

BBC PELAGIC 7.19.08

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SATURDAY, 19 JULY 2008:

BBC EXTREME PELAGIC from HYANNIS, MA to the CONTINENTAL SHELF at ATLANTIS CANYON (0400-2200 hrs.)

Weather: Mostly sunny, but foggy over cooler shallow waters of Nantucket Shoals, SW-WSW winds 10-20 mph, 70-80 F.

Water Temperature: 68-77 F (warmest over portions of Atlantis Canyon).

Seas: 4-6 feet, with a few waves perhaps to 8 feet.

Visibility: Mostly unlimited (although slightly hazy) throughout warmer shelf and canyon waters, but down to near zero in dense fog on our return over Nantucket Shoals.

Roughly 75 participants plus organizer Ida Giriunas and leaders Rick Heil, Marshall Iliff, Steve Mirick, and Jeremiah Trimble joined Captain Joe Huckemeyer and the crew of the 100' 'Helen H' for the second in a series of three Brookline Bird Club 'Extreme Pelagic' trips, this one to Atlantis Canyon and the Continental Shelf about 100-110 miles south of Muskeget Island. We departed Hyannis at 0400 and via Muskeget Channel proceeded south on route to Atlantis Canyon where we had learned in advance we would again (still) find the warmest water reachable. Water temperature had warmed considerably since the June trip. Seas were slightly rough and we endured a bit of a sloppy ride out. However, once we reached the canyon and the shelf edge, we turned east and ran with the wind, making things much more comfortable, and the boat more stable for viewing. We again ran a Menhaden Oil drip for most of the cruise and chummed heartily at several spots in the warm deep water over the canyon in waters about 2500 feet deep.

Unlike the June trip, overall numbers of seabirds were unimpressive, but we were rewarded this time with several exciting and rare, but not unexpected, warm and deep water species, including a new Massachusetts high count for Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, a stunning and very inquisitive Bridled Tern that circled the boat several times (our 5th since 2004), and two separate 1st-summer Long-tailed Jaegers that put on a great performance for the photographers on board. Several possible/probable 'Scopoli's' Shearwaters (*C. d. diomedea*), the race of Cory's breeding inside the Mediterranean Sea, were observed and photographed. Final determination will await a careful analysis of the photographs.

The marine mammal show included several small groups of Grampus (or Risso's Dolphins) and Offshore Bottlenosed Dolphins, and one pod of

Common (Saddleback) Dolphins that briefly came in and rode the bow waves.
Cory's Shearwater (11): borealis or presumed.

'Scopoli's' Shearwater, possible (4): Several Cory's types appearing more slender billed, and with white extending onto the underside of the primaries, may well be this subspecies, *C.d.diomedea*, breeding inside the Mediterranean, and which some consider a separate species. We have previously documented this taxon in these waters, first in Aug. 2006.

Greater Shearwater (60)

Sooty Shearwater (1): Nantucket Shoals.

Manx Shearwater (1)

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (502)

Leach's Storm-Petrel (5+)

Leach's/Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (2+): Larger, long-winged storm-petrels not well observed.

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (4): All in the vicinity of warm deep water of Atlantis Canyon and shelf edge. The first near N39 53.809 W70 38.258, then two near N39 53.946 W70 31.210, and one near N39 54.3377 W70.27.189. This complex taxon may actually include several species but we will save that for future seasons! We have had Band-rumps twice before, two in Aug. 2004, and one in Aug. 2007, but four individuals represents a Massachusetts high count.

Northern Gannet (1-sub adult): Nantucket Shoals.

Double-crested Cormorant (2): Flying just off Martha's Vineyard.

small shorebird sp. (1): Flying S, well south of Nantucket Shoals.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (2): Both 1st-summer, well photographed; First one at N40 41.508 W70 36.688, second near N39 54.3377 W70.27.189. This is the default jaeger once well offshore here in late summer.

jaeger sp. (1)-distantly chasing storm-petrels behind tuna boat.

Herring Gull (3)-near M.V.

Great Black-backed Gull (5+)-Near M.V.

BRIDLED TERN (1): 1st-summer; In warm water in the vicinity of Atlantis Canyon at N39 54.3377 W70.27.189. Put on a great show as it circled the boat closely several times before wandering off. The retained worn juvenile outer primaries of this 1st-summer Bridled contrasted with the fresh new inner ones (same goes for secondaries) and were obvious in the field and will show well in photos to be posted soon. This is our 5th Bridled Tern in these waters since 2004.

large whale sp. (3): distant spouts.

Grampus (23): Sum of three pods all in warmer waters.

Common (Saddleback) Dolphin (25)

'Offshore' Bottlenosed Dolphin (19)

dolphin sp (3)

Gray Seal (5): Roosting on 'Skiffs Island' a small bar off Chappaquiddick Island.

Blue Shark (1)

Atlantic Manta (1): 5-6 footer seen briefly by the First Mate, Matt.

flying fish sp. (6+)

Ocean Sunfish, *Mola mola* (3)