

NMFS-PIRO Observer Programs



**Commonly encountered seabird species of the
Central N. Pacific**

Situation

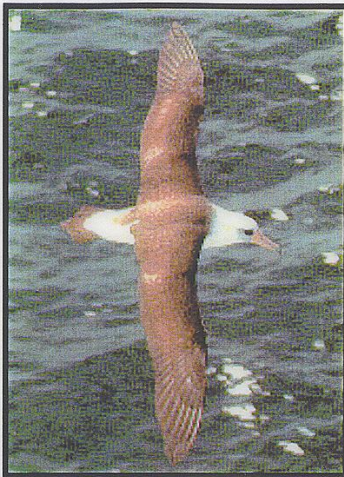
- In many fisheries all over the world, seabirds are caught accidentally.
- Seabirds have learned to scavenge food from ship.
- Seabirds following the boat attempt to steal the bait and can get hooked.
- Some species prey on target species of longline fisheries.

Albatrosses

- Among the largest flying birds
- Some species weigh up to 10 kg.(22#)
- Some species display striking colors and perform beautiful mating dances
- They are oceanic birds, living at sea and feeding on fish and squid
- Stay on land to raise chick.
- Many species are long lived (35 + yrs)

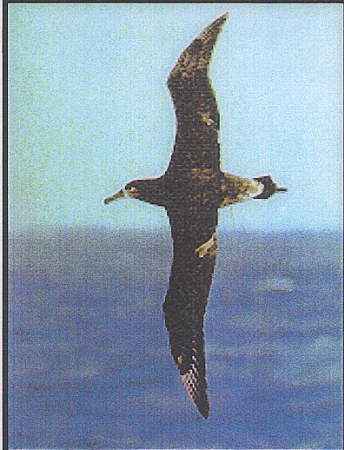
North Pacific Albatrosses

- Laysan albatross *Phoebastria immutabilis*
- Black-footed albatross *Phoebastria nigripes*
- Short-tailed albatross *Phoebastria albatrus*



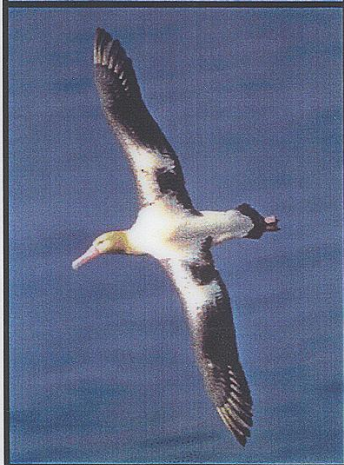
Laysan Albatross

- Plumage**
- White head, neck and stomach
 - Dark upper wings and back
 - Dark around the eyes
- Legs/Feet Color**
- Fleshy to gray
- Bill Color**
- Fleshy with a gray tip



