

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Northern giant petrel: pp 51-52.



NORTHERN GIANT PETREL

Family Procellariidae

Species *Macronectes halli*

Common names Giant Petrel, Nelly

Status Native

Size 800 mm - 900 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

Breeding islands close to New Zealand Chatham Islands, Stewart Island, Antipodes Islands, Campbell Island, Auckland Islands and Macquarie Island.

Breeding months August to February. Birds tend to nest in small loose communities.

Range worldwide New Zealand west to South Africa.

New Zealand range Around New Zealand for much of the year. In rough conditions it will enter harbours and has been recorded in both Auckland and Wellington Harbours. Generally it prefers to keep to deeper waters but will scavenge behind fishing boats well into calm water.

Description – mature bird

Head Forehead pale brown with sides of face and chin grey. **Upperparts** Greyish-brown. **Underparts** Tending to dark grey. **Underwings** Brown, with variable areas of grey. **Bill** Light tan with distinctive light brown tip. Has a prominent nasal tube. **Feet and legs** Dark grey.

Description – immature birds

Upper and underparts Varying from black to dark brown. Some young birds are very black.

Conspicuous features

- The overall brownish grey with lighter grey around the face, throat and upper breast.
- Light tan bill with light brownish tip, separates this bird from the Southern Giant Petrel.
- Has a heavy nasal tube.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Flight is often straight and direct.
- It often glides and wheels behind ships.
- Can glide motionless for some distance.
- Will come in behind fishing boats.
- A large and boisterous bird when on the water.

Where to find – North and South Islands

North Auckland – In waters towards Little Barrier Island. P. 289.

Auckland – Have been known to enter Auckland harbour on very rough days and have been observed from the Waiheke Island ferry.

Wellington – Cook Strait From the Cook Strait ferry.

North Canterbury – Regularly seen from Kaikoura pelagic excursions. P. 345.

Where to find – Stewart Island

Half Moon Bay – In waters around Half Moon Bay and Paterson Inlet. P. 367.