



**SOUTHERN
OCEAN SEABIRD
STUDY
ASSOCIATION
INC.**

Special points of interest:

- Cooks Petrels in Sydney Harbour.
- Grey-headed Albatrosses in NSW.
- Images from the Russian Far East

CONTENTS

Cooks Petrels in Sydney Harbour	1
Grey-headed Albatrosses in NSW	3
Five Islands report	4
A very sad loss - Allen Keast	5
Red-footed Booby	6
Band Recoveries	7
The Russian Far East	8



The Albatross

Issue No. 43

July 2009

COOKS PETRELS IN SYDNEY HARBOUR

Story: Lindsay Smith, Photo: Brook Whyllie

The discovery of two specimens of this rare petrel in Sydney Harbour has created great interest.

One was found at Circular Quay and the other at The ANZAC Bridge. Cooks Petrels breed only in New Zealand waters and they are known to migrate to the North Pacific Ocean after breeding. It is possible that these two birds may have had assisted passage to Sydney, on board a Pacific Ocean Cruise Liner.

One bird died, but the other was taken into care at the Taronga Wildlife Hospital on 26 March 2009. After four weeks in rehabilitation, the bird was successfully released at sea, beyond the continental shelf, off Wollongong on 25 April 2009. This was the first ever live specimen recovered on the Australian mainland.

Many thanks to the staff at Taronga Wildlife Hospital for making this release possible.



The Cooks Petrel prior to release on the Sandra K, 25 April 2009

Exploration of Discovery Beyond the Continental Shelf

Heading out between 80 to 100 nautical miles
n-east or s-east from Ulladulla on the MV Banks

**Depending on Numbers ! If Cancelled
due to shortfall, all money would be refunded.**



On board the M.V Banks. Plenty of Space.
Photo: Lindsay Smith

******To Book: Your Trips,
Contact: Janice or Lindsay**

Thanks for your support! Cheers Janice

S.O.S.S.A.

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Association Inc.

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M.V Banks in Ulladulla harbour. Details at
www.mvbanks.com

**NOTE: ALL 2009 ULLADULLA
TRIPS ARE FULLY BOOKED
OUT.**

**BELOW ARE THE DATES
FOR 2010, SO BOOK EARLY AS
THEY DO FILL UP QUICKLY.**

***** 3 TRIPS for 2010 *****

**Deep Water Pelagic
Beyond the Continental Shelf
SOSSA Pelagic Adventures!
from ULLADULLA**

27th 28th 29th MARCH 2010

10th 11th 12th JULY 2010

9th 10th 11th OCTOBER 2010

Heading out between 80 to 100 nautical miles
n-east or s-east from Ulladulla on the MV Banks

Boarding from 1800 Hrs

***** Evening Meal *****

**Will Be Available Between
7.30 - 8.30pm**

Departs Ulladulla Harbour 2130Hrs

**2 full days of daylight viewing –
Guides included**

Returning Approx 2130Hrs Monday

**All meals + Morning + Afternoon Tea
+ Supper + Adventure, Seabirds ? Whales ?**

Adventure on the 100ft vessel MV Banks

Cost: AUD \$ 645.00 p/p

******* Maximum 20 passengers**

Payment to be made to SOSSA

6 WEEKS BEFORE DEPARTURE

****(payment required to confirm the
booking)****

Grey-headed Albatrosses in NSW

By Lindsay Smith, Photos: Brook Whyllie

The Grey-headed Albatross, *Thalassarche chrysostoma* is considered rare in NSW coastal waters, but was recently been taken off the list of species that require a submission to the NSW rarities committee.

It is interesting to note that in a search of available literature indicated that all specimens recovered in NSW have been of juvenile and immature birds only. Our records from Wollongong would also indicate that adult Grey-heads are extremely rare or absent from our regional waters. They instead prefer the colder waters south of the Sub-Tropical Convergence.

