

BBC PELAGIC 7.19.14

Jeremiah Trimble

On Saturday 19 July 2014, a full boat of pelagic enthusiasts boarded the Helen H bound for the edge of the Continental Shelf some 100 miles south of Cape Cod. These trips which are sponsored by the Brookline Bird Club and organized by Ida Giriunas have been very successful in the past and this trip was no exception. First, I would like to extend my thanks to Ida and the BBC for making these trips possible! Also, many thanks to my fellow leaders on the trip including Nick Bonomo, Mark Faherty, Tom Johnson and special help from Naeem Yusuff. Finally, many thanks to all the participants who made the trip a very enjoyable one!

Here is a map of the route taken:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jrtrimble/14538788519/>

Bird and other wildlife images can be seen at the following links:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jrtrimble/sets/72157645438457950/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bonxie88/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/9191812@N02/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/erikbogh/>

Apologies if I forgot other links.

Complete list of species (avian and otherwise!):

Long-tailed Jaeger - 2 (a pair of young birds, one dark and one light, on the trip back over Nantucket Shoals in the afternoon; excellent views as these birds circled the boat several times)

jaeger sp. - 1 (early morning; too distant to be certain of ID)

Great Black-backed Gull - 2

Herring Gull - 6

Lesser Black-backed Gull - 1 (over the southern end of Nantucket Shoals)

small shearwater sp. - 1 (this bird may remain unidentified; impressions in the field and field examination of images suggested Barolo Shearwater but given the views and the poor distant images, it may prove difficult to be certain; Manx Shearwater is also a possible candidate; some detailed examination of photos to follow may prove fruitless!; the bird rocketed by the boat as we steamed full speed north over the shelf edge from Welker Canyon, absolutely too fast and far for any possibility of chase (even for Captain Joe!); The circumstances could not have been more unfortunate on this sighting, and although an announcement was quickly made over the loud speaker, the bird had already vanished;

Audubon's Shearwater - 14+ (minimum count - included 2 groups of 5 - all of these birds in the warmer water over the edge of shelf or in canyons and all birds seemed ratty and in heavy molt)

Manx Shearwater - 23+ (all over Nantucket Shoals except see comment under "small shearwater sp")

Sooty Shearwater - 40 (all early in the morning and in the late afternoon over Nantucket Shoals)

Great Shearwater - 203 (scattered throughout day but most over the Shoals)

Cory's Shearwater - 115 (many positively ID'd as 'borealis' but some too distant or fast; seen throughout day)

'Scopoli's' Shearwater - 2+ (photographed; possibly more)

Wilson's Storm-Petrel - 225 (seen throughout the day; chumming efforts in Hydrographer Canyon and off the shelf edge attracted several large groups of up to 80 WISP and also brought in some other excellent birds)

Leach's Storm-Petrel - 39 (seen very frequently especially in deeper waters but throughout day; many great views of birds coming into chum slick behind and around boat; provided excellent comparisons with Band-rumped Storm-Petrels);

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel - 8+ (difficult to estimate these birds as they tended to come into the chum slicks we laid out and disappear for some time before returning (or perhaps multiple individuals involved whole time; maximum of 3 in one chum slick off the shelf edge; a mix of molt stages on these birds from fresh (?) to a ratty bird with three very worn retained outer

primaries; excellent views of birds very close to boat in our chum slick;)

White-faced Storm-Petrel - 1 (fresh looking bird seen just as we reached Hydrographer Canyon; we were all afforded exceptional views of this bird as it kangarooed its way around the boat which Captain Joe deftly maneuvered to keep us on this bird for several minutes; many good photos obtained);

Bottlenosed Dolphin - 2+

Short-beaked Common Dolphin - 66 (several groups;)

STRIPED DOLPHIN - 125+ (Very unusual; Mega!; a life mammal for most on board; very cool, boldly-patterned and acrobatic, small dolphins; single large pod which provided great views; a few even came in to briefly bow ride)

Risso's Dolphin - 7

Minke Whale - 3

Finback Whale - 3

Large whale sp. - 5

Portuguese Man-o'-War - 1 (interestingly, fairly far up on shelf edge)

Yellow-tailed Flying Fish (Black-winged?) - 10+

Sargassum Midget (boldly yellow patterned flying fish) - 2+

Flying fish spp. - 30+

filefish sp. - dip netted out of sargassum; photo review needed;

Small shark sp. - 1