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OBSERVATIONS OF DARK-RUMPED PETRELS OFF OREGON AND CALIFORNIA

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We report two observations of the Dark-rumped Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) off Oregon and California. Spear and Ainley made the first observation on 19 October 1986 at 0830 PST, while censusing birds from a southbound research vessel, at 44° 10' N, 130° 34' W, 500 km (270 nautical miles) off Cape Arago, Oregon. They watched the bird from the flying bridge as it flew west for about 45 seconds, as close as 150 meters, in good lighting. Pyle made the second observation on 2 August 1991 from a vessel conducting research as part of the California Cooperative Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) program, at 31° 55' N, 124° 11' W, 419 km (226 nautical miles) west-southwest of San Miguel Island, California, or 710 km (383 nautical miles) due west of Ensenada, Baja California. The bird was studied from the stern of the vessel, as close as 15 meters distance, at 0700 PST while the ship was collecting oceanographic data at CalCOFI station 83 110. The bird was attracted to a slick created behind the ship, over which it sallied for several minutes before departing.

Both birds were large long-winged *Pterodroma* petrels. Field marks noted on each included white underparts with bold black borders on the leading edge of the underwing, extending from the wrist to the center of the underwing coverts, dark gray to brownish gray upperparts with, at certain angles of lighting, an indistinct M-pattern across the upperwing coverts, black nape and crown that contrasted with the lighter back and extended below the eye and to the sides of the neck, and a large white patch at the base of the bill. The combination of these features is diagnostic of the Dark-rumped Petrel (Harrison 1987). The most similar Pacific *Pterodroma* petrels, the Juan Fernandez (*P. externa*) and White-winged (*P. leucoptera*), are ruled out by size and structure along with the combination of the bold underpart pattern, indistinct upperpart pattern, and ample amount of white on the forehead. All three observers had had extensive prior field experience with Dark-rumped and similar *Pterodroma* petrels.

Sea surface temperatures and salinities were similar at each observation locality: 16.4°C and 32.7 parts per thousand off Oregon, 16.5°C and 32.9 parts per thousand off California. The low salinities (<33.4 parts per thousand) combined with additional data collected on the CalCOFI cruise (Scripps Institution of Oceanography 1992) indicate that the birds were sighted over subarctic water (Roden 1971, A. Mantyla pers. comm.), in the extensive area where the California Current and central Pacific water masses intermingle (Peláez and McGowan 1986). Regions of this mixing, with temperatures and salinities similar to those where the Dark-rumped Petrels were observed, often extend within 185 km (100 nautical miles) of the North American coast.

The Dark-rumped Petrel, listed as endangered in the United States (Department of the Interior 1990), breeds in the Hawaiian and Galapagos islands (Simons 1985, Cruz and Cruz 1990). Away from the breeding grounds the species occurs primarily in equatorial waters of the eastern tropical Pacific, between 20° N and 10° S (Pitman 1982, 1986), where the pelagic ranges of the Hawaiian and Galapagos populations may overlap. In the central Pacific the species regularly ranges north of the Hawaiian Islands to 25° N in spring (King 1970) and to 50° N in July and August, where several birds have been sighted (Bourne 1965, Bourne and Dixon 1975, Wahl et al. 1989) and three specimens have been taken in drift nets (International North Pacific Fiseries Commission 1992). In the North Pacific the species forages primarily over the Eastern Subarctic Current and Southern Transitional Zone, in waters as cold as 12° C (Wahl et al. 1989, T. Wahl pers. comm., Gould and Piatt in press). These records and our observations suggest that the Dark-rumped Petrel may occur sparsely but regularly in late summer and fall over temperate waters throughout the northeastern Pacific, potentially to within 185 km of the North American coast.

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