

Submission Date	2013-04-15 12:49:54
Observer's Name	Geoff Malosh
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Phone	412-724-3128
Observer's Address	Street Address: 450 Amherst Avenue City: Moon Township State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 15108 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	At least 6 others including Mike Lanzone, Ben Coulter, Jeff Payne, Shannon Thompson.
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)	Unknown
Observation Date and Time	10-30-2012 2:30 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S11910618
County	Bedford
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Shawnee State Park
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Shawnee Lake
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.034318,-78.635674
Habitat	Bird was seen either resting on or flying over the water.
Distance to bird	As close as 100 yards, often farther
Viewing conditions	cloudy, dark, frequent light rain
Optical equipment used	Leica 82mm APO scope, Canon 1D Mark IV + 500mm f/4 + teleconverters
Description	This submission is well after the fact. The notes I submitted in my ebird checklist shortly after the sighting are copied below verbatim.

One bird was present the entire time I was at the lake. It was seen occasionally in flight (including photos) but spent most of its time resting on the water. This was a strange bird, originally identified as a Wilson's Storm-Petrel but this is corrected to an ID of Leach's Storm-Petrel after reviewing all available photos and video, and with valuable input from several people with extensive experience with Storm-Petrels. The tail was the most odd thing about this bird; it was neither truly squared as in Wilson's nor obviously forked as in Leach's. When spread halfway, photos show the tail took on a kind of triangular shape, and when fully spread it appeared round. The wings also often appeared more rounded than pointed, but this may simply have been a consequence of the bird being exhausted and undertaking very labored flights. However, confusion over the ID was primarily due to the fact that the legs appeared to extend beyond the end of the tail when the bird was in full flight. Mike Lanzone reported seeing this on several occasions, and at one point I also caught a glimpse of what I took to be the legs extending past the tail in a scope view (not clearly photographed). This was either an illusion (though Mike was very convinced that he saw it clearly and repeatedly, and I was quite sure I saw it once too), or it could have been due to some sort of anomaly in the bird's tail; perhaps feathers were broken or growing in from a previous trauma, which might also explain the odd overall shape of the tail (see above). Regardless, the majority of characters on this bird point to Leach's.

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

See above in description.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

There was a long discussion over the identity of this bird based on the apparent extension of the legs past the tail when the bird was in flight. Some of the most instructive comments were given by Tom Johnson, which are copied below. His comments reference a video that was made by Mike Lanzone; that video is uploaded to YouTube and available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=7tx0aUDapho

Tom Johnson's comments follow:

Hi Mike,
I actually think that the photos show a Leach's Storm-Petrel. I wasn't really sure after looking at several of Geoff's photos, but the last one looks [referring to _E9H8253.jpg] pretty definitive for Leach's to me. This is what I'm noticing on the pic:
-wings look long and good for an Oceanodroma
-carpal bar is big and pale (good for Leach's, fine for Wilson's in brightness, but I think the creamy color is better for Leach's - WISP is usually whiter/ silvery here)
-rump patch seems to be fairly long and laid on top of the rump with little wrap-around down the sides of the vent
-extended legs seem very short in this last photo - I feel pretty sure that the feet would dangle a lot more on a Wilson's in this pose

Additionally, several of the photos (like the second and fifth from the bottom) show a dark median stripe on the rump;

this *could* be a photo artifact, but I think it is probably real and supportive of Leach's.
I had a hard time assessing the video since I think the apparent frame rate makes the wingbeat look a little different than I'd expect for either a Wilson's or either of the "possible" Oceanodroma. However, I think the bow-winged glides and the manner in which it comes down to land on the water with wings up is very good for Leach's. If I'd just seen the video, I'm not sure I'd have nailed this one to species for sure.
Anyway, I'm pretty sure this is a Leach's and not a Wilson's Storm-Petrel.

Best,
Tom

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

Yes

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings

[_E9H8216.jpg](#)
[_E9H8240.jpg](#)
[_E9H8244.jpg](#)
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