**Birdswing Birding & Wildlife Tours Pelagic trip off Port Fairy, Victoria Sunday 19th May 2013**

**Observers:** Neil Macumber (organiser and report writer), Kev Lobotomi, Geoff Glare, Anne Looney, Bernie O’Keefe, Angus Hartshom, Clive Curson, Cindy McDonald, Nora Lord and Lyn Brown.

**Conditions:** When we left port and headed out of the river there was overcast skies, a cool autumn day with approx. 80% cloud cover, a slight breeze and the sun trying to poke through, a swell of 1 to 1.5 metres with choppy seas that moderated later in the day with approx. 50% cloud cover and the sun out at times.

**Overview:** Departed the Port Fairy wharf at 0716 EST along the Moyne River out to sea heading at 210˚and boat speed of 12.3 knots.

An enthusiastic group left the Moyne River into a slightly choppy Bass Strait with fairly small swells. We saw crested tern and silver gull just outside the river and 14 minutes after leaving port saw our first Albatross – a Black-browed. Travelling out toward the shelf we saw Shy Albatross, Australasian Gannet, Fairy Prion, Yellow-nosed Albatross, White-fronted Tern, Antarctic Prion, Crested Tern, Common-diving Petrel, Little Penguin,Great-winged Petrel and a Short-tailed Shearwater.

At 1024 in 171 fathoms we made our first stop, there were birds around and the kettle was boiled. We ended up with around 100 Albatross, around 60 were Shy and the others were mainly Black-browed, with 5 Campbell Island, 2 Bullers and couple of Wandering Albatross as well. There were 3 Great-winged and 1 White-chinned Petrel, along with up to 10 Wilson’s, 3 Grey-backed Storm-petrels. We also had 1 Sooty Shearwater, 1 White-fronted Tern, some Fairy Prion and about 4 Northern Giant Petrel. One of the Shy Albatross had a silver band on the left leg. A small pod of Common Dolphins headed toward the boat but disappeared about 50 metres before getting there. We left our first stop at 1053 in 158 fathoms.

We moved from our first stop to a flock of birds sitting and flying birds some 6 minutes away.

So our second stop started at 1059hours the depth was around the same as it was when we left our first stop. We had even more Albatross with approximately a 50/50 mix of Shy and Black-broweds. There was also 1 Bullers, 4 Campbell, 3 Wandering and 1 Royal Albatross. We also had 4 Northern Giant Petrel (one old grey/white coloured bird), 3 Southern Giant Petrel, 15 Fairy Prion, 1 Sooty Shearwater, 3 Great-winged, 2 Cape Petrel and 1 juv. Auatralasian Gannet, there were also Wilson’s and Grey-backed Storm-Petrel around the boat. We had drifted quite a few miles before we started to head back to port at 1323hours when the depth was 237 fathoms.

On travelling back to port we added Fluttering Shearwater to the days list.

Everyone enjoyed themselves with most people adding pelagic species to their life list and we docked 1608hours.

**Birds:** 25 species off shore

**Pelagic Species:** - Little Penguin, Shy Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Campbell Island Albatross, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Buller's Albatross, Wandering and Royal Albatross, Fairy Prion, Great-Winged Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Cape Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Fluttering Shearwater, Grey-Backed Storm-Petrel, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Australasian Gannet, Pacific Gull, Kelp Gull, Silver Gull, Crested Tern and White-Fronted Tern, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel and Common-diving Petrel.

**Species seen in shore:** - Masked Lapwing, Great Egret, Rufous Night-heron, Pied Oystercatcher, Hoary-headed Grebe and Kelp Gull.

**Mammals:** Saw up to 20 Common Dolphins and 3 Australian Fur Seal.

**Proposed Dates for remainder of 2013 Trips: Sunday 30 June (only 4 places left), 14 July, 11 August, 15 September, 27 October, 17 November and 1 December.** Trips will go if there are enough numbers and the weather is suitable. First in gets a spot allocated. See our website for more details <http://www.birdingwildlifetours.com.au/>

Cheers

Neil Macumber