

Shy Albatross and other occasional visitors ... Kayelene Traynor

Albatrosses are oceanic birds with extremely long wings and a powerful, glided flight. Their bill is large, with a hooked tip and nostril tubes. Most of their life is spent on the wing, foraging for fish, squid, cuttlefish, marine organisms, carrion and offal.

In September 1999 Pauline Reilly wrote about the Shy Albatross in the *Bird of the Month* for the ANGAIR Newsletter. I have included Pauline's article below.

***Thalassarche Cauta* Shy Albatross**

Seven albatrosses visit the southern coastline, and two others approach further offshore.

The Shy Albatross, also known as the White-capped Albatross, is the only one to breed in Australia. It is one of the medium sized albatrosses or mollymawks, which translated means "foolish gull", though why is not evident. The Shy Albatross feeds on surface mackerel and squid, usually inshore from the edge of the continental shelf. It breeds on Tasmanian islands. Albatross Island off North Western Tasmania in Bass Strait is our nearest breeding colony.

At sea, identification at a distance can be difficult. The Shy can be distinguished from Wandering and Royal Albatross, which are the only two to have white backs.

During winter on windy days, albatrosses may come closer inshore. What a wonderful sight it is when whales and albatrosses come in view together. We are privileged here on this coastline to enjoy such a spectacle."

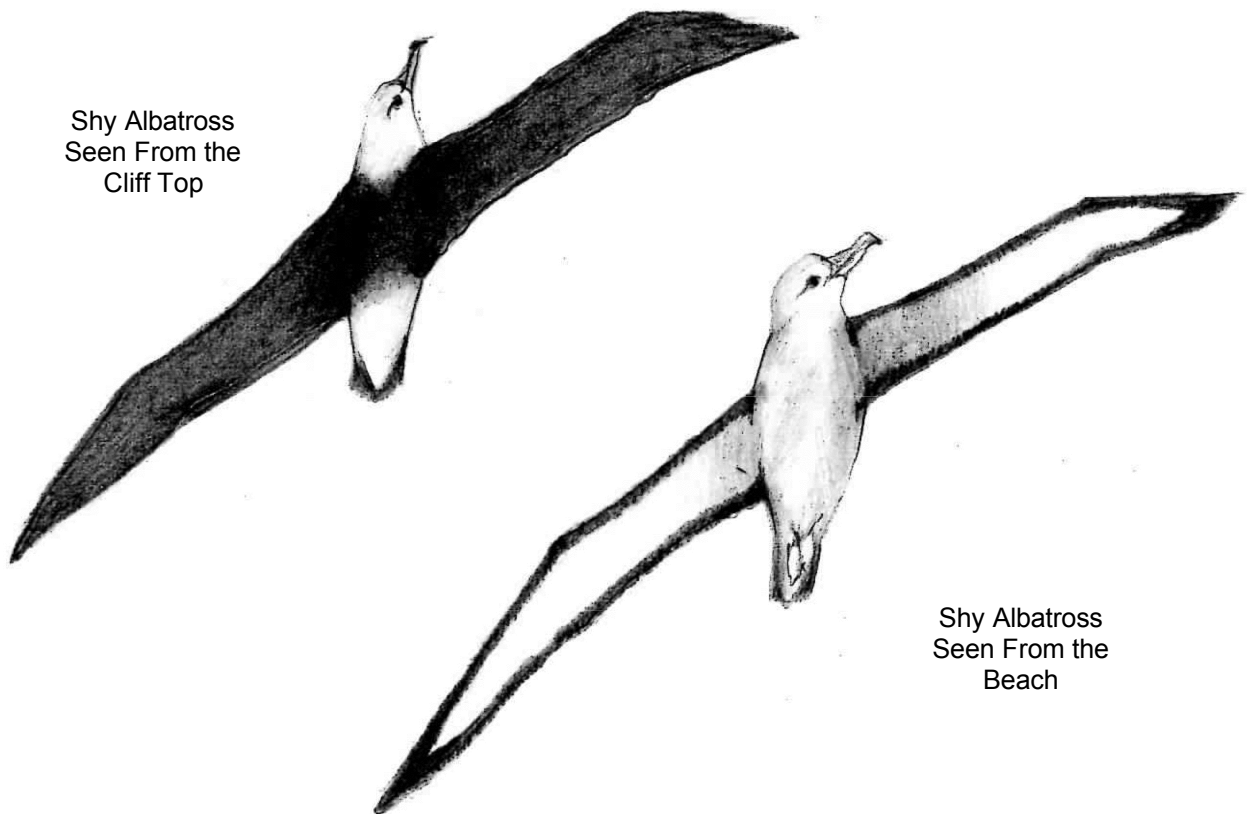
As Pauline mentioned, nine species can be found in Australian waters, and seven species occasionally visit our coastline in winter.

The other winter visitors are:

- Black-Browed Albatross
- Buller's Albatross
- Grey-headed Albatross
- Yellow-nosed Albatross
- Wandering Albatross
- Sooty Albatross

Royal Albatrosses and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses can be seen in offshore waters.

Shy Albatross
Seen From the
Cliff Top



Shy Albatross
Seen From the
Beach

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