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Below is what you submitted to obrc@ofo.ca on Sunday, September 4, 2005 at 19:34:55

If you want, please print it out for your records

Species: Sooty Tern

Number: One

Age: Adult

Sex: don't know

DateYouSawIt: 2005/08/31

Time: 0705 to 0733

Duration: 28

DatesKnownInArea: 2005/08/31

ExactLocationSeen: 1km east of Long Point Provincial Parks west boundary on the lakeshore. The bird was originally spotted a few kilometers east of our position, continued west, then returned east until it was lost over the lake.

Habitat: Rough Open Water

Weather: Moderate to Strong North-east Winds. Overcast with periodic light rainfall.

KindOfLighting: fair and constant

ObserverDistance: 500m to 2km +++

OpticsUsed: 8.5 X 42 Swarovski EL Binoculars, and 27 X Kowa Scope

Illustration: Made

DateThisReportWritten: 2005/09/04

CircumstancesOfTheObservation: Ross Wood and I arrived on the south shore of Long Point around 0630 and headed 1km east into the Provincial Park as we scanned the lakeshore and inspected the shorebirds and terns flying by. Around 0645 we spotted our first Jaegers, two Long-tailed Jaegers flying east toward our Breakwater field station about 1.5km off. Shortly thereafter we were joined by Mike Boyd who arrived just in time to see the Jaegers. Just after 0700, Mike had his eye fixed on the water

and brought my attention to a fast flying tern-like bird heading west toward us about 1km offshore. The bird continued west, periodically making swoops to the water or short turn a rounds before continuing on its way slowing its pace considerably. As the bird passed in front of us it was about 500m offshore and the bird continued west for about 5-10 minutes at which point it was near the end of our view. It then turned around and headed east back toward the Tip although this time much further out in the lake, 1.5 to 2km +. After the original fly pass about 500m to 1km offshore much of our 25-30 minutes watching the bird was spent merely trying to keep track of the bird far out over water.

Description: My first impression of the bird in question was a fast flapping tern-like bird displaying behavioral similarities to Long-tailed Jaegers we had been observing by swooping toward the water periodically working its way among the waves. The bird was noticeably larger than the neighboring Common Terns and was a confident and powerful fast flapping flier with thin pointed swept back wings and a stiff bounce to its flight. Its head was moderate in size for a Tern although more pronounce than the Commons. The bird was dark (black) from the top of the head extending over the top of the neck, through the nape (separating Bridled) and down through the tail and across the wings. I was never able to clearly demarcate white in the lores or crown. When flying-by the tail appeared long and slender with a slight fork and was observed on three occasions with the tail slightly fanned displaying a full dark fork (separating Long-tailed Jaeger) during a spin and/or swoop to the water. Due to distance and conditions, white outer rectrices were not observed - just a clear forked dark tail. The belly was white which became less clear but noticeable toward the under-tail coverts. The throat and most of the auriculars were also white. No visible markings were seen on the lores or crown or bill as all only appeared dark. The under wing was hard to see for the most part with the constant flapping and turbulent nature. The best observation made was that the secondaries and primaries were noticeably darker than the under wing coverts and axillaries which were much lighter.

SimilarSpecies: Bridled Tern - separated by strong powerful directed flight when not in feeding bouts or negotiating the wind and surf. Completely dark (black) back not lighter gray or even dusky black. The dark on the head and back was completed through the nape with no break and the tail was noticeably dark and forked without white. Long-tailed Jaeger - After some observation Long-tailed Jaeger was ruled out by much lighter under parts and darker upperparts as well as the obvious forked tail. A few behavioral keys were noticed as well as the tern although powerful was not as powerful as the other Long-tailed Jaegers observed earlier and the tern also engaged in short hovers on a few occasions although never plunge diving as it tended to swoop toward the water. Noddy's - white underbelly and throat, long forked tail. Black Tern - Much larger bird with completely dark back and long forked tail.

ExperienceWithSpecies: None

ReferencesConsulted: NAS - Sibley Guide to Birds

AdditionalCommentary: A copy of field sketches and notes will be forwarded to the secretary.

DescriptionMadeFrom: Field Notes

OriginalFinder: Mike Boyd c/o Long Point Bird Observatory PO. Box 160 Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0

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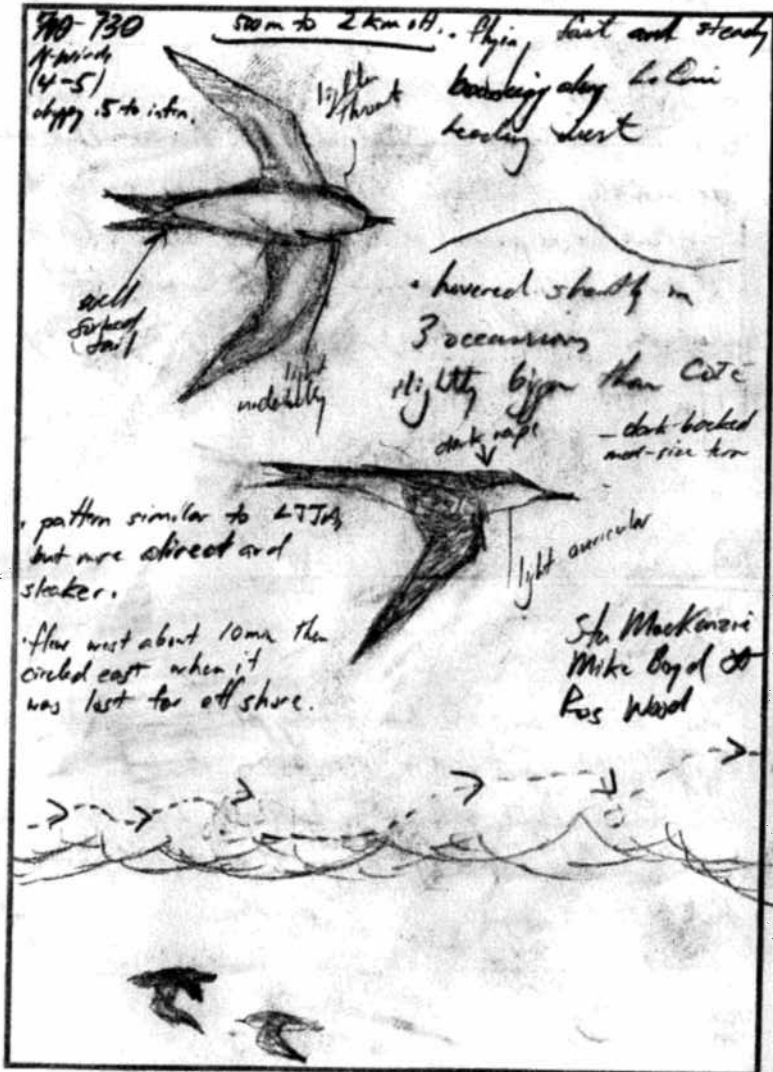
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The Ontario Field Ornithologists

Loy Point Provincial Park

- Lake Erie Sketch or Photo

SOOTY TERN
08/31/05



Common Name _____

Latin Name _____