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First record of Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates monorhis* for Senegal

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Première mention de l'Océanite de Swinhoe *Hydrobates monorhis* au Sénégal. Le 15 octobre 2025, lors d'une sortie en mer au large de Dakar, un Océanite de Swinhoe *Hydrobates monorhis* a été observé. Il s'agit de la première donnée pour le Sénégal et du deuxième cas connu pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest continentale, le premier étant une observation dans les eaux mauritaniennes en septembre 2015.

We monitored seabird migration from 10–17 October 2025 at Ngor, an island north of the Cape Verde Peninsula, Dakar, in Senegal, which has proved to be an excellent location for seawatching (e.g. Dubois *et al.* 2009). All our collected data have been uploaded to the Trektellen web portal (Troost & Boele 2019). On 15 October we made a pelagic trip c.30 km north of Dakar. The hotspot for birds was near Kayar Canyon (15°03'08"N 17°31'06"W), where we observed a dark storm-petrel.

Apart from a buffy wing-bar and whitish shafts at the bases of the primaries, the bird was uniformly dark brown, with no white visible on rump, tail-coverts, rear flanks or thighs. Whitish primary shafts extended only for a short distance beyond the greater primary coverts and were visible only on the outer primaries (Figs. 1–4). In direct comparison, the bird was larger than a Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*. The bird was roughly the same size as Leach's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates leucorhous*, three of which were observed during the same boat trip, and smaller than Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*, of which dozens were seen. A forked tail was not observed in the field, but photographs revealed it was moderately shallow (Figs. 1–4). These features allowed the bird to be identified as a Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates monorhis*. The plumage was very worn—in particular the outer primaries were heavily abraded—and the photographs suggest that at most two inner primaries were freshly moulted.

Swinhoe's Storm-petrel belongs to a group of dark-rumped storm-petrels with a forked tail and a pale wing-bar, which comprises both large and small species. The larger ones include Black *H. melania*, Markham's *H. markhami*, Tristram's *H. tristrami* and Matsudaira's Storm-petrels *H. matsudairae*. The smaller species include Swinhoe's Storm-petrel,

Ashy Storm-petrel *H. homochroa*, dark-rumped Townsend's Storm-petrel *H. socorroensis*, and dark-rumped individuals of Leach's Storm-petrel *H. l. chapmani* (Pollet *et al.* 2021).

There are two records of Matsudaira's Storm-petrel off South Africa which supports its vagrancy potential in the North Atlantic (Flood *et al.* 2013). That species can be ruled out because of its significantly larger size and longer and more deeply forked tail. Moreover, Matsudaira's Storm-petrel breeds in the northern winter (January–April) and should not exhibit worn plumage with primary moult in its early stages in October, as the adult's wing moult is mainly from July–December (Flood *et al.* 2013, Howell & Zufelt 2019). Swinhoe's Storm-petrel breeds in the northern summer (May–September) and its adult wing moult is mainly from October–April (Flood *et al.* 2013, Howell & Zufelt 2019). Thus, a moult stage in which at most two inner primaries are freshly moulted in mid-October rules out Matsudaira's but fits perfectly for adult Swinhoe's Storm-petrel.

There is no evidence of dark-rumped Leach's Storm-petrels in the Atlantic population (Flood *et al.* 2013). Dark-rumped individuals of the *chapmani* subspecies, from the south-eastern end of its Pacific range, are smaller than Atlantic Leach's and thus smaller than Swinhoe's. All other aforementioned species, except for Matsudaira's Storm-petrel, are considered to be unlikely in the Atlantic (Flood 2009). Moreover, Black, Markham's and Tristram's Storm-petrels can be ruled out due to their larger size compared to Swinhoe's. Additionally, Tristram's Storm-petrel lacks the whitish patches at the base of the primaries (Shirihai & Skerrett 2016). Townsend's Storm-petrel is smaller than Swinhoe's and Ashy Storm-petrel is, indeed, ashy-coloured. Therefore,

all dark-rumped storm-petrels with a forked tail and a pale wing-bar can be safely ruled out, except for Swinhoe's Storm-petrel.

Swinhoe's Storm-petrel breeds on small islands in the Sea of Japan, but has been recorded fairly regularly in the Atlantic since its first record there in 1983 (Flood *et al.* 2013). It has been suggested that this may be due to an undiscovered breeding population in the Atlantic (Flood *et al.* 2013, Silva *et al.* 2016). Flood *et al.* (2017) listed 46 documented records from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean up to July 2017. Subsequently, we know of the following ten documented records of singles:

- Cape Verde (2): Ilheu de Cima, trapped and ringed on 27 May 2019 and retrapped on 26 June 2020. In 2019 this individual did not have a brood patch, but in 2020 it was caught on the ground within the nesting area of Cape Verde Storm-petrel *Hydrobates jabejabe* with a fully developed brood patch (J. González-Solís *in litt.* 2026). In addition, a bird photographed on Sal on 14 December 2023 (U. Thom *in litt.* 2026) may well be the same returning individual that was first ringed in 2019.
- Malta (2): 25 August 2019 and, probably the same individual, 28 August 2022 (Miceli & Austad 2024).
- Spain (2): Las Palmas, Banco de la Concepción, 10 September 2018 and Huelva, Costa de Isla Crisina, 22 August 2020 (G. Pardo de Santayana *in litt.* 2026).
- Portugal (4): off Madeira on 11 August 2017 and three records from Azores, Banco da Fortuna, on 29 August 2017, 29–31 September 2017 and 28 August 2018; the latter three records may well refer to the same individual. It is noteworthy that a bird first recorded in 1983 was recaptured in 2007 (P. Ramalho *in litt.* 2026).

In addition, there are some observations that have not been documented or assessed by the local rarities committee. Our record is the second for continental West Africa, following one in Mauritanian waters on 6 September 2015 (Camphuysen *et al.* 2015).



Figures 1–4. Swinhoe's Storm-petrel / Océanite de Swinhoe *Hydrobates monorhis*, off Dakar, Senegal, 15 October 2025 (Markus Ahola)

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