Black-footed Albatross

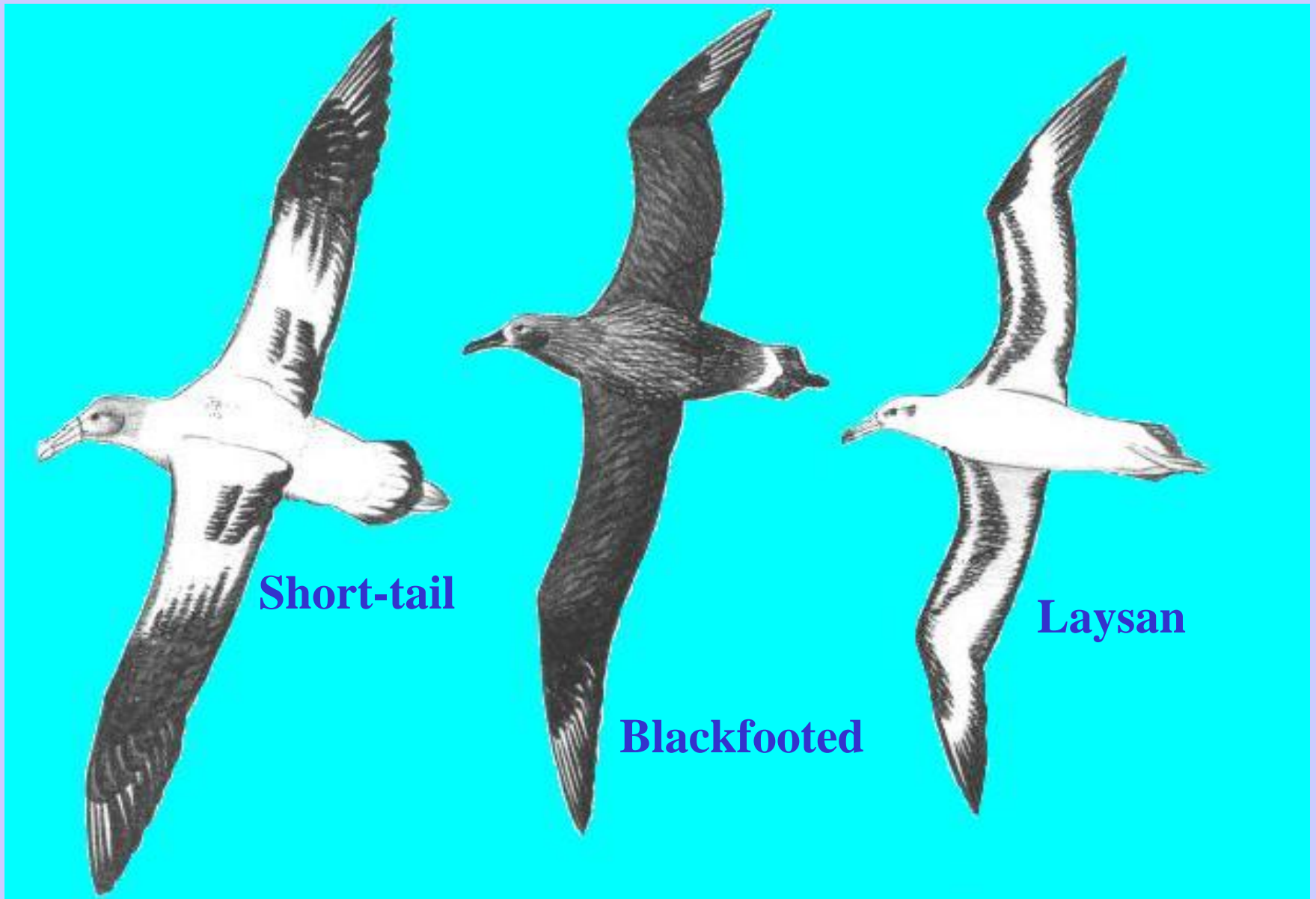
- Plumage**
- Dark head and body, and wings
 - White ring around base of bill
 - White patch behind the eyes
- Juveniles – dark at base of tail
 Adults – white at base of tail (picture)
- Legs/Feet Color**
- Black-brown
- Bill Color**
- Black-brown



Short-tailed Albatross

- Plumage**
- Juvenile – dark head, body and wings
 - Sub adult - white neck, stomach and back
 - dark cap and nape
 - white patches on wings
 - Adult – golden cap and nape (picture)
- Legs/Feet Color**
- Juvenile – dark
 - Sub adult and adult – Fleshy pink
- Bill Color**
- Juvenile – dark
 - Sub adults and adults- bright pink with a thin black line around the base of the bill

