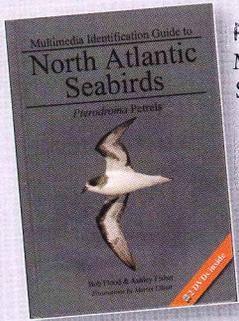


Book Review

Multimedia Identification Guide to North Atlantic Seabirds: Pterodroma Petrels by Bob Flood and Ashley Fisher, illustrations by Martin Elliott. Published by Pelagic Birds and Multimedia Identification Guides in association with www.scillypelagics.com. 2013. Hardback 316pp plus 2 DVDs. £42.95 post free in UK.



Following their very successful Multimedia Guide to N Atlantic Storm-petrels Bob Flood and Ashley Fisher have now produced an ID guide to N Atlantic pterodromas. The guide consists of a 316 pp hardback book plus two integrated DVDs. Pterodroma petrels covered are Trindade, Kermadec, Atlantic, Great-winged, Bermuda, Black-capped, Soft-plumaged, Zino's and the two sub-species of Fea's, 'Cape Verde' and 'Desertas'. Kermadec Petrel is included on the basis of two controversial records and the contention by Imber (2004) that the species breeds on Trindade Island, S Atlantic and occurs in the N Atlantic. The authors refute Imber's argument in considerable detail. Great-winged Petrel is included on the basis of an unconfirmed UK report and possible confusion with dark morph Trindade Petrel.

The first part of the book gives an overview of the species covered, ID techniques, moult (or molt as the authors prefer), structure, flight behaviour, tables of relative body lengths and wingspans of the species and the ratio of wingspan to total body length of each species. Detailed species accounts follow and include distribution maps showing core range and maximal range. Ranges of the rarer species are based on geolocator data and show some surprising long distance dispersals from their breeding islands. Confusion groups and confusion pairs are discussed in detail, supplemented with excellent comparative illustrations by Martin Elliott. All species are profusely illustrated with over 300 high quality colour images. The final section of the book provides a bullet point summary of essential identification details. The appendices include a section on the now extinct Jamaica Petrel *Pterodroma caribbaea* and a brief explanation of the Humphrey-Parkes moult and plumage system and terminology used in the book. There are interesting insets that include the histories of 'Saving the Bermuda Petrel' and 'Saving the Zino's Petrel'.

The two DVDs each contain around 200 video clips and still images with a combined running time of 130 minutes and coverage of all species. Each clip is numbered and annotated with species, location and date, and a useful timeline for each DVD repeating this information is given in the book. The narration by Bob Flood is clear and informative and demonstrates his acute observation skills. Anyone who has followed the fast soaring, swooping and erratic flight of a pterodroma from the deck of a vessel rolling and pitching in a seaway appreciates the difficulties of obtaining good video of these 'winged runners'. About 90% of the video was obtained by the authors, a remarkable feat. DVD1 includes visits to the remote breeding islands and DVD2 has documentaries on 'Saving the Bermuda Petrel' and 'Saving the Zino's Petrel'. These have significant interviews with David Wingate and Jeremy Madeiros in Bermuda and Frank Zino in Madeira.

The book brims over with the authors' enthusiasm and there is zealous attention to detail. There is repetition in the various sections of the book but this is acceptable in the context of ID proficiency of these fast moving subjects. It could be argued that the book would have benefited from the services of a professional editor; however I enjoyed its idiosyncratic nature, the minutiae and unexpected gems such as the detailed discussions of the 2009 'Varanger' Petrel and the Madeiran 'snowy-winged petrel'. The book and DVD set are good value and will be enjoyed by all seabird devotees.

Reference

Imber, M.J. 2004. Kermadec Petrels (*Pterodroma neglecta*) at Ilha da Trindade, South Atlantic Ocean and in the North Atlantic. *Notornis* 51:33–40.

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