



# Heritage Expeditions

**Trip Log**  
**Voyage # 1176**  
**Western Pacific Odyssey**  
**19<sup>th</sup> April - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011**





**Day 1:** 19 April 2011.

All arrived safely from our many and varied home countries, and by mid-afternoon had boarded Spirit of Enderby, our home for the coming month at sea. We let go the lines at 6 pm and headed away from Tauranga, on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island. After an introductory meeting with the ship's staff and our mandatory safety briefing we enjoyed the first of many fine meals and a welcome sleep.

**Day 2:** Hauraki Gulf and heading northward, 34°47'S 175°10'E to 34°51'S 174°19'E.

A moderate southwest wind and following sea, protected mostly by the NZ mainland, made for a very comfortable first day – and a very successful one. Starting out around the Mokinhou Islands we scanned the feeding balls of Red-billed Gulls for a few Gray Ternlets, as Buller's Shearwaters and Australasian Gannets wheeled around us. Then we were off north, stopping to chum for the iconic New Zealand Storm-Petrel – which took a while but finally proved to be almost “common,” and everyone enjoyed good views of this striking seabird. A few Wilson's Storm-Petrels and a late White-faced Storm-Petrel also came into the slick, but the “best” bird was a surprising Great Shearwater – one of only a handful of records from New Zealand. Other notables included good numbers of Gray-faced Petrels, a few Little Shearwaters and Parkinson's (Black) Petrels, pods of Common Dolphins and Pilot Whales, and our first flyingfish of the voyage. Adam braved a barrel of fish guts for an afternoon chumming session, and we had great views of Campbell, Shy, and Buller's mollymawks (the smaller albatrosses), and even some

majestic Wandering Albatrosses (presumably Gibson's) right behind the ship. Gentle seas continued through the evening, and after dinner Chris gave a talk on the seabirds we might see between NZ and New Caledonia.

**Day 3:** At sea heading northwest towards Norfolk Island, 33°19'S 172°35'E to 32°01'S 171°09'E; SST 19°C.

We awoke to gentle seas, a rainbow, and very pleasant conditions, with a steady trickle of gadfly petrels passing by (mainly Gould's and Gray-faced, but also a few Black-winged), the occasional albatross (Wandering types, plus Buller's, Campbell, and Shy) and a few other seabirds, including White-faced Storm-Petrel and Australasian Gannet. A few flyingfish were also seen, and then things quieted down, with many taking a siesta after lunch. After a mid-afternoon squall the wind picked up slightly and in the space of a few minutes a close White-necked Petrel, a White-bellied Storm-Petrel, and a Red-tailed Tropicbird roused us from the lull. A chumming session produced great views of Gray-faced Petrels plus a Campbell Albatross and another White-bellied Storm-Petrel, before another rainbow and a stunning sunset.

**Day 4:** At sea heading northwest towards Norfolk Island, 30°31'S 169°30'E to 29°14'S 168°07'E; SST 22.5°C.

Although a little warmer than yesterday, the wind was stronger and birds were whipping around. Birding before breakfast produced a few Black-winged Petrels and White-faced Storm-Petrels, and our first White Terns and (dark-morph) Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Birds continued through the day, with a spectacular wave of over 200 Short-tailed Shearwaters after lunch, a beautiful fresh juvenile Wandering Albatross, and a couple of light-



morph Kermadec Petrels; a few flyingfish were seen, including Pink-tailed Clearwings. By late afternoon the shape of Norfolk Island could be discerned on the horizon, and small numbers of Masked Boobies, Red-tailed Tropicbirds, Gray Ternlets, and White Terns passed by on their way home to roost. After dinner, Rodney and Chris gave us the zodiac briefing and an overview of the birds we might expect on Norfolk.