Size comparison of the N. Pacific Albatrosses



Laysan Albatross

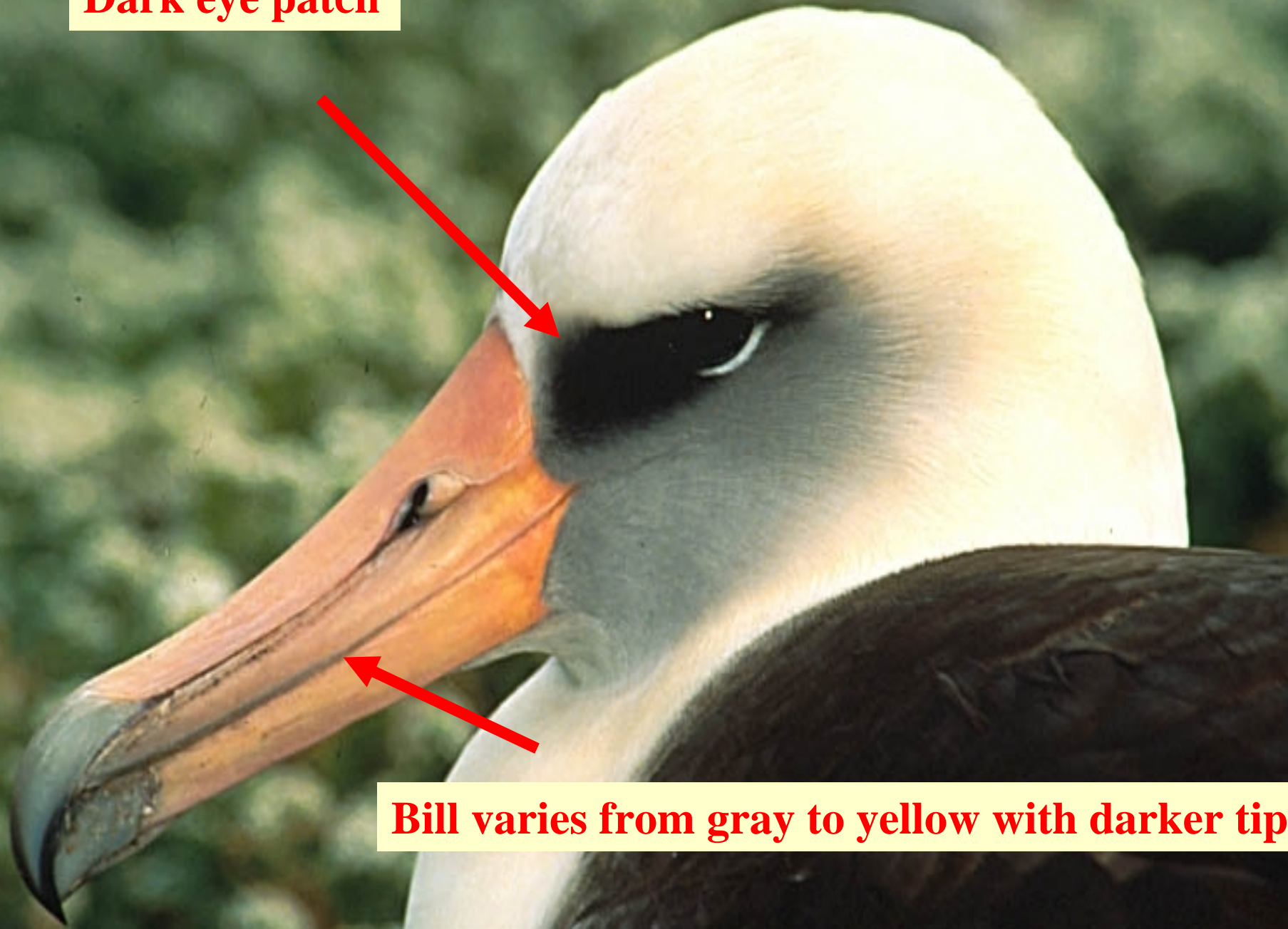
Phoebastria immutabilis



Laysan Albatross

- White head, neck, and underbelly
- Dark upper wings and back
- Underwings have black margins and irregular streaks --- wingspan over 6 ft
- Dark eye patch (lore)
- Legs and feet are pink to gray
- Bill varies from gray to yellow with darker tip
- Plumage colors do not change
- Nocturnal feeders of squid and fish

