skin (WP 85.011; ChM 1986.43) with detached, flattened wing and a separate partial skeleton saved.

The only other specimen of this form taken in South Carolina is a wing that was found on the beach of the Isle of Palms, Charleston County, on 20 September 1926 by E. von S. Dingle (ChM 1975.95). The identification of this specimen was confirmed by R.C. Laybourne. Another documented record is a color photograph of a bird captured offshore