**Day 5:** Occasional heavy showers punctuating a near-constant drizzle characterized our visit to Norfolk Island, a beautiful and tranquil Australian outpost, home to friendly people and to the spectacular Norfolk Pine. The rain didn't dampen our birding, however, and our visits to the botanical gardens (with tea and some delicious cakes) and to Palm Glen produced all of the extant endemic landbirds – Slender-billed White-eye, Norfolk Gerygone, Norfolk [Golden] Whistler, and, with some work, the sadly declining Norfolk Island Parakeet. Also notable were Pacific Robin, Emerald Dove, Gray Fantail, migrant Wandering Tattlers, and astonishing numbers of “Red Junglefowl” aka chickens, which the Australian birding “authorities” tell us are countable... The seabird colony at Rocky Point included great views of nesting Black Noddies, plus White Terns and Red-tailed Tropicbirds. The wind picked up while we were ashore and made for fun zodiac rides back to the ship, and for some great birding as we headed away offshore in mid-afternoon. A spectacular seabird show, despite the overcast and fairly windy conditions, featured hundreds of noddies (Black, Brown, White, and Gray, if one includes White Tern and Gray Ternlet as noddies), well over a hundred Little Shearwaters, lots of Wedge-tailed

Shearwaters, great views of Black-winged Petrels, and even a couple of Solander's (aka Providence) Petrels. We ended at 28°38'S 167°47'E, SST 24°C, and rolled on into the night.

**Day 6:** At sea heading north-northwest towards New Caledonia, 26°52'S 167°20'E to 25°07'S 166°58'E; SST 24.5°C. A blustery 20-25 knot NE wind in the morning made for some atmospheric seas – but was seemingly to the liking of the 7 species of gadfly petrels we saw, including our first Tahiti Petrels, both dark- and light-morph Collared Petrels, and more White-necked and Kermadec Petrels. A fish-oil slick in mid-morning allowed even better views of Tahiti Petrels and a Wilson's Storm-Petrel. The wind dropped a little after lunch, bird numbers also dropped, and flyingfish numbers picked up a bit before a spectacular rain squall darkened the skies and closed down the birding. After dinner, Chris gave a recap on the birds we hope to see on New Caledonia.

**Day 7:** At sea heading north to New Caledonia, with stops to try for the enigmatic “New Caledonia Storm-Petrel” – one did come into a slick we laid about 30nm south of Noumea, along with 15+ Wilson's Storm-Petrels, but sadly it stayed mostly beyond camera range. The slick (thanks again, Adam) also produced great views of many Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Tahiti Petrels, and other birds in the morning included numerous Gould's Petrels and at least one Collared Petrel. Perhaps the most striking avian points of the day, however, were the Red-footed Boobies (in their varied plumages) that hunted flyingfish around the ship, and the impressive northward streams of Short-tailed Shearwaters. We picked up the pilot in mid-afternoon



and by 5 p.m. were tied up at the wharf in Noumea. Our approach to land featured Crested, Black-naped, and Fairy Terns, the New Caledonia race of Silver Gull, a couple of Bottlenose Dolphins, some distant Glossy Swiftlets (of the white-rumped form), and Dark-brown Honeyeater at the dock. After customs formalities there was a chance to wander briefly around the town before back on board to tally the bird list and an early dinner in preparation for a very early start tomorrow. Started at 23o01'S 166o25'E and ended in Noumea (22o16'S 166o26'E). Partly cloudy and mostly sunny, starting to get hot, with gentle low seas and a light southwest breeze.

**Day 8:** New Caledonia. As a trio of Kagus walked around right in front of us, raising their crests, any memories of the 3.15 wake-up call faded into the magical forest at Riviere Bleu. Birding in the forest along the dirt road through the park produced most of the specialty birds, and we were blessed by very pleasant weather. Highlights included good views of both Horned and New Caledonia Parakeets, the visually and vocally impressive Goliath (or New Caledonian) Imperial-Pigeon, endearing Yellow-bellied Robins, Melanesian and New Caledonian Cuckoo-shrikes, perched New Caledonian Goshawks, the elusive Red-throated Parrotfinch, and mixed-species flocks with fantails, gerygones, white-eyes, and whistlers. After a good picnic lunch we birded a little and headed back to ship. Heading out through the reef, our old friends Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Gould's Petrels were there to greet us, plus a few Tahiti Petrels and a nice Collared Petrel.

