

Submission Date	2013-03-09 23:49:38
Observer's Name	Bill Etter
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Observer's Address	Street Address: 407 S Cigar Rd City: Northampton State / Province: United States Postal / Zip Code: 18067 Country: United States
Species (Common Name)	Leach's Storm-Petrel
Species (Scientific Name)	Oceanodroma leucorhoa
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Adult
Observation Date and Time	09-30-2012 12:00 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/pa/view/checklist?subID=S11904984
County	Bucks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Haycock Twp
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Lake Nockamixon / Nockamixon State Park
Habitat	Large rural lake
Distance to bird	Probably about 1500-2000 feet...hard to judge distance over open water
Viewing conditions	overcast but fairly bright; no precipitation
Optical equipment used	8x Celestron binoculars, good Nikon 24-30x scope
Description	This bird was seen mostly at total rest on water's surface, so not much to describe. It was a small, long, all dark bird (no white apparent at all while at rest on water) bobbing up and down on the lake. Details of the angular forehead and the sharp, all dark hooked bill revealed it to be a storm-petrel. The hind parts (primaries, rump, tail) rose slightly from the water's surface with primaries extended above the bird's tail. See below for description in flight....

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

This bird did almost nothing for hours. After watching it off and on for a couple hours, I was finally able to see it fly briefly. At about 12:30 pm, a Merlin coursed low across the water, disturbing the storm-petrel from its rest. I was able to watch its flight from start to end through my scope and paid particular attention to the rump and tail. The white rump was minimal, and definitely lobed rather than a wide band. Tail was forked, not squared. Wings were dark above and below. Flight was hectic and erratic as the bird moved across the water, circled and returned to the water fairly quickly.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

While certainly nothing close to a seabird expert, I believe the rump/tail pattern of this bird (white lobed rump patch, deeply notched tail) eliminate any dark storm-petrel species.

Discussion - anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

This bird was clearly a product of Hurricane Sandy, and seen by many. The bulk of my experience with storm-petrels has been with Wilson's, which generally has a cleaner, crescent like white rump. This bird did not display the dangling legs typical of Wilson's, but I suspect that this posture is more typical for feeding, rather than fleeing/casual flight, and may not be of use for this ID.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes. While observing this bird, I was conscious of possible similarities to Wilson's and Band-rumped; after seeing the bird quite well in flight, I was completely satisfied that it was in fact a Leach's Storm-Petrel.

During

None

After

Nat Geo 3rd addition (upon return to car); Sibley; Harrison's seabirds guide

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