

BBC PELAGIC 8.23.08

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SATURDAY, 23 AUGUST 2008:

BBC EXTREME PELAGIC III from HYANNIS to VEATCH CANYON.

Weather: Mostly clear, SE winds 7-20 mph, 59-75 F.

Seas: 1-5 feet; Visibility: Generally excellent.

A full boat of roughly 75 participants and the Captain and crew of the 'Helen H' headed to sea again, for the third of three trips to the edge of the continental shelf. There was no really warm water around this trip (or any this season) but we decided to head for Veatch Canyon where water temperatures were currently (no pun intended) the warmest, around 73-74 F. Both in and out we traversed the cooler shallow waters of Nantucket Shoals where forced upwellings bring colder deeper water, and nutrients, to the surface. This time at last there was no fog over the shoals, but alas, not that many birds either. In fact, there were relatively low numbers of seabirds in general throughout the areas steamed, although Cory's Shearwater, as has been the case all season, and most especially on souther New England inshore banks, was present in respectable numbers. Highlights included absolutely crippling views of AUDUBON SHEARWATERS for extended periods right beside the boat, good numbers of LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS, two surprise SPERM WHALES in relatively shallow 165 foot deep waters near Nantucket Shoals, and THE GREEN FLASH witnessed by many on board at sunrise thanks to Marshall's prompting!

Common Loon (2)-Nantucket Shoals.

Cory's Shearwater (70): Including at least ten identified as *C.d.borealis* subspecies.

Scopoli's Shearwater, *C.d.diomedea* (1)-Possible; Slightly smaller darker bird with thinner darker olive yellow bill flushed with other Cory's. Underwing pattern in photos somewhat ambiguous.

Greater Shearwater (15)

large shearwater sp. (12): distant.

Sooty Shearwater (1)

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER (4): Three fresh-looking (juvs.?) at Veatch Canyon and one somewhat unexpected much farther north in the shipping lane about 50 miles SSE of Nantucket in 70 degree F water.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (156): (90+% apparently fresh juvs; just a few adults still showing near completion of wing molt.

Leach's Storm-Petrel (16): All in deep water near the shelf edge.

Northern Gannet (13): All sub-ads.; all in shoals waters.
shorebird sp. (34)

Red-necked Phalarope (29): Good looks at several small flocks on the water.

phalarope sp. (65): Several distant flocks all heading roughly SSW.

Laughing Gull (6)
Herring Gull (1)
Great Black-backed Gull (3)
Larus sp. (8+)
Black Tern (3)
Common Tern (22)
Sterna sp. (5)
Pomarine Jaeger (1): 1st-summer.
jaeger sp. (3)

Humpback Whale (1)
SPERM WHALE (2): Unexpected in 165 feet of water near Nantucket Shoals.
large whale sp. (3+)
Risso's Dolphin/Grampus (45)
Bottlenose Dolphin (2)

large Manta Ray sp. (1): Perhaps 7-8' wing spread.
Mola mola, Ocean Sunfish (1)
Flying Fish
Bluefin Tuna