**Day 9:** At sea heading northwest off the west coast of New Caledonia, with a pleasant following wind and sea. Starting at 21o17'S 164o26'E, ending at 20o00'S 163o13'E; SST 26.5oC. Birds were slow but steady with a good variety that built up through the day. Notable were some nice Collared Petrels in the morning, Red-footed Boobies hunting flyingfish, a White-tailed Tropicbird that visited briefly, and a Great Frigatebird feeding over a group of Brown Boobies. The fish oil drip off the stern attracted numerous Tahiti Petrels and a few Wilson's Storm-Petrels, but Polynesian Storm-Petrel remained elusive. The mid-late afternoon produced a few more Wilson's Storm-Petrels, Sperm Whale and a mix of distant [= unidentifiable] dolphins and blackfish, and ended with an obliging Lesser Frigatebird over the ship. Variably cloudy and with some very hot and sunny spells.

**Day 10:** Heading north-northwest towards Rennell, starting at 18o05'S 162o08'E and ending at 16o21'S 161o27'E; SST 27.5oC. Another surprisingly "cool" day with mostly overcast conditions, frequent showers, and a following wind and sea. The undoubted highlight of the morning, before breakfast, was a well-seen Polynesian Storm-Petrel. Also notable were our first feeding flocks of Sooty Terns and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, the occasional frigatebird and tropicbird, a few Red-footed Boobies, a single White-faced Storm-Petrel and, in the afternoon, some surprise Band-rumped [= Madeiran] Storm-Petrels. Flyingfish numbers were also very much on the rise, with numerous types seen and even photographed. After dinner, Adam gave a beautifully illustrated talk on reef fish of the western Pacific.



**Day 11:** Heading north-northwest towards Rennell, starting at 14o29'S 160o42'E and ending at 12o50'S 160o04'E; SST 29oC. The overcast and cool conditions continued, with frequent rain showers to freshen up the diehards who tried to remain outside. Birding was generally slow, but flyingfish numbers and diversity continued to build. Highlights from the birders included 3 more Band-rumped Storm-Petrels, a light trickle of northbound Wilson's Storm-Petrels, good views of both Red-tailed and White-tailed tropicbirds, and some fine late afternoon entertainment from 2 Red-footed Boobies hunting flyingfish (and then perching on the radar scanner tower). After dinner, Rodney, Chris, and Adam gave a briefing on tomorrow's visit ashore to the island of Rennell, the southernmost of the Solomon Islands.

**Day 12:** Rennell Island, Solomons, 11o47'S 160o17'E; SST 29.5oC. Our day ashore on this island paradise offered some great birding, swimming, and snorkeling around a small village of happy people – and although hot and humid, by local standards the weather was remarkably pleasant. A Rennell Shrikebill at the landing was followed as we walked through the village edge by numerous gerygones, myzomelas, and Bare-eyed White-eyes, and scope views of perched Pacific Imperial-Pigeon, Brown Goshawk, and Rennell Starlings. Heading into the forest we quickly found the remaining endemics – Rennell White-eye and Rennell Fantail – but had to work a little for the retiring Island Thrush. Other highlights included fabulous views of the handsome Moustached Treeswift, “cute” pygmy-parrots feeding at eye level, Silver-capped Fruit-Doves, and both Sacred (migrant) and Collared (resident) kingfishers. After birding

we convened at the beach for some swimming and a perusal of local crafts, while swarms of local children reveled in playing and diving from the zodiacs. All were loaded back on board by 2 p.m., and after a great buffet lunch we headed off east along the south side of Rennell. Torrential rain showers were punctuated by some mind-blowing rainbows as Red-footed Boobies flew past, and the day ended with a tranquil and beautiful sunset. Before dinner Chris briefed us on tomorrow's visit to Makira Island.

