

## NORTH ATLANTIC POSSIBLE, PROBABLE AND REJECTED RECORDS OF SWINHOE'S STORM-PETREL AND EXTRALIMITAL BULWER'S PETREL

### Bob Flood

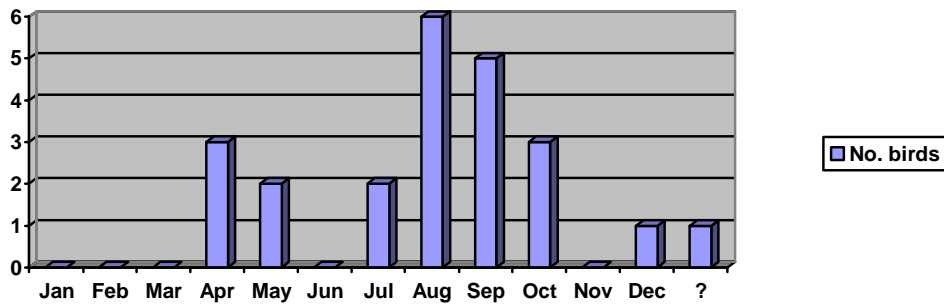
Records of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel and extralimital records of Bulwer's Petrel were researched and are presented in the article 'All-dark' Oceanodroma storm-petrels in the Atlantic & neighbouring seas' (R. L. Flood) to be published in *British Birds* in July 2009. Possible, probable and rejected records of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel surfaced in this research are consolidated below in Table 1 and Bulwer's Petrel (latter extralimital only) in Table 2. For many records information is limited to date and place as recorded on pagers or in a magazine news round-up. Additional records may exist and details from observers would be welcome.

Twenty-three records of 'small' 'all-dark' storm-petrels bearing descriptions indicative of Swinhoe's (marked **SW** in Table 1) were uncovered in this research to the end of 2008. Since 2000 pagers and web sites have been the single information source with no descriptions thus limiting the entry in Table 1 to 'small' 'all-dark' storm-petrel (**SSP**). In recent years even these media have ceased reporting possible and probable sightings. The monthly distribution of **SW**s is shown in Figure 1. There are five spring records for April and May. There are eight late-summer, early-autumn records for July and August coincident with the season of sea watching and pelagic trips - too early in the year for pseudo dark-rumped Leach's (see *British Birds* article). There are eight records for the autumn period September and October concurrent with continued sea watching and one winter record in December (months when pseudo dark-rumped Leach's might be seen). There is one record without date. Four records are for eastern USA, 19 for European countries, with two in mid-ocean. Of the 19 European records the bulk of 11 come from the UK where pelagic trips and sea watching are most popular. There are three records for France, two for Netherlands, and single records for Germany, Madeira and Spain. Not too much can be read into this limited data.

Year	Location	Details
1829	Madeira	Identified as Bulwer's Petrel by Harcourt (1855) but description suggests Swinhoe's (Bourne 1990) <b>SW</b>
1964	USA, North Carolina	One 34° 56'N, 72° 12' W on 31 August (W.F. Curtis <i>in litt.</i> ) <b>SSP</b>
1971	USA, North Carolina	One off Oregon Inlet on 2 October (R. Rowlett; Morrison 1998) <b>SW</b>
1978	England, Merseyside	One past Hilbre on 25 June (T. Cleaves <i>et al</i> pers. comm.) <b>SSP</b>
1982	France, Cherbourg	One at-sea on 16 October (P. de Grissac; <i>Ibis</i> 133: 355) <b>SSP</b>
1986	England, Humberside	One offshore Spurn on 27 May (S. Lister; <i>Birding World</i> 3: 27) <b>SW</b>
1988	England, Scilly	One at-sea area Sole approx. 30 miles SW of Scilly on 3 August ( <i>British Birds</i> 90: 305-313) <b>SW</b>
1989	Belgium, Ostend	One, possibly two, offshore on 7 October (L. Janssen & R. de Smet; <i>Birding World</i> 2: 352) submitted as Swinhoe's & rejected (Belgian national committee Belgische Avifaunistische Homologatiecommissie) <b>SSP</b>
1989	Belgium, Mariakerke	One at-sea on 7 October, probably different from above (T. Goethals; Morrison 1998) <b>SSP</b>
1989	Netherlands, Schiermonnikoog	One at-sea on 8 October (B. de Bruin, L. Steijn, R. E. van der Vliet <i>et al</i> ; <i>Birding World</i> 2: 352) <b>SW</b>
1989	England, Portland	One offshore on 24 December (R. Newton; Morrison, 1998) <b>SW</b>
1989	England, East Sussex	One past Brighton Marina on 25 December (D. Cooper; <i>Sussex Bird Report</i> No 42, 1989) <b>SSP</b>
1990	Mauritania	One at-sea off West Africa, 23°N, 18°W on 20 January (Bourne 1990) <b>SSP</b>