Juvenile Grey-headed Albatrosses are easily identified from all other mollymooks. The combination of grey head, dark underwings and blackish bill separate it from the Black-browed and Campbell Albatrosses.

Due to feather wear during the first 12 months at sea, the tips of the feathers, of the head and neck wear to show their white bases. They therefore appear to become white-headed, Grey-headed Albatrosses. As such, they become incredibly cryptic, resembling immature and juvenile Black-browed and Campbell albatrosses.

Immature
Grey-headed
Albatross—
Wollongong
April 2009.



Immature Grey-headed Albatross—Wollongong
June 2006.

Great care is therefore required when identifying young Grey-heads, particularly second and third year old birds.

I am certain that this species is overlooked on occasion, as it is so cryptic amongst juveniles of the fore mentioned species.



Five Islands Report

By Lindsay Smith

Five Islands visit December 29-30 2008

Team. Lindsay Smith, Janice Jenkin-Smith, Darryl McKay, Jack Smith, Brook Whyllie Ross, Nina, Cath Young, Celeste Brockson

This was the first opportunity to get to the islands to assess the damage vandals had done to the Consett Davis Hut. (See Newsletter 41.)

On departing Fisherman's beach, our boat was "swamped", sunk by the surf and we all got wet. Once we landed, Darryl organised the banding crew whilst Jack and I set about repairing the hut.

The banding crew had a very successful trip and managed to collect data on over 150 breeding Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Included in these numbers, was one individual that was banded as a chick, 161-60619, on Big Island in 1980. At 29 years, this individual is the oldest Wedge-tailed Shearwater known from the Five Islands Nature Reserve.

Australian Pelican chicks in crèches and breeding adults on eggs and with small chicks, numbered over one thousand individuals, prevented the banding team from travelling across to No 2. Island. Australian White Ibis were also breeding in quite large numbers, in the order of 500 pairs. Royal Spoon-bills (*Platalea regia*) were discovered breeding in a small colony of 15-23 birds.

This represented the first known marine nesting station in Eastern Australia. Nests were situated amongst the Ibis, on the south eastern side of No1, above the gulch and on the North western end of the island.

Jack and I set about basic repairs with the limited equipment and materials available. The repairs were only to secure the hut and protect equipment from the weather. The solar electricity system panels and batteries were damaged and repairs are urgently needed.

Darryl McKay, Jack Smith and I later returned to Big Island to effect further repairs to the hut. Whilst on the island we also managed to collect more information and data on the birds currently breeding there. We also managed to tidy up the mess left by the vandals and remove much of the damaged equipment and rubbish. Some spraying of the Kikuyu Grass and Mirror bush was also conducted before we had to leave the island, due to unfavourable weather.

On our return to the harbour in two metre seas and thirty five knot north east winds, we had engine problems and were lucky to make it back safely, with the out board motor running on only one cylinder. Sea conditions prevented us from stopping to carry out repairs. Once back in the harbour the engine inexplicably began to function properly again.

All in all, it was a successful and eventful trip.



The banding team working Wedge-tail Shearwater burrows on the west side of the island. The hut is in the background.

A Very Sad Loss - Allen Keast

The Eminent Australian Ornithologist
 Allen (James **Allen Keast**)
 Passed away in Canada on the
 8th March 2009

We are all saddened to hear of the passing of Allen. He was a wonderful companion, a gentleman of impeccable character and had an extraordinary knowledge of the natural world around us. Allen had an immense love of the bush and the creatures that inhabit it. He was particularly interested in the birds. He would head out in the morning well before first light, in order, he said, to take in the morning chorus, identifying the birds by their calls. He was forever taking notes on who was calling and when. He would sit and observe birds and their behaviour for hours on end, taking notes the whole time.

Allen was author of many books and papers dealing with birds, their behaviour and their habitat requirements. Among my fondest of memories of Allen was when he joined us on a trip to his beloved "Five Islands" Nature Reserve. After an absence of almost fifty years it was a most interesting and up lifting experience to listen to Allen's view of the changes in that time. Fortunately Allen wrote up the experience for us all to share.

