

# Leach's Storm-Petrel

## Hydrobates leucorhous (Atlantic Population)



## Species Description

Leach's Storm-Petrel is a small (20-23 cm long) tube-nosed seabird with long, angled wings and a deeply forked tail. Its plumage is primarily dark brown to dark grey, with a distinctive white rump and a broad, pale upper wing bar. Its breeding and winter plumage are identical.

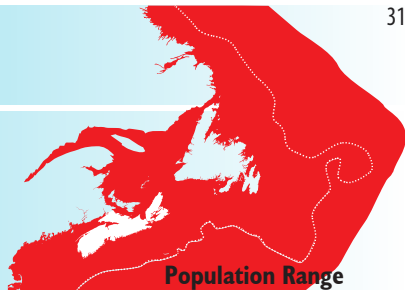
## STATUS

Threatened 

Not listed



Forages offshore and overwinters in equatorial waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Breeding colonies are found on coastal islands along Nova Scotia's Atlantic coast and Gulf of St. Lawrence.



## Habitat

During breeding season, Leach's Storm-Petrels nest in burrows on vegetated islands. They prefer forested, fern-covered, or grassy landscapes, where they can excavate burrows, though natural cavities may also be used. At sea, they forage over the continental shelf and shelf breaks.



### Leach's Storm-Petrel burrow



### Nesting habitat

Leach's Storm-Petrels can be observed at sea, day or night. From April to November, they breed on coastal islands and may be seen flying to and from nesting burrows at night.

## Interesting Points

- This is a long-lived seabird that typically starts breeding at age five or older, producing only one chick per year.
- Bon Portage Island, protected by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and owned by Acadia University, supports the largest breeding colony south of Newfoundland, with an estimated 38,000 pairs.
- Storm-petrels that become grounded on land, vessels, or shorelines often need help to return to sea.

## Similar Species

### Wilson's Storm-Petrel:

Slightly smaller (15-20 cm long), distinctive yellow webbing on feet, shorter wings, square tail, extensive white beneath tail.



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Bon Portage Island

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## Threats to Survival

- Coastal or offshore light pollution can disorient migrating birds, leading them away from colonies and causing strandings or collisions with infrastructure.
- Other birds such as Herring Gulls and Great Horned Owls prey on Leach's Storm-Petrels at breeding colonies.
- Herbivores near breeding colonies, such as sheep and deer, can destroy and degrade nesting habitat.
- Changes to marine ecosystems associated with climate change (reduced prey availability).

## How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and distinguish it from similar species. Report sightings to eBird or iNaturalist. Reduce artificial light at night, especially during September to November when most Leach's Storm-Petrel strandings occur. Consider a property light assessment through DarkSky.org, take steps to reduce light pollution, and advocate for outdoor lighting rules and regulations in your community.

Watch for stranded birds and help return them safely to sea: 1) Place bird in clean, dry box. 2) Release back to sea when dark (before dawn or after dusk) at a location free of artificial lights and predators like gulls. 3) Report stranded birds and include photos and details on the bird's outcome.

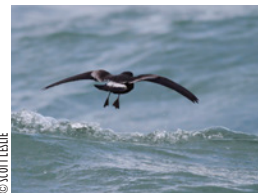
### Contact, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship

**Contact:** NS Department of Natural Resources: [biodiversity@novascotia.ca](mailto:biodiversity@novascotia.ca)

**Info:** [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca), [www.nsnr.ca/bon-portage-island/](http://www.nsnr.ca/bon-portage-island/)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447, [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org), [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

**Stewardship:** [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)



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Leach's Storm-Petrel research on Bon Portage Island