**Day 13:** 1 May 2011. Mayday at Makira Island, Solomons, 10o21'S 161o22'E; SST 30oC. Another early start saw us ashore on the little-visited island of Makira, where we met, finally, with the much-touted hot and humid WPO conditions that had to date (thankfully) eluded us – but it was worth it. A very productive morning along the logging road across from Anuta village, produced the endemic White-headed Fruit-Dove, San Cristobal Melidectes (which took a bit of work!), Makira (or Ochre-headed) Flycatcher (named by somebody either color-blind or anatomically challenged), San Cristobal Starling, and numerous Sooty Myzomelas and Mottled Flowerpeckers. Also nice were Red-knobbed, Pacific, and Chestnut-bellied imperial-pigeons (all seen perched and enjoyed through the scope), Eclectus Parrot, Yellow-bibbed Lory, Dollarbirds, vocally strident Golden Whistlers, and a good raptor showing that featured Solomon Sea-Eagles, Pied Goshawks, and handsome Brahminy Kites. After this great morning we headed across to Anuta and a wonderful visit with the friendly and hospitable people (despite the staged “attack” by whooping, clay-painted boys with spears!)



who make our visits here possible. A greeting ceremony, during which the young girls of the village presented us with leis, was followed by a formal greeting, for which even some of the Russian crew and captain Dmitri came ashore! Rodney was presented with a spear, and he presented the village with some school books and a cricket bat, wickets, and bails – we then enjoyed teaching the local children the basics of the game, after pied-piper Adam had led them on a race along the beach. Some outrigger racing followed, and the birding contingent found a handsome Beach Kingfisher. All too soon it was time to return to the ship, enjoy a quick swim before lunch, and relax a bit before we headed on towards the adjacent island of Guadalcanal, as a close pod of Pilot Whales had everyone out on deck. Afternoon birds featured numerous Bridled Terns and a few Gray-backed Terns, before we ended at 10o01'S 161o06'E and convened in the bar for a briefing on tomorrow's visit to Guadalcanal.

**Day 14:** Our earliest start of the trip found us bleary-eyed on the wharf in Honiara (9o25'S 159o58'E), waiting for buses to take us up to Mount Austin. Sadly, logistical problems killed our intended owling venture, but we still arrived in perfect time at the edge of the forest for what proved to be a fabulous morning of birding. We were greeted by squadron after squadron of eye-popping Blyth's Hornbills, their wing-rush filling the air over our heads. Fruiting trees offered perched views of brilliant red Cardinal and Yellow-bibbed lorries, the fancy DuCorps Cockatoo, plus a variety of cuckoo-shrikes, Black-headed Myzomela, Claret-brested Fruit-Doves, Brown-winged Starlings, and Yellow-faced

Mynas. Other avian highlights ranged from the tiny but very handsome Midget Flowerpecker to the massive and almost mammalian Buff-headed Coucal, from the endemic Guadalcanal (White-billed) Crow to the striking Ultramarine Kingfisher. Some raptor watching from the shade produced another Solomon Sea-Eagle, and then we returned to the ship for a refreshing buffet lunch and well-deserved rest. The non-birders (the sensible members of our party?) slept until a reasonable hour and spent an interesting morning exploring Honiara, capital of the Solomons, visiting the market and meeting many friendly people. The hot and humid afternoon was spent transiting towards Kolombangara Island; most people took the opportunity to relax while a few hard-core souls watched Crested Terns hunting flyingfish. In late afternoon the temperature dropped, and feeding flocks included our first Tropical Shearwater among Wedge-tails and Short-tails before ending at 8o55'S 159o23'E.