Allen, at his best, presented Janice with "two Boxes of Chocolates" to enjoy whilst I was out on the islands with him and Steve-Anyon-Smith.

Allen's passing is a great loss to the ornithological community world wide. Truly a man of great stature.

Lindsay Smith



Professor Allen Keast on a visit to Unanderra
 Allen Keast, 1922-2009

50 Years Since
 First Band
 Recovered



An unexpected surprise arrived in the mail. A card from Lance Tickell proclaiming that December 29th 2008 marked the 50th anniversary of the discovery of a

Wandering Albatross
Diomedea exulans,
 banded at Bellambi NSW by Dough Gibson being recovered alive and well at Bird Island South Georgia in the South Atlantic Ocean. This was the beginning of a long association between the British Antarctic Survey and the New South Wales Albatross Study Group.

Bird Island, South Georgia
 29 December 1958

"Great scoop this evening. I discovered a Wandering carrying a CSIRO ring"
 Entry in my diary that day.

For Lindsay, Janice & Harry
 in memory of Doug.

50 year greetings from

Lance

The March Pelagic - a Red-footed Booby

Report and photos by Brook Whyllie

An unexpected sighting on the March 2009 SOSSA trip from Wollongong was a juvenile Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*).

The day had commenced as a typical Autumn day, with very pleasant pelagic conditions. Banding of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters had started on our journey out to the continental shelf, then the call of "what's that?" and "stop the boat" rang out. It was with

great surprise that the call of Red-footed Booby was made, a species that is very rarely seen in New South Wales. There have been less than ten sightings in all, and until now, none recorded on a SOSSA pelagic trip. The only previous record of Red-footed Booby on the South Coast was a beach washed bird at Port Kembla.

The most significant breeding population of Red-footed Booby's on the Australian east coast is at Raine Island, which is at least 3,000 kilometres from Wollongong.

Red-footed Boobies are the smallest member of the Gannet family, *Sulidae*. They are found in tropical waters and their range extends from the Indian Ocean across to South America, with populations on the Galapagos Islands as well as Christmas Island.



An Interesting Image



Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, photographed on South Georgia in January 2006 , Mark Muller.

Unusual Band Recovery

Paul Sagar of the New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research has reported sighting a White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche steadi* with Band No 280-12875.

The bird was most recently observed standing on an empty nest at Castaway's Bay Disappointment Island New Zealand. (Latitude: 50 degrees 36mins 25 seconds south. Longitude: 165 degrees 59 mins 30 seconds east.)

This bird was originally banded as a first year bird at sea off Wollongong New South Wales by members of the NSW Albatross Study Group on August 13th 1995.

Time between banding and recovery is 13years 3 months and 26 days. Distance between banding site and recovery site is 2,169 km on a bearing of 151 degrees.

This represents the first recovery of a White-capped albatross banded in Australian waters being recovered on the New Zealand breeding grounds.



Immature White-capped Albatross off Wollongong
Photo: Brook Whyllie

Durno Murray

**A valued friend and member of SOSSA
from the beginning and beyond.
Sadly passed away on the 25th April 2009**

From Wikipedia.

Durno Murray was an Australian Veterinary scientist and an ornithologist with a particular interest in seabirds. He was born and educated in England before moving to New Zealand and then Australia. He was the first regional organiser for New South Wales of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme. He was instrumental in establishing the New South Wales Albatross Study Group, now the Southern Oceans Seabird Study Group (SOSSA). He was President of the Australian Bird Study Association 1973-1974, Editor of its journal *Corella* 1990-1994, and largely responsible for its 'Seabird Islands' series.

DONATIONS

Thank you to the people below for their very kind donations.

\$1,500.00 from the NSW Fauna & Marine Parks Assoc. Inc. Our contacts are Lisa Christie (Secretary), and Rick Webb (Manager) Featherdale.

