

# An Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross off the Faeroe Islands

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Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos* corpse, caught alive at sea 110 miles northwest of the Faeroe Islands on 22nd July 2012 (Jens-Kjeld Jensen). The base of the culmen is shown in the inset.

On the morning of 22nd July 2012, a Faeroese long-line fishing boat set its line between the Faeroe Islands and Iceland at 63.10°N, 10.26°W. This is some 110 miles from Faeroe and 160 miles from Iceland (and less than 400 miles NW of Scotland). Suddenly, the fishermen saw an albatross come flying up to their boat, hotly pursued by two Great Skuas. Unfortunately, the albatross quickly took some of the bait they were setting and became caught on a fishing hook. The fishermen pulled it on-board, but the albatross was dead by the time they landed it. The fishermen on this boat always use streamer lines to reduce their seabird catch, but inevitably some birds do still get caught.

The fishermen immediately sent me some photographs of the dead albatross and, as I had read about the 2007 birds in Europe in *Birding World* (Gantlett & Pym 2007), I immediately recognised it as Yellow-nosed Albatross.

The corpse was eventually brought back to Faeroe and I was able to examine it. The head and neck are quite grey (rather than pure white) and this, together with the rounded (rather than pointed) base to the the yellow culmen stripe identifies it as an Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos* (Gantlett & Pym

2007). The albatross appeared to have fresh new feathers except for its two outermost primaries and its tail feathers. It was found to be an immature female; it weighed 2,430g and its wing length was 505mm. The corpse will be skinned and the mounted specimen kept by one of the fishermen, but a few feathers have been kept available for isotope or DNA analysis.

The Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross breeds on Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island and normally ranges across the South Atlantic. Although there have been a few other reports (as detailed in Gantlett & Pym 2007), just three previous birds have been accepted in the Western Palearctic: single adults in Norway in April 1994 and June & July 2007, an immature in England in June & July 2007, and the same immature in Sweden in July 2007. There are also single records for Greenland in August 1944 and August 1963.

## Reference

Gantlett, S. & Pym, A. 2007. The Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross from Somerset to Lincolnshire – a new British bird. *Birding World* 20: 279-295.

Jens-Kjeld Jensen, Faeroe Islands.

Jensen, J-K. 2012. An Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross off the Faeroe Islands. *Birding World* 25 (8): 328.