1990	France, Noirmoutier	One at-sea on 1 August (A. Reille; Morrison 1998) <b>SW</b>
1990	England, Merseyside	One offshore from Hilbre Island on 20 September (D. Goulding & P. Kenyon; description in Morrison 1998: 543-44) <b>SW</b>
1990	England, Norfolk	One offshore from Cley on 25 September ( <i>Birding World</i> 3: 296), presumably then Ness Point, Suffolk later same day (J. Cawston) <b>SW</b>
1991	England, Scilly	One at-sea 25 miles SW of Scilly on 18 August (J. Clifton, R. A. Kempster, J. Knifton, & H. Vaughan; Morrison 1998) <b>SW</b>
1992	England, Cumbria	One at-sea off Selker Point on 30 August (A. Strand; <i>Birding World</i> 5: 287) <b>SW</b>
1992	England, Seaforth	One leaving the Mersey on 3 September (T. Vaughan <i>et al</i> pers. comm.) <b>SW</b>
1993	England, Humberside	One offshore from Spurn on 27 July (Evans 1994) <b>SSP</b>
1993	England, Suffolk	One at-sea off Minsmere on 28 July (B. J. Small & M. Smith; <i>Birding World</i> 6: 261) <b>SW</b>
1993	England, Scilly	One at-sea in area Sole between Scilly & Cornwall on 9 August (R. Clay; Morrison, 1998) <b>SW</b>
1993	England, Scilly	One at-sea in area Sole on 15 August (observers unknown; Morrison, 1998) <b>SSP</b>
1996	USA, North Carolina	One at-sea off Hatteras in May (R. Crossley, per B. Patteson) <b>SW</b>
1997	England, Cheshire	One off Leasowe, Wirral on 13 September in a movement of c300 Leach's (Birdline Northwest 1997 NW Region Bird Report) <b>SSP</b>
1998	Netherlands, Den Helder	One offshore from Huisduinen on 11 July (observers unknown) <b>SW</b>
1998	Ireland, Co. Cork	One off Cape Clear on 10 September submitted as Swinhoe's & rejected (Irish national committee Irish Rare Birds Committee) <b>SSP</b>
1998	France, Morbihar	One off Belle-île on 11 October ( <i>British Birds</i> 93: 116) <b>SW</b>
2000	Wales, Anglesey	One past the Range on 30 August ( <i>Birding World</i> 13: 482) <b>SW</b>
2000	Scotland	One in sea area Malin on 5 September submitted as Swinhoe's & rejected ( <i>British Birds</i> 94: 501) <b>SSP</b>
2001	South Atlantic	One 13° 48' S, 08° 08' W on 14 April (Kampp 2001) <b>SSP</b>
2001	South Atlantic	One 03° 51' S, 19° 01' W on 21 April (Kampp 2001) <b>SSP</b>
2002	Scotland, Lothian	One north past Barns Ness on 6 October (Birdguides, Rare Bird Alert) <b>SSP</b>
2003	North Atlantic	Two 04°13' N, 19°10' W on 15 April (Hales & Vaughan 2003) <b>SW</b>
2003	Spain, Ebro Delta	One off Platja del Trabucador on 30 April (observers unknown) <b>SW</b>
2003	Norway	One departing Varanger Fjord on 25 June (T. Cleeves <i>et al</i> pers. comm.) <b>SSP</b>
2003	France	One southwest of Ouessant on 2 September from <i>MV Pride of Bilbao</i> (P. Nuyten <i>et al</i> pers. comm.). <b>SW</b>
2003	Belgium, De Panne	One on 23 September submitted as Swinhoe's & rejected (Belgian national committee Belgische Avifaunistische Homologatiecommissie) <b>SSP</b>
2004	Germany, Niedersachsen	One at Cuxhaven on 24 September ( <i>Birding World</i> 18: 18) <b>SW</b>
2004	Netherlands, Noord-Holland	One off Camperduin on 22 September submitted as Swinhoe's & rejected (Dutch national committee Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna) <b>SSP</b>
2004	Scotland, Argyll	One off Coll-Tiree ferry on 5 October (Birdguides) <b>SSP</b>

