Eaglehawk Neck Pelagic Trip Report – 18th June 2019

**Participants:**

David Adam, Ruth Brozek, James Cornelius, Cat Davidson, Karen Dick (organiser), Mona Loofs-Samorzewski (report compiler), Brad Moriarty, Bruce Richardson, Robert Shore, Ashley Thomson, Bill Twiss, Peter Vaughan (caller), Matt Wright.

**Boat:**

The Pauletta, skippered by John Males, with deckhand Adam Mackintosh.

**Notes:**

This unusual mid-week pelagic double-header had been organised in response to an excellent run of sightings of cold-water species, but unfortunately conditions had changed and the type and diversity of species were nothing special. A steady stream of Buller’s, Shy, Indian Yellow-nosed, Black-browed and Campbell Albatross kept our interest in inshore and offshore waters, but once we were pelagic things slowed down. Great-winged Petrel were by far the most numerous of the tube-noses, a few Providence Petrel were nice additions, and the bird of the day were two sightings of Soft-plumaged Petrel. Of the great albatross, there were only Antipodean (Gibson’s) and a young Southern Royal. Strong winds, lumpy seas and concern about the two extremely seasick participants prompted an early return.

**Activity:**

We left port at 0715, heading straight east until we reached the shelf break at 0912. We set our first and only berley over 340 fathoms, drifting with the wind approx 5 km south (against a strong current that was pushing us north), reaching a depth of 384 fathoms, until 1130 when we started back towards shore. We reached the Hippolytes at 1235, then hugged the coast northward until we docked at 1345.

**Conditions:**

The day started cloudy and barely light, although we were treated to a glowing orange sunrise as we headed out of Pirate’s Bay. The 1-2 m swell was northerly, with choppy seas whipped up by the 15-20 kn NE winds. As we headed east, the waves increased to over 2 m, with the winds also increasing up to 25 kn. Once we reached the shelf drop-off at 0912, the wind swung to the north, varying between 10-15 kn and gusting up to 20-25 kn. Water temperature was 14.6 ˚C. Around 1100 a few rays of sun made their way through the clouds, and despite distant rain to the north, at 1130 we headed back towards sunshine, although the cloud cover had returned by the time we docked. The trip back was lumpy and wet, with seas up to 3 m resulting in fairly unpleasant conditions. Two very seasick.

**Mammals:**

Australian/NZ Fur Seal: 2 on and around the Hippolytes.

**Birds (IOC v 8.1 – max at one time in brackets):**

Wilson’s Storm Petrel: 1 pelagic.

Grey-backed Storm Petrel: 2 (1) pelagic.

Antipodean Albatross 4 (2) ssp *gibsoni* pelagic.

Southern Royal Albatross: 1 young bird pelagic.

Black-browed Albatross: 5 (3): 2 inshore, 3 pelagic.

Campbell Albatross: 3 (2): 1 inshore, 2 pelagic.

Shy Albatross: 69 (35): 12 inshore, 11 offshore, 35 pelagic and 11 inshore in the afternoon. Several juvenile birds present.

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross: 7 (1): 5 inshore, 1 offshore, 1 pelagic.

Buller’s Albatross: 35 (4): 18 inshore, 16 offshore and 1 pelagic.

Northern Giant Petrel: 1 offshore.

Cape Petrel: 7 (5): 5 *capense* 2 *australe*, all pelagic.

Fairy Prion: 21 (2): 4 offshore, 15 pelagic, 2 offshore in the afternoon.

Grey-faced Petrel: 13 (4): 5 offshore, 8 pelagic.

Great-winged Petrel: 50 (25): 15 offshore, 35 pelagic.

Great-winged/Grey-faced: 5 offshore, too fast and/or distant to identify.

Providence Petrel: 6 (2): 1 offshore, 5 pelagic.

SOFT-PLUMAGED PETREL: 2 (1) pelagic.

Sooty Shearwater: 4 (1): 1 inshore, 2 pelagic, 1 offshore in the afternoon.

Short-tailed Shearwater: 13 (5): 11 inshore, 2 offshore.

Common Diving-petrel: 5 (2): 3 inshore in the morning, 2 offshore in the afternoon.

Australasian Gannet: 19 (6): 14 inshore in the morning, 1 offshore and 4 inshore in the afternoon.

Black-faced Cormorant: 2 (1) inshore in the afternoon.

White-bellied Sea-eagle: 2 (1): 1 above the Hippolytes and 1 further inshore, both in the afternoon.

Silver Gull: 9 (9) inshore in the afternoon.

Pacific Gull: 2 just outside Pirate’s Bay in the morning.

Kelp Gull: 59 (25): 3 inshore in the morning (1 Juv) and 56 inshore in the afternoon (several juv).

Greater Crested Tern: 36 (4): 9 inshore and 5 offshore in the morning (1 imm), 1 offshore and 21 inshore in the afternoon.

MLS