**Day 15:** After the intense shearwater action yesterday evening we awoke early with optimism – but after an hour not a single bird had been seen, and the remarkably strong early morning sun was truly cooking. A light breeze and some cloud after breakfast ameliorated the heat a little, and among the flyingfish some nice Yellow Bandwings and Blue Bandwings were a distraction from the lack of birds. After lunch (just before which a distant Heinroth's Shearwater was seen), we went ashore to Kolombangara Island, at the neatly kept and very attractive village of Kukundu. Some folks wandered around the village, went swimming, and perused the local handicrafts, which included some beautiful carvings. The birders split into 3 groups, all of which



confirmed that birding in a tropical forest in the heat and intense humidity of mid-afternoon is rather unproductive. A few nice birds were seen, though, mainly around the village on our arrival (notably some stunning Duchess Lorikeets and the ever-popular Moustached Treeswift) and again at the forest edge in late afternoon, with all groups converging at a very birdy area – with fruit-doves, starlings, myzomelas, cuckoo-shrikes, white-eyes, White-capped Monarchs, Cardinal Lories, Solomon Sea-Eagle, Ducorps Cockatoo, Eclectus Parrots, and swarms of confusing swiftlets. After this intense burst of activity we headed down to the village for a beautiful, tranquil evening and great views of the spectacular fruit bats. Sadly, our search for the enigmatic Roviana Rail proved fruitless and we headed back to the ship for some cold drinks and another great dinner.

**Day 16:** At sea heading northwest off the west coast of Bougainville Island, starting at 7o30'S 155o15'E, ending at 6o00'S 154o24'E; SST 30oC. An overall hot and humid day with a light breeze alternating with glassy calm – the sunshade on the top deck was a life saver, and some even took to hammocks. Birds were overall sparse except for a notable feeding flock in the afternoon, which we passed on by to stop for a swim and an unproductive session of chumming. Quality made up for quantity, however, and small numbers of Heinroth's Shearwaters and Gray-backed Terns were seen throughout the day, with a single Beck's Petrel in late afternoon. Flyingfish diversity was excellent, including beautiful Yellow Bandwings, Solomon Ceruleans, Leopardwings, and various pinkwings, while mammals included Sperm Whales, pilot whales,

dolphins, and, for some, a very close Dwarf Sperm Whale just after lunch.

**Day 17:** We awoke near Cap St George, New Ireland (5o12'S 152o59'E, SST 30oC), and started to chum for Beck's Petrel, which dutifully arrived just as breakfast (would have) started. For the first time on the WPO we enjoyed watching several Beck's and Tahiti Petrels foraging together, when the striking size difference between them could be appreciated easily. A sense of satisfaction settled on the ship as we headed on north through near calm waters, inhabited by numerous cetaceans but relatively few birds. Sightings through the day included a Killer Whale, several Sperm Whales, a large pod of Melon-headed Whales, and numerous dolphins. We ended the day at 3o30'S 153o40'E with an absolutely stunning sunset over the last land we would see for several days.

**Day 18:** Heading basically north towards Micronesia, we awoke (around 1o22'S 153o47'E) to amazingly glassy and very gently rolling seas – and very few birds. Small numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters struggled north through the doldrums, and a couple of Bulwer's Petrels were seen. Before lunch, Steve gave a talk on flyingfish – for which the WPO is becomingly increasingly famous (over 20 types having been identified to date on this year's voyage). In mid-afternoon we crossed the equator, stopping to swim on the line and enjoy a toast on the bow. The weather changed to notably pleasant with a light breeze as we continued north to end at 0o26'N 153o25'E; SST 29oC.