Dark eye patch



Bill varies from gray to yellow with darker tip



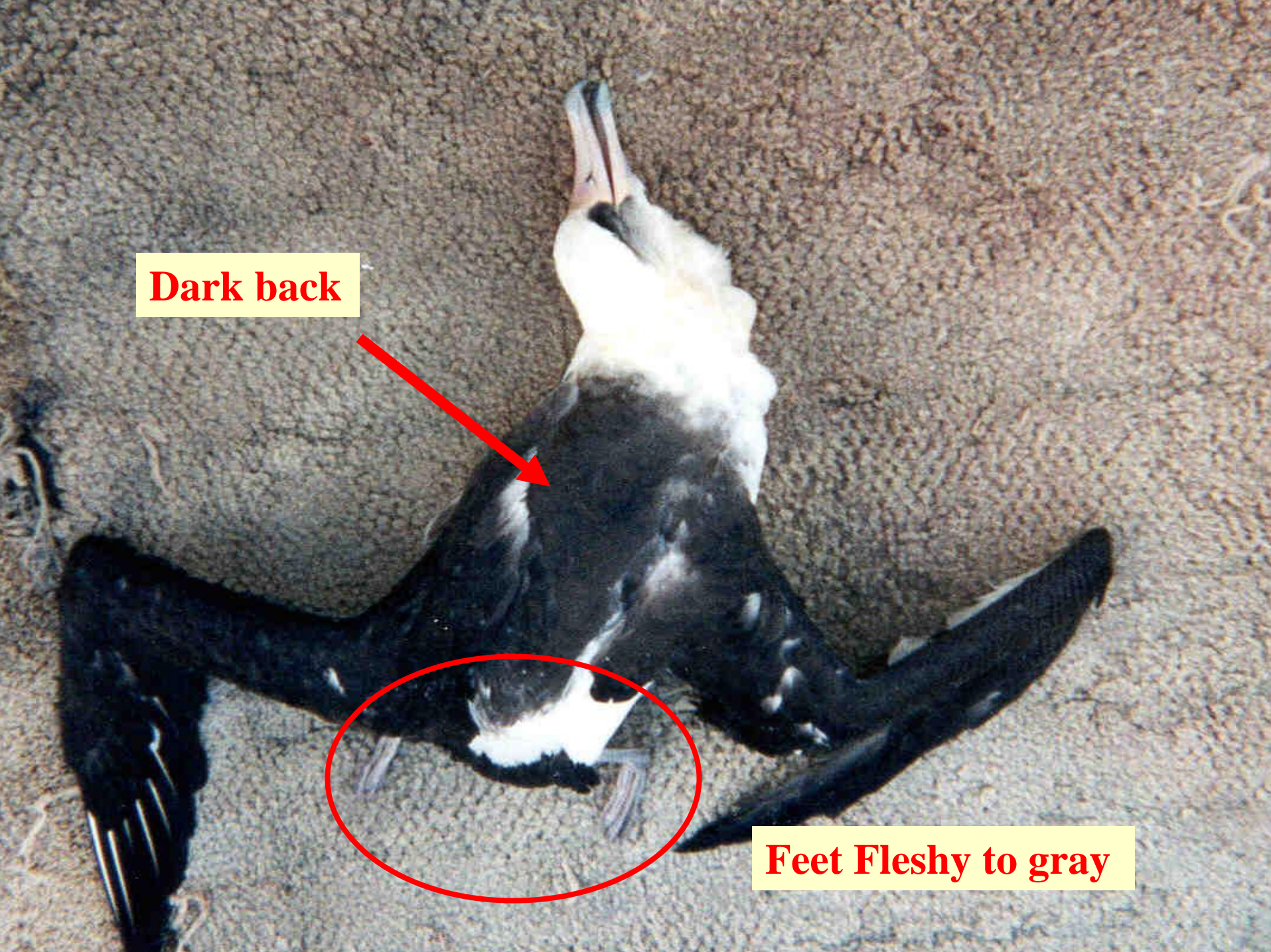
Underwings have black margins and irregular streaks on converts



