
Acknowledgements

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A PASSAGE OF STREAKED SHEARWATERS PAST THE TALAUD ISLANDS, NORTH SULAWESI

by

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On 18 November 1999, we observed a total of 18 Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas* flying in a southerly direction off the west coasts of Salibabu Island (03°56'N, 126°38'E) in the Talau Archipelago, North Sulawesi. All were observed within a 40 minute period between 1410-1450 hours, flying singly, in pairs or small groups, with the maximum group size being five birds. All the birds were roughly following the same line, an estimated 2 km from the shore. We observed the birds from the upper deck of an inter-island ferry and were given good views over a calm sea as the birds passed within 500m of the boat. No observations were made after 1450 hours as the ferry rounded the northern tip of Salibabu Island and entered the straight between Salibabu and Karakelang Island.

The birds were observed through 8x30 binoculars in the strong sunlight. The shearwaters appeared brown above, with pale heads and white underparts contrasting strongly with their dark upperparts. Their flight was relatively lazy and lumbering on slightly bowed wings, with birds spending less than 25% of the time gliding in the shearing fashion. The birds immediately reminded the principal author of Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* in both plumage, general shape and flight pattern.

The Streaked Shearwater is a regular migrant in Wallacean seas with records from September to July (Coates and Bishop 1997). White and Bruce (1986) state that the focal point of its winter quarters appears to lie off northern New Guinea, with an appreciable number migrating through the Sulu Sea to reach their New Guinea winter quarters past Sangihe and the Moluccan Ishinds. However, Riley (1997) in his comprehensive review of the birds of Sangihe and Talaud does not list the species for these Islands and no reference to any observations from Sangihe can be found in the literature.

The first records of Streaked Shearwater from the Sangihe and Talaud Islands were made in 1998, with three birds being seen just south of Sangihe on 20 November (I. Mauro *pers. comm.*) and three birds seen by JCW and TN flying north in a tail wind off the west coast of Karakelang Island, Talaud, on 27 November 1998.

It is interesting to note that the observations made on 15 November 1999 seem to re-rewrite a south easterly migratory passage of Streaked Shearwater past the Talaud Islands. As the 1998 sightings were also made in November, it is reasonable to assume that that month marks the main passage of this species past the Sangihe and Talaud Islands. These records appear to represent the first evidence for the timing of the migration of Streaked Shearwaters through the seas of northern Wallacea, presumably on route from the South China Sea to Pacific Ocean waters off northern New Guinea.

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