**Table 1.** Possible, probable, and rejected records of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis* in the Atlantic and neighbouring seas to the end of 2008 uncovered in this research. Records are coded as follows (based on information available): **SSP** 'small' 'all-dark' storm-petrel, **SW** description indicative of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel. Note: one reported for Madeira at-sea on 29 August 1996 (*Birding World* 9: 350) is presumed to be an error, misreporting the Swinhoe's trapped in Selvagens that day. Tip From the Top' (*Birdwatch* 197: 11) misreports 'a dark-rumped storm-petrel in a box' at Portland in November 1982 that was in fact a thought-to-be Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro* later correctly identified by the Observatory Warden Mick Rogers as a Leach's Storm-petrel (M. Cade pers. comm.).



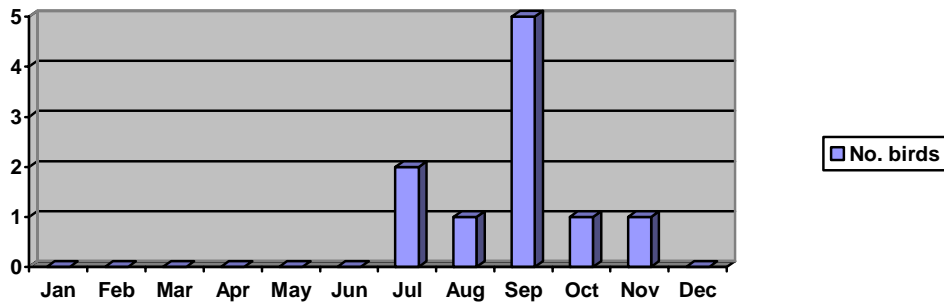
**Figure 1.** Monthly distribution of possible, probable, and rejected records of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis* in the Atlantic and neighbouring seas to the end of 2008 uncovered in this research (from Table 1).

Ten records of large 'all-dark' petrels in the Atlantic bearing descriptions indicative of Bulwer's (extralimital only, marked **BP** in Table 2) were uncovered in this research to the end of 2008. Again, since 2000 pagers and web sites have been the single information source with no descriptions thus limiting our entry to 'large' 'all-dark' petrel (**LP**) though in recent years have ceased reporting possible and probable sightings all together. Records of scams and known misidentifications are included in Table 2. Issues pertaining to size exaggeration of 'small' 'all-dark' storm-petrels and misidentification discussed above are relevant at this point. The monthly distribution of **BPs** is shown in Figure 2. There are three late-summer, early-autumn records for July and August that is a popular time for headland watching and pelagic trips. There are six records for the autumn period September and October concurrent with continued seawatching. There is one late-autumn record in November. Of the 10 records the majority of seven come from England with two off Wales and one off Ireland. Once more, not too much can be read into this limited data.