Our northward run  
Through worlds untold  
The Spirit takes with ease  
As morning sun  
Bleeds burning gold  
On glassy satin seas

With gentle swell  
We end the day  
And pass into the night  
Where dreams propel  
Our minds to play  
Ere dawn will bring new light

**Day 19:** Another tranquil day at sea, rolling overall north towards Truk, starting at 02o23'N 153o02'E (SST 29.5oC) and ending at 04o07'N 152o43'E. Spectacular and ever-changing cloudscapes marked the day, punctuated by rain squalls and cooled throughout by a pleasant breeze. Short-tailed Shearwaters continued to pass on by to the north, small numbers of White-tailed Tropicbirds and terns were seen, plus a few (unidentified) dolphins, making this perhaps the quietest birding day of the trip to date. Moreover, almost no flyingfish were seen, confirming that we were deep into the equatorial ocean desert – the largest desert on Earth (just because it's full of water doesn't mean it isn't a desert). Chris gave a talk on wildlife in the Russian Far East, and a Blue Planet video was screened in the afternoon. Clocks went back another hour, and the bar was re-opened for an hour from 9 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Day 20:** Heading north to Truk, starting at 5o57'N 152o20'E (SST 29.5oC) in gently rolling seas with a scattering of birds, including our first light-morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater, a nice Bulwer's Petrel, and several terns. The day continued fairly quietly until the islands of Truk appeared on the horizon in mid-afternoon, when we started to see numbers of noddies and White Terns, at times in spectacular feeding flocks, with small numbers of Atoll (Tropical) Shearwaters mixed in. After picking up the pilot we headed through the reef and tied up at the wharf (7o27'N 151o50'E), where customs and immigration formalities were completed. Birding from the top deck in the pleasant late afternoon produced a number of birds, including a surprise (vagrant) Laughing Gull.

**Day 21:** An early wake-up call was followed by breakfast, after which two groups of birders headed off on their different courses for the day: one by zodiac across to the island of Tol South, and the other up to Japanese Gun, on the main island. Both groups met with success on the birding front, seeing all of the specialty species possible. The Japanese Gun group enjoyed good views of the Caroline Islands white-eyes, swiftlets, and reed warblers, plus Oceanic Flycatchers, stunning Micronesian Myzomelas, and handsome Purple-capped Fruit-Doves, all the while with White Terns, noddies, and tropicbirds overhead; the persistent contingent even found the Caroline Islands Ground Dove. The Tol South party enjoyed relatively smooth zodiac crossings and among other birds found the Faichuuk (Great Truk) White-eye and Chuuk Monarch lower than they had expected, making the steep muddy climb shorter, but





still arduous. A little bit of zodiac racing livened up the journey back to Truk. There was also a snorkeling option, and time to wander and explore town, with cold beers partaken by some at the Truk Stop Hotel before a buffet lunch on the ship and some last-minute birding and shopping. Lines were let go about 4 p.m. and we sailed out of the lagoon and back to sea for the last leg of the odyssey, with distant views of the Laughing Gull as we pulled away. Passing through the reef late in the day produced some close views of Atoll Shearwaters and a few flyingfish.

**Day 22:** At sea heading north-northwest towards Japan, starting at 9o26'N 150o23'E (29.5oC) and ending at 10o58'N 150o05'E. Overall a very quiet day for sea life as we transected the ultra-desert of the tropical Pacific, with a few flyingfish and a few birds, including Bulwer's Petrel, but with long periods of nothing. A good day to catch up on sleep, diaries, and editing photos. After dinner, Chris gave a talk on seabirds we might see on the rest of the route, while a Red-footed Booby slept on the mast.

**Days 23-24:** At sea heading north-northwest towards Japan, continuing our transect through the edge of nowhere, which doesn't differ substantively from the middle of nowhere in terms of birds. Day 23 was perhaps the quietest of the trip for birds, with just a handful of species and even of individuals, but things picked up a little on Day 24, with our first Matsudaira's Storm-Petrels, increasing numbers of Sooty Terns, some nice Sperm Whales in the afternoon, a few flyingfish and even some flying squid! Ice creams on the bow were a

good mid-afternoon feature, and beers on the top deck for sunset proved a popular way to end our two days of desert birding. We also crossed over the Mariana Trench, Adam completed his talks on tropical reef fish, and Steve gave the first two lectures in his series on Seabirds of the World – beginning with the question: how does one define a seabird? Day 23 started at 12o37'N 149o16'E (SST 29oC), ended at 14o21'N 148o28'E. Day 24 started at 16o05'N 147o31'E (SST 28.5oC), ended at 18o01'N 146o33'E.

