

### BARC CASES PERTAINING TO NSW DECIDED IN 2018

889	White-bellied Storm Petrel	Britannia Seamounts	March 18, 2015	Accepted
897	Western Sandpiper	Lake Wollumboola	December 17, 2015	Not Accepted
918	White-bellied Storm Petrel	Britannia Seamounts	April 9, 2016	Accepted
957	White-bellied Storm Petrel	off Newcastle	April 23, 2006	Accepted
958	White-bellied Storm Petrel	off Sydney	October 30, 2006	Accepted
959	White-bellied Storm Petrel	off Port Stephens	March 27, 2010	Accepted
960	White-bellied Storm Petrel	off Sydney	March 11, 2017	Accepted
965	Cook's Petrel	off Port Stephens	November 27, 2016	Accepted
971	Band-rumped Storm Petrel	Britannia Seamounts	April 9, 2016	Accepted
984	Cook's Petrel	off Port Stephens	November 12, 2017	Accepted
985	Ringed Plover	Stockton Beach	August 25, 2017	Accepted
1001	Aleutian Tern	Farquhar Inlet	December 4, 2016	Accepted
1006	Hudsonian Godwit	Lake Wollumboola	July 1, 2018	Accepted
1007	Grey-headed Lapwing	Penrith Lakes	Sept 5-14, 2019	Accepted

### CASE SUMMARIES

**Case 894:** This case concerned three sight records of White-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregretta grallaria* which were seen over the Britannia Seamounts off the coast of NSW on March 18, 2015. Close views and excellent photographs along with the supportive description confirmed the identity beyond doubt and the committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance. Although White-bellied Storm Petrel breeds on Lord Howe Island, it remains a very rare bird in coastal waters of the Australian mainland and is only the 5<sup>th</sup> record to be accepted by BARC. Paul Walbridge

**Case 897:** This case concerned the claimed sighting of a Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* at Lake Wollumboola on December 17, 2015. The committee found this case quite difficult to assess. The small size compared to Sharp-tailed Sandpiper suggested the bird was a stint and the bird appeared to be too long billed to be a Red-necked Stint, Little Stint or Sanderling, and too uniformly patterned to be a Broad-billed Sandpiper. The low resolution of the only image meant that it was not possible to determine how uniform the upperparts were and the angle of the image meant that it was not possible to see any chevrons on the flank or streaking on the breast. Since this would be a first record for Australia, especially good documentation is required and, although the bird may well have been a Western Sandpiper, the lack of visible detail caused the committee to not accept the sighting.

**Case 918:** This case concerned the sighting of a White-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregretta grallaria* which was seen over the Britannia Seamounts off the coast of NSW on April 9, 2016. Extended views for over an hour and excellent photographs along with the supportive description confirmed the identity beyond doubt and the committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance. Although White-bellied Storm Petrel breeds on Lord Howe Island, it remains a very rare bird in coastal waters of the Australian mainland and is only the 6<sup>th</sup> record to be accepted by BARC. Paul Walbridge

**Cases 957, 958 and 959** With White-bellied Storm Petrel recently reinstated onto the BARC Review List, these three cases were previously reviewed and accepted by NSW ORAC (NSW ORAC Case numbers 418, 428 and 503 respectively) and have been added to the BARC case files for completeness.

**Case 960:** This case concerned the sighting of a White-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregretta grallaria* which was seen north east of Brown's Mountain on a pelagic trip off Sydney on March 11, 2017. Although the bird was seen quite briefly, the submission and associated photographs confirmed the identity beyond doubt and the committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance. Although White-bellied Storm Petrel breeds on Lord Howe Island, it remains a very rare bird in coastal waters of the Australian mainland and is only the 7<sup>th</sup> record to be accepted by BARC. Robert Hynson, Roger McGovern, Jodi Osgood and Jon Spicer-Bell

**Case 965:** This case concerned the sighting of a Cook's Petrel *Pterodroma cookii* which was seen some 24NM south east of Port Stephens Head during a pelagic trip on November 27, 2016. The bird did several passes to within 15-20 metres of the boat providing close views and excellent photographs to support the identification. The submission eliminated the possibility of other cookalaria type petrels, in particular the very similar Pycroft's Petrel, and the committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance. It becomes only the 8<sup>th</sup> record of this species to be accepted by BARC although there have been a number of unsubstantiated reports from eastern Australia in the past. Mick Roderick