Year	Location	Details
1837	England, Yorkshire	One dead River Ure, West Tanfield on 8 May (Newton 1887) <b>TR</b>
1849	England, Yorkshire	One obtained Scarborough in spring (Higgins 1849; <i>Ibis</i> 109: 157) <b>TR</b>
1880	England, Suffolk	One near Ipswich with no date ( <i>Hardwicke's Science Gossip</i> 1880: 65) subsequently reidentified as a dark-phase Pomarine Skua <b>MI</b>
1888	England, Isle of Wight	One obtained in Freshwater Bay in autumn ( <i>Zoologist</i> 1889: 150-151) subsequently reidentified as a Wilson's Storm-petrel <b>MI</b>
1897	England, Scilly	One on 2 October ( <i>Ibis</i> 134: 213) <b>QP</b>
1903	England, Sussex	One dead at Beachy Head on 3 February ( <i>Ibis</i> 109: 141-167) <b>QP</b>
1904	England, Sussex	One female dead St Leonards on 4 February ( <i>British Birds</i> 55: 299-384) <b>HR</b>
1908	England, Yorkshire	One Scalby Mills, Scarborough washed ashore 28 February (Collinge 1922; <i>Ibis</i> 147: 249) <b>QP</b>
1908	England, Sussex	One found alive at Pett on 4 September ( <i>British Birds</i> 55: 299-384) <b>HR</b>
1911	England, Sussex	One male dead at Pevensey on 25 October ( <i>British Birds</i> 55: 299-384) <b>HR</b>
1914	England, Sussex	One male at Jury's Gap on 16 March ( <i>British Birds</i> 55: 299-384) <b>HR</b>
1949	Scotland, Shetland	One off Sumburgh on 7 September no longer recognised ( <i>Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin</i> 1: 29) <b>LP</b>
1952	Scotland, Shetland	One off Fair Isle on 18 January no longer recognised ( <i>Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin</i> 1:29, 5: 6) <b>LP</b>
1965	Ireland, Co. Cork	One at-sea off Cape Clear on 26 August (Clements 1966) <b>BP</b>
1981	England, Norfolk	One at-sea off Mundesley on 20 September (observer unknown; Morrison 1998) <b>LP</b>