**Day 25:** As Friday the 13th dawned, we awoke off the northern Marianas Islands (19o40'N 145o42'E; SST 28oC), which are effectively oases of land in a desert of sea. The birders enjoyed an active morning as birds headed off from the islands and out for their day of foraging at sea – numerous Wedge-tailed Shearwaters (now of the light morph), and three species of booby could be seen at one time around the ship – Brown, Masked, and Red-footed, as well as noddies and a few Bulwer's Petrels. But shortly after breakfast things got quiet again. Cruising through the gentle seas we stopped for a refreshing swim break at midday, and the afternoon birding was punctuated with a good scattering of Bulwer's Petrels, a few Matsudaira's Storm-Petrels, and boobies that included a dark-tailed Red-footed, perhaps of the eastern Pacific subspecies websteri. Steve concluded his Seabirds of the World talk in the afternoon, and we ended at 21o29'N 144o58'E with drinks on the top deck and a very tranquil sunset.



**Day 25:** St (Christopher) Peter's day dawned hot and sunny in Japanese waters (23o13'N 144o17'E; SST 27oC), with the wind having shifted to astern, making it hotter than usual. We crossed the Tropic of Cancer in the morning as a good showing of Matsudaira's Storm-Petrels populated the wake, our dark-tailed Red-footed Booby was still with us, and the first of several Bannerman's Shearwaters passed by. After some morning squalls the wind shifted to a more pleasant northwest and bird (and flyingfish, and even flying squid!) action picked up. In early afternoon we stopped while some folks swam, after which a fish-oil slick was laid; a few Matsudaira's Storm-Petrels came in before we headed off again on our way. As we continued north, Bonin Petrels put on some good shows but St Peter's green-flash sunset died even as its possibility was announced. Photo-caption competition winners were named in the bar, before the bird list, with Hugh Buck taking the honors. We ended at 24o43'N 143o33'E.

**Day 26:** We awoke under gray skies off the southwestern Bonin Islands (26o18'N 142o38'E), the air (and water) much cooler, with SST 23oC and birds all around – a fantastic sight, with numerous Bonin Petrels, Matsudaira's and Tristram's storm-petrels, and light-morph Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, plus smaller numbers of Bulwer's Petrels, Brown Boobies, Brown Noddies, and Bannerman's Shearwaters, and a few other odds and ends including Wilson's and Leach's storm-petrels, Long-tailed Jaegers (Skuas), and some great views of Sperm Whales. Despite an abundance of birds and good weather in the morning, it was decided to defer chumming till the afternoon – but sadly, at the appointed

time we had largely lost the birds and it was pouring rain. Despite a brave show by Adam, only 3 Black-footed Albatrosses came in to join the abundant Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Shortly after chumming, the weather cleared again and we found an impressive feeding flock of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Brown Boobies, and Brown Noddies, as well as single dark-morph Pomarine and Parasitic (Arctic) Jaegers before ending at 28o11'N 142o12'E.

**Day 27:** We awoke to near calm seas and overcast skies, some 60 miles south-southeast of Torishima (29o48'N 141o03'E; SST 21oC); the breeze picked up a little but birds before breakfast were sparse – a few Bonin Petrels, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, and large dark storm-petrels (mostly too distant for species ID). After breakfast Adam started chumming, and small numbers of Black-footed Albatross, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, and Matsudaira's and Tristram's storm-petrels began to mill in the wake. By late morning the hazy outline of Torishima could be discerned and we had gathered quite a following of birds, including our first Streaked Shearwaters and a couple of Flesh-footed Shearwaters, with some intriguing beaked whales (*Mesoplodon* sp.) being seen. Chumming continued after lunch, and Adam's diligence was rewarded when a subadult Steller's (Short-tailed) Albatross worked its way up the wake from far away and proceeded to show off at the stern for over an hour, for all to watch and enjoy – at times within almost arm's reach! After a while we stopped the engines and drifted, and the albatrosses and storm-petrels came even closer before becoming sated; a Barn Swallow flying around the ship in late afternoon added one more species to our



growing total before we ended at 30°46'N 140°26'E to spend the night drifting, in the hope that more Steller's might be seen in the morning.

