

LIGHT-MANTLED SOOTY ALBATROSS - Port Fairy

Pelagic

24th June 2018

VORAC SUBMISSION

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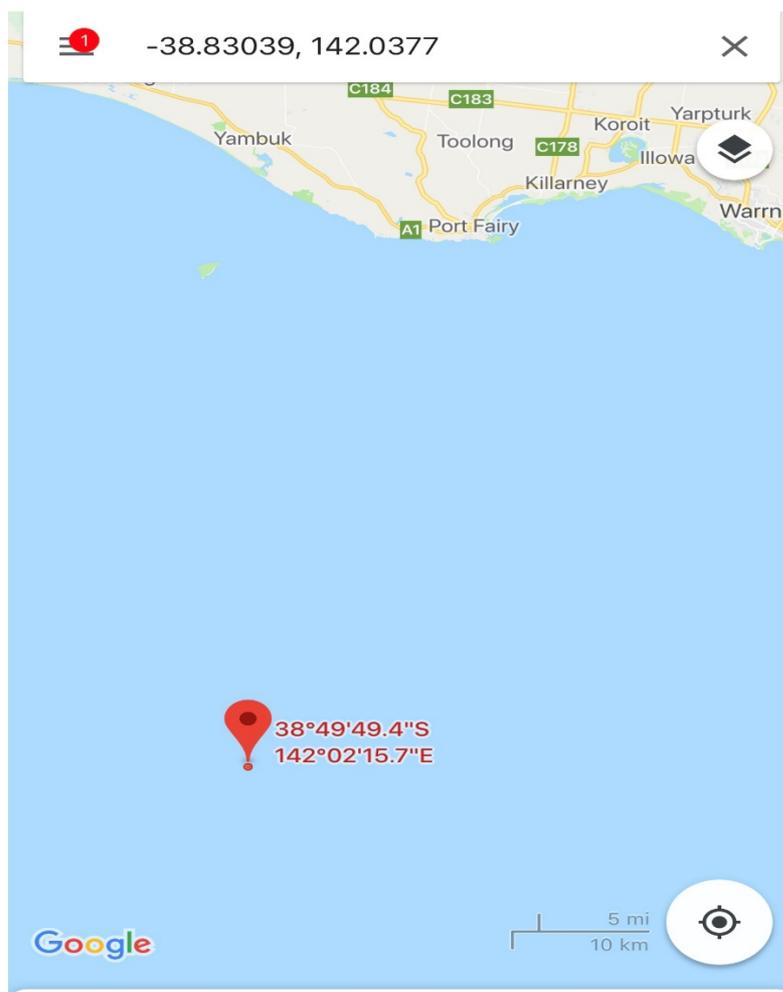
Other Observers: Alison Nisbett, Neil Macumber, Tanya Hattingh, Scott Baker, Kevin Batram, Dan Ashdown, Angus Hartshorn, Geoff Glare, Peter Lansley, Janine Duffy, Sally Hennessy, Mark Buckby, John Daniels, Ron Sawyer, Peter Sawyer, Oakley Germech, Wendy McWilliams, Ben Viola, Ian Denham, John Sterling, Trevor Hunt

Species: Light-mantled Sooty Albatross (*Phoebetria palpebrate*)

Date: 24th June 2018

Location: Pelagic waters off Port Fairy, Vic.

Exact location. -38.83039S, 142.0377E – Water depth – 424m



38°49'49.4\"S 142°02'15.7\"E

Time: 12.17pm

Conditions: Conditions were overcast with 100% cloud cover. Wind was minimal and coming from a SSW direction. Seas were approximately 2-3m with a small amount of chop but moderated with a little sun appearing later in the afternoon.

Notes: Originally the June pelagic was scheduled for Sunday 17th June but was postponed until 24th June due to bad weather. We left dock around 7am and proceeded to head out to pelagic waters. We set anchor at approximately 9.55am at the co-ordinates provided. At around 12.10pm, I decided to head up to the crows nest to have a look around from an elevated position. After a few minutes of scanning the horizon, (at approx 12.17pm) I noticed a large, dark bird quite a distance out on the horizon. Although not identifiable through binoculars because of the distance, I was sure it wasn't a Giant Petrel nor any of the Great-winged Petrels as even from that distance, the flight pattern nor silhouette of the bird looked to be right for those species. It appeared to be continually gliding, with little to no flapping of the wings which immediately had me thinking Sooty Albatross. It was at this point I took a long distance shot with my camera to see if I could get a better idea as to what the bird may have been. After taking the shot, blowing it up on the back of my camera and having a good look at the image, it was undeniably a species of Sooty Albatross. Once I was 100% certain of this ID, I made the call to the rest of the observers on board that I'd spotted a Sooty Albatross. It wasn't until the bird flew in a little closer to the boat that we all realised it was in actual fact a Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. Much excitement ensued and no doubt everyone on board with a camera was able to get pretty good shots of the bird as it did buzz the boat quite closely. As is apparently typical of this Albatross, it did a reasonably close fly by of the boat but didn't hang around, and proceeded to pass the boat and continue on its way. It was easily distinguished as a Light-mantled Sooty Albatross as the bird was sooty brown in colour, darker on the head but much lighter in colour on the mantle and back and the underparts were also pale. The eyes had slight, but not highly pronounced, very light grey/whitish orbital crescents which has now been attributed to the bird being a full juvenile. The bill was completely dark.