Tess Brickhill (QLD) \$200.00
Frank O'Connor \$100.00

Many thanks, for these donations. This money has already enabled us to buy new nets for the Wedge-tailed Shearwater and Petrel season. It will also go along way towards new equipment for the ongoing "Five Islands" Nature Reserve Studies.

Images from the Russian Far East

Photos by Graham Morgan

SOSSA member, Graham Morgan, spent a month in late 2008 touring the Russian Far East. Here are some of his amazing images.



Left: Horned Puffins at Perengrebnaya Bay on Medny Island in the Commander group. These are the Pacific version of the Atlantic Puffin.



Right: Mother and Chick. Endangered Red Legged Kittiwake at Perengrebnaya Bay on Medny Island in the Commander group.



Above: Bird Rocks, Commander Islands

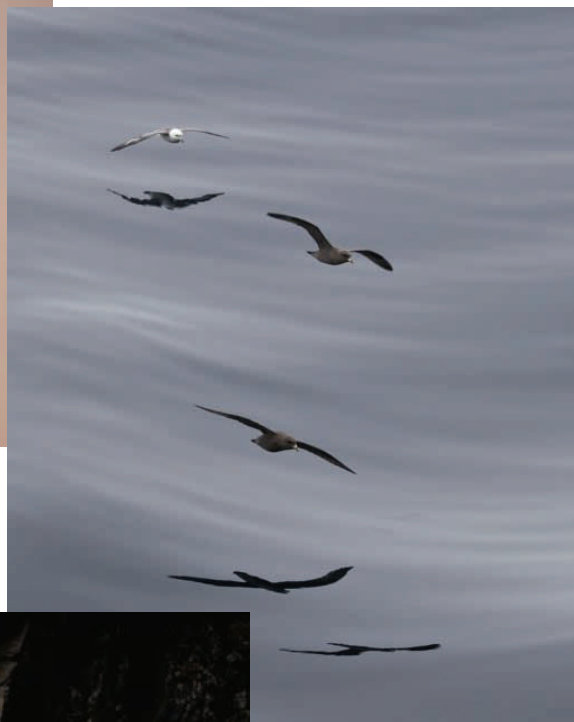


Above: Juvenile Northern Fur Seal at Yuzhno Vostochniy at Medny Island

Images from the Russian Far East—continued from page 8.



Above: Slaty Back Gulls



Right: Northern Fulmars. Light + Dark phase



Left: Pacific Walrus at Anastasia Bay.

Right: Natalia Bay in Northern Kamchatka





SOUTHERN OCEAN SEABIRD STUDY ASSOCIATION INC.

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Newsletter Contributions

All are invited to contribute to our newsletter 'Albatross'. We do prefer electronic copies of any material. Send it by email to

sossa@tpg.com.au

Alternatively mail it to us on a disk, which we will return.

We're on the web!
www.sossa-international.org

New Members...

Willem Renema
Rosalyn Hanson
Jim Sneddon
Robert Hynson
Celeste Brockson
Ross Crates
Sue Taylor
Rochelle Wood
Albert Wright
Martin Cachard
Charlie Andrews

NEXT SOSSA MEETING

Saturday 22nd August 2009
held at HQ. – 7.00 pm
10 Jenkins Street - Unanderra.
NSW.
We only supply the Coffee or Tea!!!

NEW CONTACT FOR EDEN PELAGIC TRIPS

Helen Buckingham

FREEDOM CHARTERS

fishing@freedomcharters.com.au

BOAT TRIP DATES 2009

SATURDAY 22nd AUGUST
SUNDAY 23rd AUGUST
SATURDAY 12th SEPTEMBER

SOSSA AGM SUNDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 2009

11.30 am AT SOSSA H.Q.

