

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Grey-backed storm petrel: pp 65-66.



GREY-BACKED STORM PETREL

Family Hydrobatidae

Species *Oceanites nereis*

Common name Grey-backed Storm Petrel

Status Circumpolar

Abundance Common in southern waters

Size 180 mm (House Sparrow 145 mm, Fluttering Shearwater 300 mm)

Major breeding islands close to New Zealand On islets off Chatham Islands, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island.

Breeding months August to April. Nest is a shallow cup of grass and twigs above ground. One white egg is laid.

Range worldwide From New Zealand around southern hemisphere waters.

New Zealand range Waters around New Zealand from the south to Taranaki and Gisborne.

Description

Head, neck, throat and upper breast Greyish-black. **Upperwings** Dark grey with black primary feathers. **Rump and tail** Dark grey with black tail tip. **Underparts** White. **Legs and feet** Dark grey.

Conspicuous features

- Feet extend behind tail when in flight.
- Tail is square.
- Underparts clean white.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Touches the sea with its feet when feeding.
- Dips constantly into the sea.
- Plunges erratically towards the water and then into the air again.

Call Cackle and twitter sounds near the breeding colonies.

Where to find

Northern waters – Birds move north in winter months and have been recorded from beach wrecks and also on pelagic excursions from the North Island. Some birds reach to 30° South. It is a species though that seldom comes close to land.

Southern waters – A common birds around the Chatham Islands and other southern islands.

Kaikoura – In deep water in winter but not common. P. 345.

Stewart Island – In deep water only. P 367.