

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Great Shearwater, *Puffinus gravis*

2. Number of individuals: 1

3. Locality: LOUISIANA: (parish) Plaquemines

Specific Locality: see other reports for detailed location data

4. Date(s) when observed: 09/21/2018

5. Time(s) of day when observed: mid-morning

6. Reporting observer and address:

Paul Conover

Lafayette, LA

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Several other people on the pelagic trip got onto this bird.

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): N/A

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Good light until the bird crossed the sunburst on the sea.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon D3300 with 200 mm lens

11. Distance to bird(s): I would estimate that the bird came into sight at about 400-500 yards. We did not close on the bird much during the sighting as our speed was somewhat slow and the bird's path was somewhat perpendicular to ours.

12. Duration of observation: Perhaps 30 seconds from when I saw it to when I lost it.

13. Habitat: Green water

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation: I saw a bird below the horizon at about "2 o'clock" and called it out. I also noted that it looked like a "good bird," i.e. a truly pelagic species, but more specifically, not one that I typically encounter (Cory's or Manx for instance) on our pelagic trips. The bird's size seemed in the Cory's range, but its flight pattern seemed different, an impression that was magnified when the bird arced and then resumed its horizontal flight. The bird arced at least one other time above the sea horizon. I should point out that most

of this was seen through my viewfinder as I started to snap photos as soon as I saw the bird, hoping that the camera would see more than I could.

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):

A shearwater in the size class of Cory's, seen and photographed in flight. The bird's flight style seemed interesting from the first, as it seemed less buoyant and energetic than Cory's; the flight was based mostly on long low glides with short bursts of shallow flaps, with the occasional arc as if to get more wind under the bird. The bird's flight seemed to have a heavier, more jaeger-like to me than does Cory's, although that's clearly subjective.

Size and flight style observations made in the field, but all description of plumage are based on the following photos.

A fairly stocky shearwater dark above and light below. White below with dark undertail. Gray patch on belly perhaps visible in some photos. Partial collar extending onto sides of neck onto breast sides. Dark cap, paler nape, dark back. Underwings whitish with narrow dark border, with narrow darker border to some covert tracts on the inner underwing and a darker smudge at the wrist.

My photos hint at a dark bill, but I think the photos of others are better and a dark bill is indeed present.







16. Voice: N/A

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Cory's Shearwater has cleaner white underwings most if not all of the time, smudgy dark sides of neck, pale bill.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photos, attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've seen a lot on ferry crossings in the Nova Scotia area, but those birds are generally flushing to avoid the ferry, not actively in flight.

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from: memory, photos

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

23. Date: 11/7/2018