

First sighting of a Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* for Portugal

Primeiro registo de tinhosa-comum *Anous stolidus* para Portugal

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This short note refers to an observation of a new species for the Portuguese list: the Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*. This observation was made in the Azorean waters, west of Flores, during one of the many seabird censuses conducted under the Marine IBA's Life Programme promoted by SPEA, on the 17th of August of 2008. This represents the first record of Brown Noddy for Portugal. There are three other records or claimed sightings for the Western Palearctic, namely in Germany (AERC 2010), Norway and, the most recent in 1977, from Western Sahara (Birdguides 2006). This Portuguese record has been accepted by the Portuguese Rarities Committee (Jara *et al.* 2009-2010) as the first for Portugal.

The observation occurred on the 17th of August, some 190 nautical miles west of Flores island, Archipelago of Azores (38°57'N, 35°07'W), close to 12h00. The weather conditions were good for seawatching, with long-period waves of 2 to 3m tall, wind speed of 1 on the Beaufort scale, and some sparse clouds in a otherwise clear sky. The observation platform was the Portuguese hydrographical vessel named NRP Alm. Gago Coutinho. This bird was observed for approx. 5 mins, flying around the hydrographical vessel coming as close as 20m from the ship and at a height of 10-15m above sea surface. Then, the bird flew towards northwest.

Although this was a brief observation, this bird came close enough to allow some pictures that illustrate the sighting. The first impression was of a medium-sized seabird with a powerful-flight, resembling that of Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*, with strong wing beats on stiff wings, by opposition to the butterfly-like or «floating-type» flight of most North Atlantic terns. At a close range, the silver-white crown became very conspicuous, but when flying directly away from the observer the pale crown can «vanish» and leave

the birds with an all-brown appearance. At no time did the plumage appear to be black or blackish, nor did the crown show brightly white with a sharp demarcation from the black lores as would be the case of a Black Noddy *Anous minutus*. Compared to other tern species, its head and body were heavier, with broader wings, and proportionally rather short tail that distinctly wedge-shaped, with a long and slightly down-curved dark bill, and a dark stripe above eye.

During the first twenty days of August 2008, the Azorean sea surface temperature was higher than normal, on a series of days averaging 26°C (data collected on board). Such conditions were possibly well-suited to the Brown Noddy as other tropical and sub-tropical species were also sighted in the preceding few days. Both Red-billed and White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* and *P. lepturus* were present, and high numbers of Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* for this area where they are uncommon.

RESUMO

Esta nota refere-se ao primeiro registo para Portugal da espécie tinhosa-comum *Anous stolidus*, registo este efetuado nas águas dos Açores, a 17 de agosto de 2008, cerca de 190 milhas a Oeste da ilha das Flores. Esta observação durou cerca de 5 mins., em condições de mar e vento boas para a observação de aves marinhas, a bordo do navio hidrográfico N.R.P. Alm. Gago Coutinho, e inseriu-se nas missões levadas a cabo durante o Projeto LIFE IBAs Marinhas coordenado pela SPEA.

REFERÊNCIAS

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Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* at Azores, August 17th 2008 (A.H. Leitão)

Tinbosa-comum *Anous stolidus* nos Açores, 17 de Agosto de 2008 (A.H. Leitão)