Dark back



Feet Fleshy to gray





Black-footed Albatross

Phoebastria nigripes



Black-footed Albatross

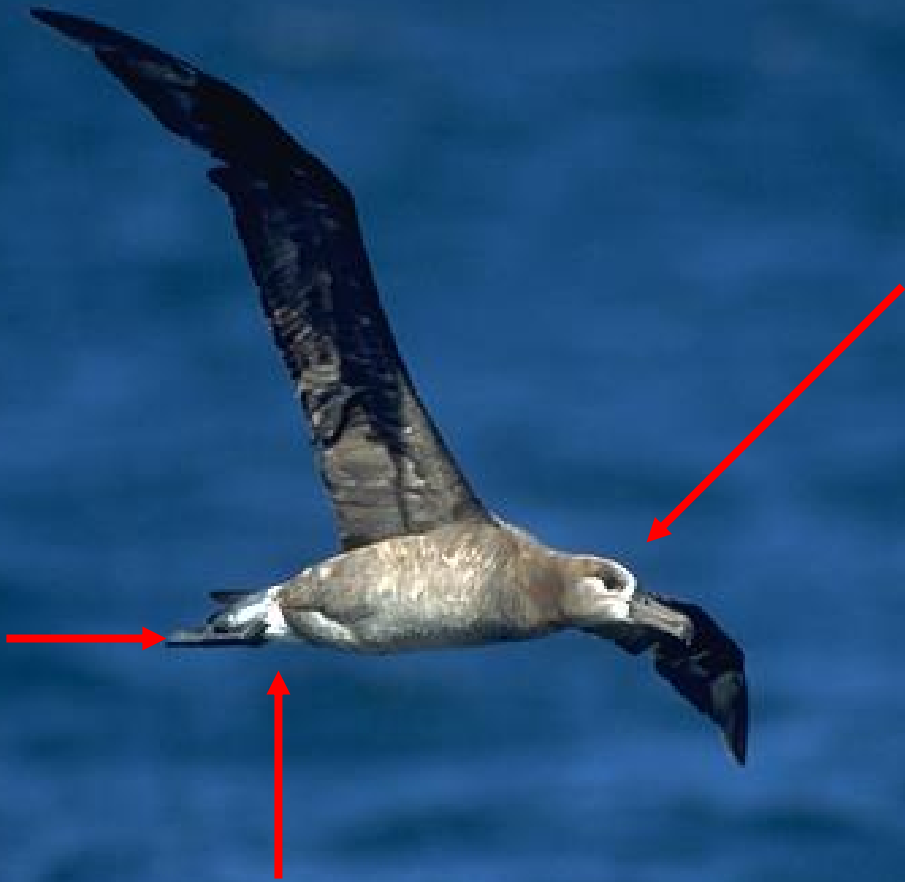
- Dusky brown body and head, white face around base of bill.
- Bill has is black-brown
- White eye patch (lore)
- Nocturnal feeders, primarily on flying fish eggs
- Juveniles are dark at base of tail
- Adults have a white ring around base of tail
- Legs and feet are black.



