

**BROOKLINE BIRD CLUB EXTREME PELAGIC to Hydrographer Canyon & vicinity**  
**August 3, 2013**  
**Nick Bonomo**

Time: 0215 – 2112

Weather: Mostly Sunny for most of the trip with brief period of moderate rain in the afternoon just south of Nantucket Shoals on our return. Excellent visibility throughout. Winds WSW @ 8-15 mph. Air temp approx mid-60s to upper 70s.

Seas: 3-6 ft subsiding to 2-4 ft

Destination: Hydrographer Canyon & vicinity

Water temps: Coolest 55 degrees Fahrenheit on Nantucket Shoals, warmest 74.5 degrees Fahrenheit southeast of Hydrographer Canyon.

Water depth: max depth of approximately 1 mile

Leaders: Mark Faherty, James P. Smith, Nick Bonomo. Huge thanks to Ida Giriunas and Naeem Yusuff for the monumental task of putting these trips together.

Summary:

\_\_ participants and three leaders joined Capt. Joe Huckameyer, first mate Matt & crew for a fine day of pelagic birding. Following an early morning departure, dawn found us on the southeastern edge of the Nantucket Shoals with numbers of Great Shearwaters and a few Sooties sprinkled in. Our first Leach's Storm-Petrel around sunrise on the shoals was a sign of things to come for this species today. A few Red and Red-necked Phalaropes were seen in flight only. The birds thinned out as we made the run between the shoals and the shelf edge, as they often do. Upon reaching the tip of Hydrographer Canyon around 0900 we immediately came into numbers of Wilson's Storm-Petrels and a handful of Leach's. Our first of six Audubon's Shearwaters was seen in 72 degree water near the tip of the canyon.

We worked our way down the east wall of the canyon, sorting through the storm-petrels and finding several more Leach's. One particular pair of Audubon's Shearwaters allowed close approach, so everyone on board had the chance to see this warm-water species well today.

We cut across the southeast corner of the canyon and headed to a steep dropoff between Hydrographer and Dogbody Canyon, but found few birds here. From here we motored south, looking for warmer and deeper water southeast of Hydrographer Canyon. It was in this warmer (74.5 degrees), deeper water that we tallied eight BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETRELS scattered among the Wilson's and Leach's. As is typical for the species, they proved very elusive, with only brief views before fleeing the boat. Before turning back to the northwest we spent 40 minutes chumming in the deep water, which eventually did the trick of attracting two Band-rumps close enough to the boat for most to see, though they did not linger for long – life birds for several folks.

Our return trip brought us back through the mouth of Hydrographer Canyon and along its west wall. We found ourselves back on the Nantucket Shoals after a bout of moderate rain in the late afternoon. We picked through the numerous Great Shearwaters to find a few more Cory's and Sooties. The only Manx

of the trip was seen by just a few birders from the stern, giving us a five shearwater day. A distant SKUA was seen briefly by just a few on the horizon, eluding identification.

Later in the afternoon we had another encounter with a skua, this one also rather distant and brief, flying into the sun glare and vanishing. This bird was left unidentified from field views as Skua versus Pomarine Jaeger, pending photo review. Indeed the photographs reveal a SKUA, the identification of which is still being discussed. Plumage and molt strongly suggest South Polar Skua.

3 Common Loon

17 Cory's Shearwater (4 birds seen well were identified as the more common 'borealis' subspecies)

609 Great Shearwater (almost exclusively on Nantucket Shoals)

7 Sooty Shearwater (Nantucket Shoals)

1 Manx Shearwater (Nantucket Shoals)

6 Audubon's Shearwater (all seen in approx. 72 degree water right along shelf edge, but none in the warmest/deepest waters; both fresh and heavily molting individuals seen)

769 Wilson's Storm-Petrel

43 Leach's Storm-Petrel (most along shelf edge and deeper)

8 BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (exclusively in deep 73-74.5 degree water south of the shelf edge; one bird photo'd well enough to observe rather stout structure and nearly complete primary molt, which falls in line with potential winter-breeding "Grant's" form hypothesized to be the expected visitor to our region)

5 Leach's/Band-rumped Storm-Petrel

3 Northern Gannet

6 Red-necked Phalarope (Nantucket Shoals)

5 Red Phalarope (Nantucket Shoals)

4 phalarope sp. (Nantucket Shoals)

11 Common Tern

2 SKUA sp. (Nantucket Shoals; one photographed highly suggestive of South Polar Skua, review in progress)

1 Fin Whale

2 Minke Whale

16 Risso's Dolphin

2 Offshore Bottlenose Dolphin

50 Common Dolphin

6 dolphin sp. (Striped vs. Spotted)

1 Gray Seal

1 Blue Shark

1 Thresher Shark

1 Ocean Sunfish, Mola mola

1 Portuguese Man-O-War

Thank you to all participants! Ebird lists will be offered in two forms: a total list for the day, and hour-by-hour. Email me at the address below to request a shared copy (and please specify total versus hourly)

when I get around to entering them. I will also post a few photos and some form of a map of our route to my blog in the next couple days.

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