SATURDAY 26th SEPTEMBER-Wollongong
SUNDAY 27th SEPTEMBER-Wollongong
SATURDAY 17th OCTOBER-Wollongong
SATURDAY-MONDAY 17th OCTOBER to 19th

Ulladulla MV Banks

SATURDAY 24th OCTOBER-Wollongong
SUNDAY 25th OCTOBER-Wollongong

SATURDAY 31st OCTOBER-Wollongong
SATURDAY-MONDAY 31st OCT, 1st + 2nd NOV

Ulladulla MV Banks

SATURDAY 28th NOVEMBER-Wollongong
SATURDAY ***** 19th DECEMBER—

Wollongong

December Trip 2009, will be brought forward as it will fall to close to Christmas, now 19th December 2009.

SOSSA Pelagic trips

Members: \$ 70.00

Visitors: \$ 90.00

These prices are on the web

Prices may change due to charter costs

Note: Some trips are strictly for research and will have limited numbers!

SOSSA's newsletter—The Albatross

The Albatross is published four times a year (roughly Jan, Apr, Jul & Oct). The editor welcomes (is desperate for!) articles from members and friends on issues relating to pelagic seabirding, seabird research and marine conservation. Please advise the editor if you intend to submit an article and submit the piece at least two weeks before the start of a publication month. Thank you!

Please send us your email address

To save SOSSA postage costs and receive 'The Albatross' as a colourful pdf or web file then please send your email address and current membership number to : sossa@tpg.com.au



Fairy Prion. Photo: Brook Whyllie

Please help...

SOSSA membership fees remain unchanged even though costs have increased greatly across the board. We would really appreciate any donations from those whom may be able to afford it.

SOSSA - Pelagic Trip data - 2008-2009

Phone: 02 4271 6004

Fax: 02 4272 4626 PO Box 142 Unanderra NSW 2526

email: SOSSA@tpg.com.au

Speno	Species	Brisbane		Eden		Sydney			Ulladulla				Wollongong					
		Feb09	Apr09	Mar09	May09	Mar09	Apr09	May09	#####	20Oct08	29Mar09	30Mar09	Sep08	Feb09	Mar09	Apr09	May09	Jun09
5	Little Penguin, <i>Eudyptula minor</i>				2		5								2			
85	Common Diving Petrel, <i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>				1													
929	Southern Giant Petrel, <i>Macronectes giganteus</i>											3					2	
937	Northern Giant Petrel, <i>Macronectes halli</i>				1												4	4
984	Cape Petrel, <i>Daption capense</i>								9	4							5	5
75	Great-winged Petrel, <i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>	1	32	30		45	1		186	17	123	47	1	100+	7			
971	Providence Petrel, <i>Pterodroma solandri</i>		35	1	1	3	14	5	6	5	15	18	1		8	5	10	8
920	Tahiti Petrel, <i>Pseudobulweria rostrata</i>	15	5															
922	Kermadec Petrel, <i>Pterodroma neglecta</i>		4							2	7	2						
919	Mottled Petrel, <i>Pterodroma inexpectata</i>								2									
774	White-necked Petrel, <i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>										8							
918	Cook's Petrel, <i>Pterodroma cooki</i>									1						1		
78	Gould's Petrel, <i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>			1					1		6							
83	Fairy Prion, <i>Pachyptila turtur</i>				40		4		1				38				30	
915	White-chinned Petrel, <i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>									2								
916	Westland Black Petrel, <i>Procellaria westlandica</i>							1										
917	Black Petrel, <i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>			1					2		2							
853	Streaked Shearwater, <i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	3										1		4	1			
69	Wedge-tailed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus pacificus</i>	691	8	120		500	280	1	2	19	14	118	4	4	375+	100+		
975	Buller's Shearwater, <i>Puffinus bulleri</i>											1						
72	Flesh-footed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	4		3		60	60					15			50+	5		
70	Sooty Shearwater, <i>Puffinus griseus</i>			2	1				2	5		2		1				
71	Short-tailed Shearwater, <i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>			70		2		1	4477	2255		17			4			
68	Fluttering Shearwater, <i>Puffinus gavia</i>				6		1	1		4		4	19	7	5	1	1	1
913	Hutton's Shearwater, <i>Puffinus huttoni</i>	2			1		3	1		24		4			1			
67	Little Shearwater, <i>Puffinus assimilis</i>								3		4							
86	Wandering Albatross, <i>Diomedea exulans</i>			1				1	5	6	1		2				3	
846	Antipodean Albatross, <i>Diomedea antipodensis</i>			1						6							3	1
847	Gibson's Albatross, <i>Diomedea gibsoni</i>				1	3			8	57	4	2	21				5	5
973	Northern Royal Albatross, <i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>					1				2								
88	Black-browed Albatross, <i>Thalassarche melanophrys</i>			6	5		3	6	3			1	58			15	15	15
859	Campbell Albatross, <i>Thalassarche impavida</i>			4	3				6	34		6			1		3	
931	Buller's Albatross, <i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>			1	6			2					3			3	5	1
91	Shy Albatross, <i>Thalassarche cauta</i>			15	19			1		7	1	11	15		1	2	7	7