1987	England, Merseyside	One at-sea off Seaforth on 19 September (observer unknown; <i>Twitching</i> 1: 248) <b>BP</b>
1988	Wales, Dyfed	One past Strumble Head on 13 September (R. H. Davies & G. H. Rees; <i>Birding World</i> 1: 301) <b>BP</b>
1988	England, Merseyside	One past Meols/Moreton on 9 October (observers unknown; <i>Birding World</i> 1: 336) <b>BP</b>
1989	England, Cornwall	One at-sea off Towan Head on 23 July ( <i>British Birds</i> 83: 78; <i>Birding World</i> 2: 232) <b>BP</b>
1989	England, Humberside	One in Humber Estuary on 9 September (J. Ward; <i>Birding World</i> 3: 27) <b>BP</b>
1989	England, Humberside	One past Hornsea on 22 November (G. Bennet & B. Richards; <i>Birding World</i> 2: 378) <b>BP</b>
1990	England, Cumbria	One at-sea off South Walney on 17 April initially accepted as Bulwer's, now rejected ( <i>British Birds</i> 89: 485; <i>Ibis</i> 147: 249) <b>LP</b>
1990	Wales, Clwyd	One past Point of Ayr on 21 September (R. D. Corran & I. Higinson; <i>Birding World</i> 3: 296) <b>BP</b>
1990	Belgium, Koksijde	One on 3 November submitted as Bulwer's & rejected (Belgian national committee Belgische Avifaunistische Homologatiecommissie) <b>LP</b>
1991	England, Yorkshire	One at-sea off Hornsea on 8 September (T. Charlton, S. James <i>et al</i> ; <i>Birding World</i> 4: 301) <b>BP</b>
1991	Wales, Gwynedd	One off Porth Colman on 24 September (observer unknown; <i>Birding World</i> 4: 301) <b>LP</b>
1991	Norway, Ålesund	Two seen from a boat on 26 October ( <i>Birding World</i> 4: 361) <b>LP</b>
1992	Wales, Clwyd	One at-sea off Point of Ayr on 11 September (observer unknown; Morrison 1998) <b>LP</b>
1996	Scotland, Tayside	One past Lunan Bay on 12 October ( <i>Birding World</i> 9: 376) <b>LP</b>
1997	England, Isle of Man	One off Calf of Man on 13 September submitted as Bulwer's & rejected ( <i>British Birds</i> 92: 608) <b>LP</b>
1997	England, Norfolk	One at-sea off Eccles-on-Sea on 12 October ( <i>Norfolk Bird Club Bulletin</i> 27) submitted as Bulwer's & rejected ( <i>British Birds</i> 91: 515) <b>LP</b>
1997	Netherlands, Noord-Holland	One at-sea off Camperduin on 5 December ( <i>Royal Navy Birdwatching Society Bulletin</i> 138: 11) <b>LP</b>
1998	England, Suffolk	One past Sizewell on 12 July ( <i>Birding World</i> 11: 244) submitted as Bulwer's & rejected ( <i>British Birds</i> 92: 607) <b>LP</b>
1998	England, Sussex	One past Selsey Bill on 14 July (T. Edwards <i>et al</i> ) & presumably same later off Ventor, Isles of White (D. Swensson) ( <i>Birding World</i> 11: 460) <b>BP</b>
1998	USA, South Georgia	One off Myrtle Beach on 9 August (Davis 1998) <b>P</b>
1998	England, Essex	One off Bradwell-on-Sea on 20 September submitted as Bulwer's & rejected ( <i>British Birds</i> 93: 566) <b>LP</b>
1998	Scotland, Orkney	One in Scapa Flow on 6 December ( <i>Birding World</i> 11: 447) <b>P</b>
2001	Bay of Biscay	One off Portsmouth-Bilbao ferry on 23 October (Rare Bird Alert) <b>P</b>
2003	Ireland, Co. Kerry	One from pelagic off Dingle on 10 August (Birdguides, Rare Bird Alert) <b>P</b>
2003	Ireland, Co. Kerry	One off Brandon Point on 11 September submitted as Bulwer's & rejected (Irish national committee Irish Rare Birds Committee) <b>LP</b>
2004	Ireland, Co. Clare	One off Fodroy Point on 5 October (Rare Bird Alert) <b>P</b>
2005	Ireland, Co. Waterford	One off Dungarvan from boat on 2 June (Rare Bird Alert) <b>P</b>
2005	England, Norfolk	One past Titchwell on 16 September (Birdguides, Rare Bird Alert) <b>P</b>
2005	England, Dorset	One past Branksome Chine & then Durlston Country Park on 8 November (Birdguides, Rare Bird Alert) <b>P</b>

**Table 2.** Possible, probable, and rejected records of Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* (extralimital only) in the Atlantic and neighbouring seas to the end of 2008 uncovered in this research. Records are coded as follows (based on information available): **BP** description indicative of Bulwer's Petrel, **HR** 'Hastings Rarities' fraud (Nicholson & Ferguson-Lees 1962, not acceptable), **LP** 'large' 'all-dark' petrel, **MI** misidentification, **P** 'all-dark' petrel, **QP** questionable provenance (not acceptable), **TR** 'Tadcaster Rarities' fraud (Melling 2005, not acceptable).



**Figure 2.** Monthly distribution of possible, probable, and rejected records of Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* in the Atlantic and neighbouring seas to the end of 2008 uncovered in this research (from Table 2).

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