**Day 28:** Dawn on deck in the gloom and rain produced a surprise Whiskered Tern but no albatrosses, sadly, and we headed on north for the day, from 30°57'N 140°09'E (SST 20°C) to end at 32°27'N 139°30'E. A lumpy sea with 15-20 knot northeast winds and rain made it feel like we were truly in the North Pacific, but birds were few in the morning – mainly unidentified distant storm-petrels and shearwaters, plus a few Black-footed Albatross and Bonin Petrels. The wind picked up to 20-25 knots in the afternoon, making for atmospheric conditions; numbers of Streaked Shearwaters rose steadily, a few northbound migrant waders flew past, and a Minke Whale showed well just before lunch. An eventful evening of canapés (thanks as always to Nicki and Brad) and drinks in the bar featured an auction hosted by kilted Hugh Buck and winged fairy Gemma, during which a goodly amount was raised for Birdlife International's endangered species program.

**Day 29:** We awoke off Miyake Jima (34°01'N 139°26'E; SST 20.5°C) under sunny skies and near-calm, and cruised slowly past the rocks where Japanese Murrelets nest – sadly, it seemed that most if not all of the murrelets had finished breeding on this date, although the eddies and surface fronts were loaded with impressive feeding flocks of Streaked Shearwaters. Two or three fly-by specks seen by a few people were the best we could muster of the (presumed) murrelet before moving on northward, where we stopped mid-

morning to drift while clearing up some Japanese entry formalities. After lunch we continued north over pleasantly calm waters and found numerous Japanese Murrelets, including pairs with large chicks close beside the ship – a great relief to see the last “target seabird” of the voyage. A Laysan Albatross and a pod of Baird's Beaked Whales rounded out the day nicely as we cruised into the shipping lanes of Tokyo Bay (35°12'N 139°47'E) and the start of our re-entry into the “real” world. After a great buffet dinner, Rodney and the staff gave a recap of the journey and outlined the plans for disembarking tomorrow.

**Day 30:** After breakfast we disembarked into Japan and on to our many and varied destinations. It was an amazing month “at sea” and thanks to all for making it such a memorable experience.



### Flyingfish Observed on 2011 WPO

(Thanks to Doug Hanna, Marilyn Browne, Mark Maddock, Linda Utterberg, Tom Blackman, Denice Coverdale, and John Carlyon for help compiling this list)

Pink-tailed Clearwing  
Bar-tailed Clearwing  
Small Clearwing  
\*Spitting Glasswing  
Southern Giant (Austral Windshield)  
Truk Windshield  
Bonin Windshield  
Big Pinkwing  
\*Flamingo Pinkwing  
Freckled Pinkwing  
Floyd Pinkwing  
Big Raspberry  
Black-eyed Bruisewing  
Thrushwing  
\*Half Thrushwing  
Sergeant Pepper (glaucous)  
Double Hyena  
Twilight Midget  
\*Glasslike Midget  
\*Satellite Midget  
Yellow Bandwing  
Leopardwing  
Solomon Cerulean  
\*Plain Naffwing  
Fenestrated Naffwing  
Glaucous Bandwing  
Blue Bandwing  
Fenestrated Bandwing  
Cryptic Bandwing  
Violaceous Rainmaker  
Scratchwing  
Common Patchwing  
Beck's Patchwing  
Serrated Cenizo  
Necromancer (including southern\*)  
Careless Smudge

(\*newly described type first seen in 2011):