

DARK-RUMPED *OCEANODROMA* STORM-PETRELS IN THE CENTRAL ATLANTIC OCEAN

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Hales S. & Vaughan J 2003. Dark-rumped *Oceanodroma* Storm-petrels in the central Atlantic Ocean. *Atlantic Seabirds* 5(2): 85-86. On 15 April 2003, two dark-rumped *Oceanodroma* Storm-petrels were observed in a mixed feeding flock of seabirds, at 04°13'N, 19°10'W. It is argued that both appear to be Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*.

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On a recent voyage back from the Southern Atlantic Ocean on the m.v. *Professor Molchanov*, extensive notes on seabirds were made. Shortly after crossing the equator, following a heavy early morning thunderstorm on 15 April 2003, the ship sailed into another heavy squall of rain at 04°13'N, 19°10'W. Within the squall, the sea was dead calm and we saw a feeding flock of seabirds, slowly gliding and feeding just above sea level at very close proximity (10-20m). The flock consisted of at least 63 Madeiran Storm-petrels *Oceanodroma castro*, 7 Arctic Terns *Sterna paradisaea*, 4 Bulwer's Petrels *Bulweria bulwerii* and two small dark-rumped *Oceanodroma* type Storm-petrels. The birds were dark sooty brown all over, which gave them a squat looking appearance although the size was comparable to Leach's Storm-petrel *O. leucorhoa*. The wing tips seemed more rounded rather than the more angular appearance of those of Leach's Storm-petrel and the wings did not show a prominent carpal bar -even at these close quarters. The flight was sedate and resembled British Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* rather than the more erratic flight of Leach's. The flying pattern was gentle and smooth although the calm sea conditions might have had an effect on this. The bill was dark and the back and rump were very dark sooty brown with no trace of white anywhere. The birds appeared graceful, buoyant and took on a circular feeding pattern. The tail was forked and the feet not seen to be projecting beyond it. They were feeding in with Madeiran Storm-petrels. We saw many Leach's Storm-petrels and Bulwer's Petrels on this trip and the behaviour and appearance of these birds did not resemble either of them in any way. We are both aware of and have seen dark-rumped variants of Leach's Storm-petrel (Bourne & Simmons 1997). Swinhoe's Storm-petrels *O. monorhis* have been trapped on Selvagem Grande for some years and breeding

is strongly suspected there (Francis Zino *pers comm.*) and they have been turning all up the west coast of Europe (Cubitt *et al.* 1992; Jardine *et al.* 1993; Jäbekk 1996). As the chance of finding two dark Leach's Storm-petrels together in the Atlantic would be most unlikely, these birds appear to be Swinhoe's Storm-petrels indicating their winter quarters in the Atlantic Ocean.

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STORMVOGELTJES MET EEN DONKERE STUIT
IN DE CENTRALE ATLANTISCHE OCEAAN

Op 15 april 2003 werden op 04°13'NB, 19°10'WL in een gemengde groep foeragerende zeevogels twee stormvogeltjes met een donkere stuit gezien. De auteurs beargumenteren dat beide vogels Chinese Stormvogeltjes *Oceanodroma monorhis* zijn.

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