

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <[zoiseaux@lusfiber.net](mailto:zoiseaux@lusfiber.net)> .

1. English and Scientific names: Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*). I do not feel comfortable attempting subspecific identification on this bird, although others braver and more knowledgeable than me may be able to do so.

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
One adult.

3. Parish: Plaquemines Parish

Specific Locality: I don't have precise coordinates for this bird, although perhaps somebody else does (?). However, the coordinates for our 1-hour eBird checklist, during which we covered ~7 miles, is 28.591, -89.141. I would presume that the location might be closer to the coordinates that Erik Johnson documented for the third Cory's Shearwater of the day (~28.621, -89.204), but see below. That said, I have no way to verify this.

4. Date(s) when observed: 22 September 2018 (<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48714342>)

5. Time(s) of day when observed: 1:31 PM. This was the fourth and final Cory's Shearwater that we found on this pelagic trip. According to my sequence of photos, this bird was 23 minutes after the previous Cory's Shearwater of the trip (#3), matching the timeline for the last bird that Erik Johnson has already documented with a long form (1:07 PM; <http://www.losbird.org/lbrc/cosh183johnsona.pdf>). Unfortunately, however, it seems that the last two Cory's Shearwaters were mixed up in that documentation. Although I believe Erik supplied the correct time and photos of the third bird, his written commentary in the LBRC form seems to be for the fourth bird (see his matching eBird comments/photos as well). His photos in the LBRC report show a bird flying to the right (and he similarly mentions "possible *C. d. scopoli*" in the description for that same set of four images in ML116026841), whereas pictures of the bird that was sitting on the water and then in flight following takeoff are all of a bird going to the left. Given that the hard, photographic documentation is likely the most critical piece of evidence, I'll assume that Erik's report suffices for the third bird, while this report can hopefully take care of the fourth individual.

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Cameron L. Rutt
City: Baton Rouge
State: Louisiana

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): As luck would have it, I spotted this bird sitting on the water just as we came to a stop in order to try some chumming. Although this was easily the closest Procellariid that day, it took flight shortly thereafter, so I'm not sure how many of the 22 birders onboard got on this bird. Some of those in the back of the boat may have missed it, but I suspect that a good many were able to catch sight of this individual. The list of observers is included in the aforementioned eBird checklist.

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): None

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Mostly sunny. When we came to a stop, the bird was backlit, but given the time (early afternoon), the angle of the sun was such that we were still able to obtain excellent looks.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Swarovski EL 8.5x42 binoculars and a Canon 7D Mark II with a 400mm f/5.6L

11. Distance to bird(s): Surprisingly close. Spotted naked-eye sitting alone on the surface of the ocean. It may have been as close as 25 m.

12. Duration of observation: My sequence of pictures only span a mere 18 seconds, so I think that all photos and observation of this bird occurred over the course of about a minute.

13. Habitat: Open ocean (blue water) on the Gulf of Mexico.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Sitting on the water, then executing a running takeoff to the left, after which it could be seen arcing up and down in typical dynamic soaring as it quickly left our vicinity.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

A large tubenose with a big, dull yellow bill that has a large dark spot just prior to the bill tip. Dark above and white below (including the undertail coverts) with dark brown wings and a

paler gray-brown back, neck, and head, wrapping around the head/neck to impart a cowled look. In flight, this bird showed extensive, clean white underparts and underwings (underwing coverts and the bases to the protruding remiges), with rather limited dark blackish tips to the primaries and secondaries. In Charlie Lyon's photos, you can also make out a brown rump, rather limited white uppertail coverts, and a dark, blackish tail. The eye is dark and the legs and feet appear pinkish or purplish, I believe. As Erik Johnson mentioned in the eBird checklist for this bird, this individual appears to be actively molting p6 (see especially ML116417931).

16. Voice: Not heard vocalizing.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Very unlike Great Shearwater, the only other "expected" large shearwater on the Gulf of Mexico. Among other things, lack of a dark cap, white hindcollar, smudgy belly, dark undertail coverts, and bill color eliminate Great Shearwater. Cape Verde Shearwater, which would be a very remote possibility here, would show a conspicuously thinner and dusky bill.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, by me (attached). See also excellent flight shots by Dave Patton (ML116178641) and Charles Lyon (ML116417931 and ML116417951) embedded within the same joint eBird checklist.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've seen this species a few times over the years on pelagic trips in the Atlantic Ocean, but apparently not since 2008 (!).

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: None

b. after observation: Sibley Guide to Birds and Petrels, Albatrosses, & Storm-Petrels of North America (Howell 2012).

21. This description is written from:

<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes

23. Date: 17 January 2019

Time: 10:30 PM

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and

accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes

