

CORELLA

Journal of the Australian Bird Study Association

VOLUME 14

MAY, 1990

NUMBER 2

Corella, 1990, 14(2): 37-43

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE AND MARINE HABITAT OF STORM-PETRELS (OCEANITIDAE) OFF CENTRAL NEW SOUTH WALES

K. A. WOOD

7 Eastern Avenue, Mangerton, NSW 2500

Received 8 December, 1988

During monthly oceanic cruises off central New South Wales between April 1985 and March 1987, a total of 153 storm-petrels was observed. Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* and White-faced Storm-Petrels *Pelagodroma marina* comprised 70 and 25 per cent of the Oceanitidae population respectively. Only two Grey-backed Storm-Petrels *Oceanites nereis* and six White-bellied *Fregatta grallaria* and/or Black-bellied *Fregatta tropica* Storm-Petrels were seen. All Oceanitidae were mostly pelagic and silent at sea. They occupied the air stratum within a few metres of the surface. The behaviour and seasonal abundance of Wilson's Storm-Petrels suggested that they purely migrated through the study area. White-faced Storm-Petrels were absent in autumn and most numerous in late winter. This pattern of abundance is evident elsewhere off New South Wales, suggesting a large-scale movement from (or through) the region in summer and a return in late winter.