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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Grey-faced petrel: pp 62-63



### GREY-FACED PETREL

**Family** Procellariidae

**Species** *Pterodroma macroptera*

**Common names** Grey-faced Petrel, Great-winged Petrel (Australian)

**Status** Endemic

**Abundance** Common

**Size** 410 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

**Breeding islands close to New Zealand** Breeds on many offshore islands from Gisborne northwards to the Three Kings Islands on the east coast of the North Island and Taranaki north on the west coast. Major breeding islands are the Hen and Chicken Islands, Mokohinau Islands, Motuhora Island, Mercury Islands off Coromandel, Alderman Islands, Whale Island and White Island in the Bay of Plenty.

**Breeding months** May to December. Birds return to the breeding grounds in late February. Birds lay 1 white egg in a burrow.

**Range worldwide** From New Zealand to South Africa northward to about latitude 20° in non-breeding months.

**New Zealand range** Common in northern New Zealand waters.

### **Description**

**Face and throat** Grey. **Upperparts and underparts** Blackish-brown. **Bill and feet** Black.

### **Conspicuous features**

- Generally an all black bird.
- Wings are long and narrow.
- Has short dark bill.
- Has grey on face.

### **Conspicuous characteristic**

- Birds toss into the air at a fast pace before plunging again down near the wave crest.

**Call** A guttural “oi oi oi” is made by birds when near their burrows.

### **Differences between Grey-faced Petrels, Black Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters and Flesh-footed Shearwaters**

- The Grey-faced Petrel has a short, almost stubby, black bill when compared with the long thin bills of the shearwaters.
- Grey-faced Petrels have a black bill.
- Black Petrels have a yellowish bill tipped with black.
- Sooty Shearwaters have a dark grey bill.
- Flesh-footed Shearwaters have a yellowish bill tipped with brown.
- The Grey-faced Petrel, Black Petrel and Sooty Shearwater, have black legs and feet which separate them from the Flesh-footed Shearwater which has flesh coloured feet.
- The Grey-faced Petrel has a grey face.
- The Grey-faced Petrel is a fast flier tending to bounce up off the waves to a much higher altitude than Sooty and Flesh-footed Shearwaters, which are more wave skimmers.
- The Grey-faced Petrel lacks the silver underwing of the Sooty.

### **Where to find – North Island**

**Northland** – Bay of Islands beyond Cape Brett.

**North Auckland** – Towards Little Barrier Island during late winter, spring and early summer. Birds move away from their breeding grounds by January. P289.

**North Auckland** – Goat Island Marine Reserve from the headland. P. 288.

**Coromandel** – Towards Mercury Islands.

**Bay of Plenty** – Towards White Island. There is an active breeding colony on Mount Maunganui and nearby Motuotau Island. P. 319.