Speno	Species	Brisbane		Eden		Sydney			Ulladulla				Wollongong					
		Feb09	Apr09	Mar09	May09	Mar09	Apr09	May09	#####	20Oct08	29Mar09	30Mar09	Sep08	Feb09	Mar09	Apr09	May09	Jun09
862	Salvin's Albatross, <i>Thalassarche salvini</i>												1					
89	Yellow-nosed Albatross, <i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>						1	13										
864	Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, <i>Thalassarche carteri</i>			2	4				1				24			5	5	20
90	Grey-headed Albatross, <i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>												1			1		
93	Light-mantled Albatross, <i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i>				1													
63	Wilson's Storm Petrel, <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>		3	3			14	7	51	6	114	48			2		15	
65	White-faced Storm Petrel, <i>Pelagodroma marina</i>		10	2			4		18	5	2	4						
66	Black-bellied Storm Petrel, <i>Fregetta tropica</i>								35									
944	White-bellied Storm Petrel, <i>Fregetta grallaria</i>										3	1						
108	White-tailed Tropicbird, <i>Phaethon lepturus</i>					1												
104	Australasian Gannet, <i>Morus serrator</i>		3	16	22		60	23		42	2	85	34	34	18	300+	18	50+
103	Red-footed Booby, <i>Sula sula</i>	2													1			
100	Little Pied Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>			1	1							1					3	3
98	Black-faced Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax fuscescens</i>			4	32													
99	Pied Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	3															1	1
97	Little black Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	18			1									6				
96	Great Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			8	4					1		1		3			2	2
106	Australian Pelican, <i>Pelicanus conspicillatus</i>				6					1			31	17	8	13	12	12
980	Brown Skua, <i>Catharacta lonnbergi</i>				7					1			4					
945	Pomarine Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	6		2		3						27		34	7	3		
128	Arctic Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	4		4							1	8		4		2		
933	Long-tailed Jaeger, <i>Stercorarius longicauda</i>													23				
126	Pacific Gull, <i>Larus pacificus</i>			6	10													
981	Kelp Gull, <i>Larus dominicanus</i>													2	1	2		1
125	Silver Gull, <i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	61	26	40	35	120	120	50		2			100+	100+	40	20+	50+	200+
111	Caspian Tern, <i>Sterna caspia</i>		1		15													
115	Crested Tern, <i>Sterna bergii</i>	213	90	15		2	8	16		12		31	40+	20+	37	40+	20+	20+
114	White-fronted Tern, <i>Sterna striata</i>				3			1					1				5	5
953	Common Tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	1																
952	Arctic Tern, <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>									1								
120	Sooty Tern, <i>Sterna fuscata</i>	3																
122	Common Noddy, <i>Anous stolidus</i>	2																
982	Grey Ternlet, <i>Procelsterna cerulea</i>														1			