**Case 971:** This case concerned three separate sightings presumed, although not obviously, to be of the same individual Band-rumped Storm Petrel *Hydrobates castro* which was seen over the Britannia Seamounts off the coast of NSW on April 9, 2016. Close views and photographs allowed the observers to identify the bird(s) conclusively with the description noting that the bird had a rather chunky structure with a heavy bill and slightly notched tail, a dark head, a broad carpal bar, an unmarked crescent shaped white rump patch that spanned onto the upper tail coverts and a lack of any foot projection. The committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance even though this species is a particularly difficult identification challenge and it becomes the first confirmed record for this species in Australia. Rohan Clarke and Paul Walbridge

**Case 984:** This case concerned the sighting of a Cook's Petrel *Pterodroma cookii* which was seen some 25NM south east of Port Stephens Head during a pelagic trip on November 12, 2017. The bird was in view for about 30 seconds and approached to within about 50 metres of the boat providing good views and photographic opportunities to support the identification. The submission eliminated the possibility of other cookalaria type petrels, in particular the very similar Pycroft's Petrel, and the committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance. It becomes only the 9<sup>th</sup> record of this species to be accepted by BARC although there have recently been about nine reports of this species from Queensland and Tasmania between October and December 2017. Alex Berryman and Mick Roderick

**Case 985:** This case concerned the sighting of a Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* standing in a swale behind sand dunes near the Lavis Lane entry point to Stockton Beach on August 25, 2017. The bird was seen in association with a Double-banded Plover and good photographs were obtained by the observer. The committee voted unanimously in favour of acceptance, satisfied that the bill shape, extent and position of the dark loreal stripe, pattern of the lores and the inconspicuous yellow orbital

ring eliminated the possibility of Semipalmated Plover and all other confusion species. It becomes the 5<sup>th</sup> confirmed record for Australia and the first for NSW to be accepted by BARC although there is an old record for the species seen on Kooragang Island several times in 1967 (McGill A. R. 1969) Ann Lindsey

**Case 1001:** This case concerned the enigmatic discovery of Aleutian Tern(s) *Onychoprion aleuticus* at Farquhar inlet near Old Bar on December 4, 2016. The following year on December 11, 2017 four birds were rediscovered at the same location and, between then and April 8, 2018, there were regular reports of up to eighteen birds with the maximum number photographed together being sixteen. The initial identification in 2016 was made through expert scrutiny of photographs (David Eades et al) but the rediscovery in 2017 provided many opportunities for close scrutiny and documentation of the transition from non-breeding to breeding plumage. The submission contained an excellent series of photographs and a thorough account of how the birds were seen and identified, allowing the committee to vote unanimously in favour of acceptance. Several members commented that this occurrence was more likely to be a recent development rather than the species having been simply overlooked in the past. This becomes a first confirmed record for Australia and, since the sightings occurred over two seasons, BARC is treating these sightings as two records. Liam Murphy

**Case 1006:** This case concerned the sighting of a Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* at Lake Wollumboola which was first discovered on July 1, 2018 where it was associating with Bar-tailed Godwits, and it remained until at least August 25, 2018. The description covered all the identification features of Hudsonian Godwit and the photographs obtained corroborated the identity beyond any doubt. The committee voted unanimously for acceptance and it becomes the 9<sup>th</sup> confirmed record for Australia and, interestingly, the second record for this locality. Vincent Mourik and Demetrios Bertzeletos

**Case 1007:** This case concerned the sighting of a Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* at Penrith Lakes, Western Sydney from September 5, 2015 when it was found by Matthew Hughes until it was last seen on September 14, 2015. The bird was seen and photographed by many observers during the period of its stay and all the salient diagnostic features were very clear allowing the committee to vote unanimously for acceptance. It becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> confirmed record for Australia and the 2<sup>nd</sup> for NSW, the previous NSW record being from Burren Junction from June to August 2006. David James

Roger McGovern

Secretary NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee

January 26, 2019