White ring around bill

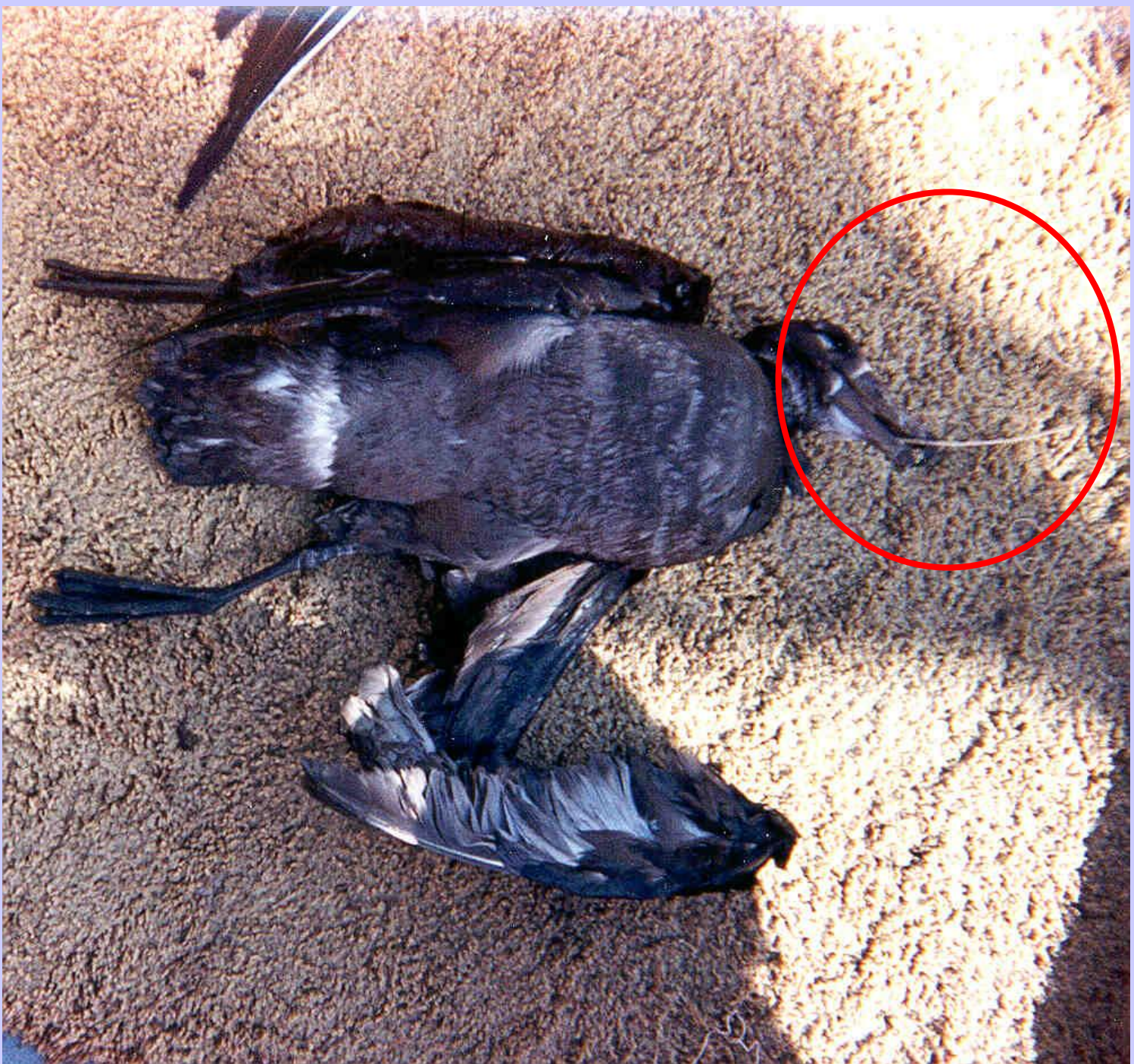
Dark head, body and wings

White ring around tail











Short-tailed Albatross

Phoebastria albatrus



Photo by Hiroshi Hasegawa

Short-tailed Albatross

- Endangered
- Hunted for feathers during late 1800's and 1900, killing an estimated 5,000,000.
- Further devastated by the eruption of Torishima's volcano in 1902
- Protection has increased their numbers from fewer than 50 in the late 1940's to over 1200 today
- Wingspan can reach up to 7 feet

