

FIRST RECORD OF LEACH'S STORM-PETREL IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

FERNANDO PUEBLA-OLIVARES, OCTAVIO R. ROJAS-SOTO, and ADOLFO G. NAVARRO S., Museo de Zoología "Alfonso L. Herrera," Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Apdo. Postal 70-399, México, D. F. 04510, Mexico

Leach's Storm - Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) is a widespread bird of the North Pacific and North Atlantic oceans, in the former breeding south to islands off western Mexico (AOU 1998). Four populations, differing mainly in the color of the rump, have been identified in western Mexico, breeding on Los Coronados (variably white rump), islets off Guadalupe Island in both summer and winter (white rump), and the San Benito Islands (dark rumped). Furthermore, nonbreeding migrants, possibly from much farther north, occur south in the Pacific Ocean to about 15° S, mainly over offshore waters. The species has not been found previously in the Gulf of California (Pitman 1986, Howell and Webb 1995).

At 0700 on 14 April 2000, one hour before arriving at Mazatlán, Sinaloa (at the mouth of the Gulf of California), we collected a Leach's Storm-Petrel in the dining room of the ferry from La Paz, Baja California Sur. The bird had been on board for an unknown period. It was a juvenile male (testis 1.5 mm), skull 80% pneumatized, with body molt and little fat. Body measurements: wing chord 160 mm, tail length 78.3 mm, tail fork depth 15.1 mm, exposed culmen 14.7 mm (including the tubular nostrils), middle toe 23.5 mm, tarsus 25.2 mm. The specimen was deposited in the ornithological collection of the Museo de Zoología, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (MZFC 16316).

This record is the nearest reported to the continental coast of Mexico in the Gulf of California and can be considered as a vagrant. However, it is possible that the species occurs as a regular visitor in low densities in the southern Gulf of California. The specimen has white uppertail coverts, but, without critical specimen comparison, we are unable to assign it to subspecies. Additional field work is needed to determine this species' status in the Gulf of California and to determine which subspecies occur(s) there.

We thank the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACyT R27961), DGAPA-UNAM (IN 214200), Facultad de Ciencias-UNAM, and the Programa de Apoyo para Estudios de Posgrado (PAEP-UNAM 101331) for financial support. Steve N. G. Howell, Robert A. Hamilton, and Lorrain Giddings provided valuable comments on the manuscript. We also thank Patricia Escalante for access to the collection of the Instituto de Biología, UNAM. The Instituto Nacional de Ecología provided the scientific collector's permit (FAUT 0034).

LITERATURE CITED

- American Ornithologists' Union. 1998. Check-list of North American Birds, 7th ed. Am. Ornithol. Union, Washington, D.C.
- Howell, S. N. G., and Webb, S. 1995. A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, England.
- Pitman, R. L. 1986. Atlas of seabird distribution and relative abundance in the eastern tropical Pacific. Natl. Mar. Fish. Serv. Admin. Rep. LJ-86-02C.

Accepted 11 April 2002