Short-tailed Albatross Plumage

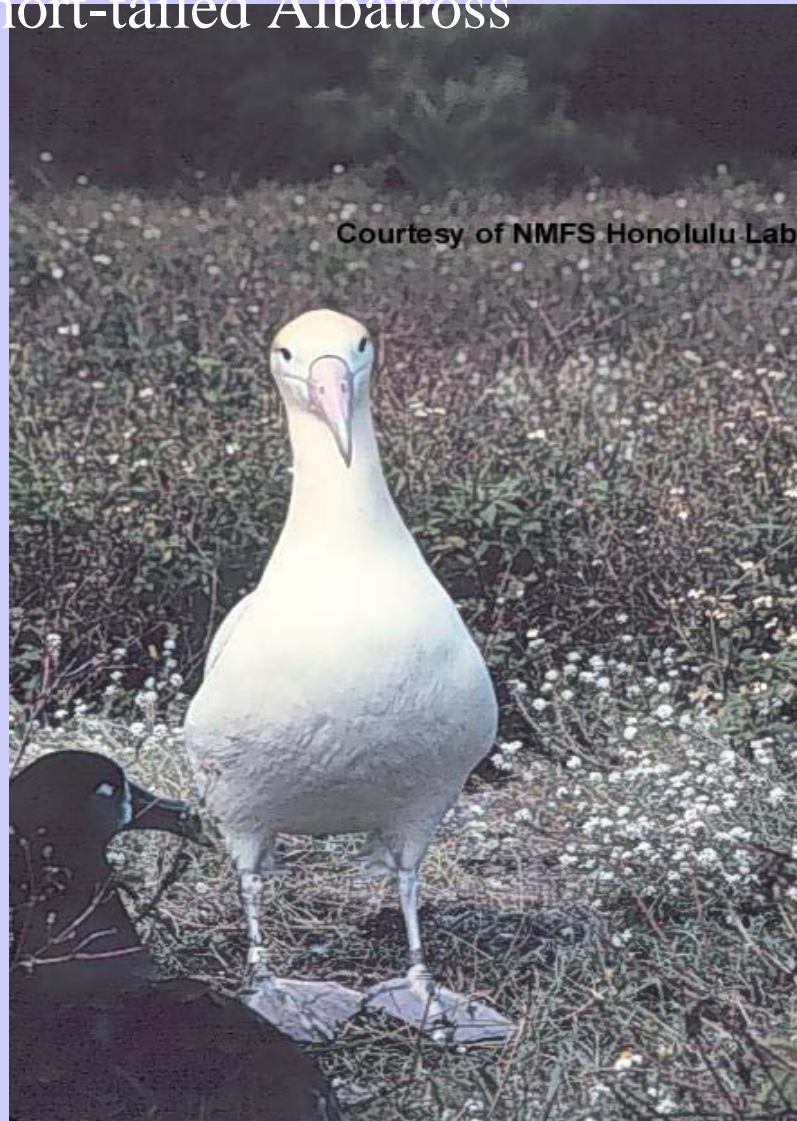
- Juveniles
 - dark head, body, and wings
- Sub-adults
 - have white neck, stomach, and back
 - Dark cap and nape
 - White patch on wings
- Adults
 - Golden cap and nape

Short-tailed Albatross

Legs/feet/bill

- Juveniles
 - Dark feet (turn pink after 2-3mos old)
 - Dark Bill (turns pink after 2-3mos old)
- Sub-adults and adults
 - Bright pink bill with a thin black line around base of tail

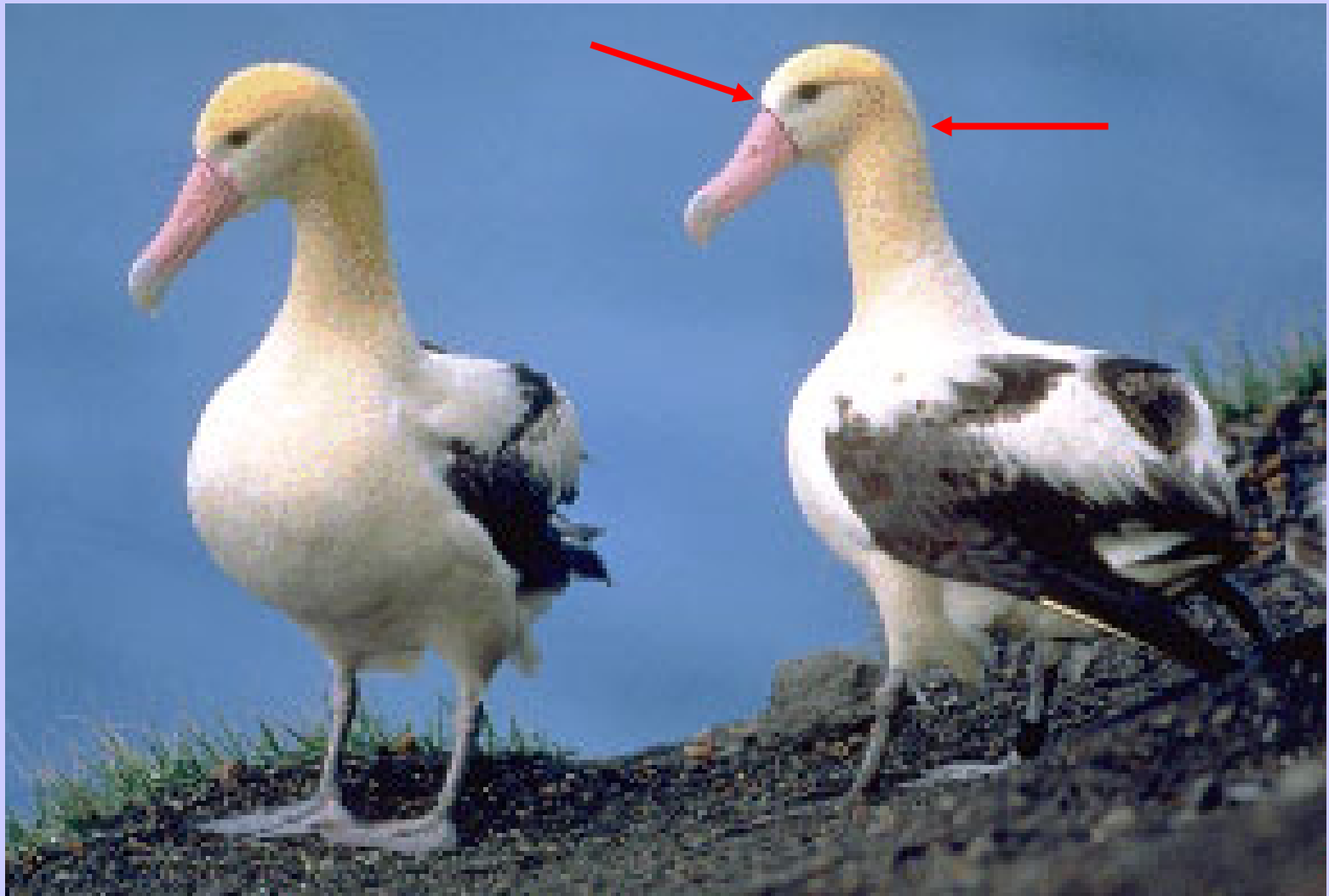
Short-tailed Albatross







Thin black line at base of beak.

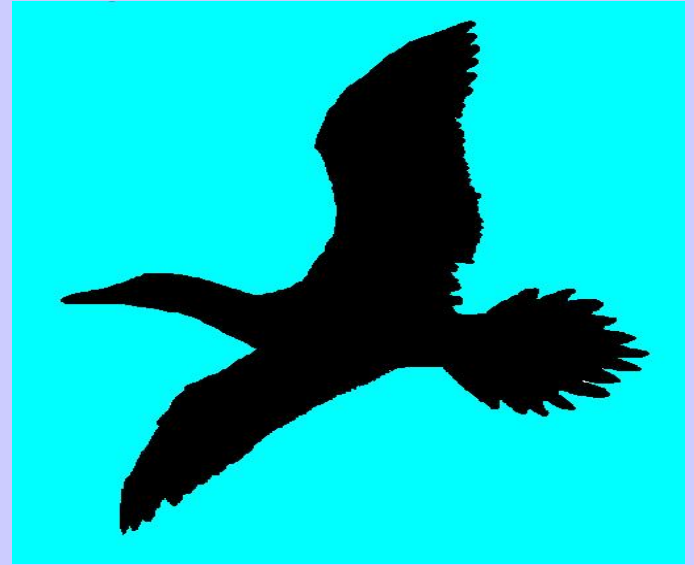






Boobies

Fam. Sulidae



Boobies have long conical beaks and wedge shaped tails. They also have webbed feet and often land on fishing vessels. Their main prey items are flying fish, squid and bait fish. They are attracted to trolling gear.

Common Boobies in Hawaiian waters

1. Red-footed Booby
2. Masked Booby
3. Brown Booby

Red-footed booby

Sula sula

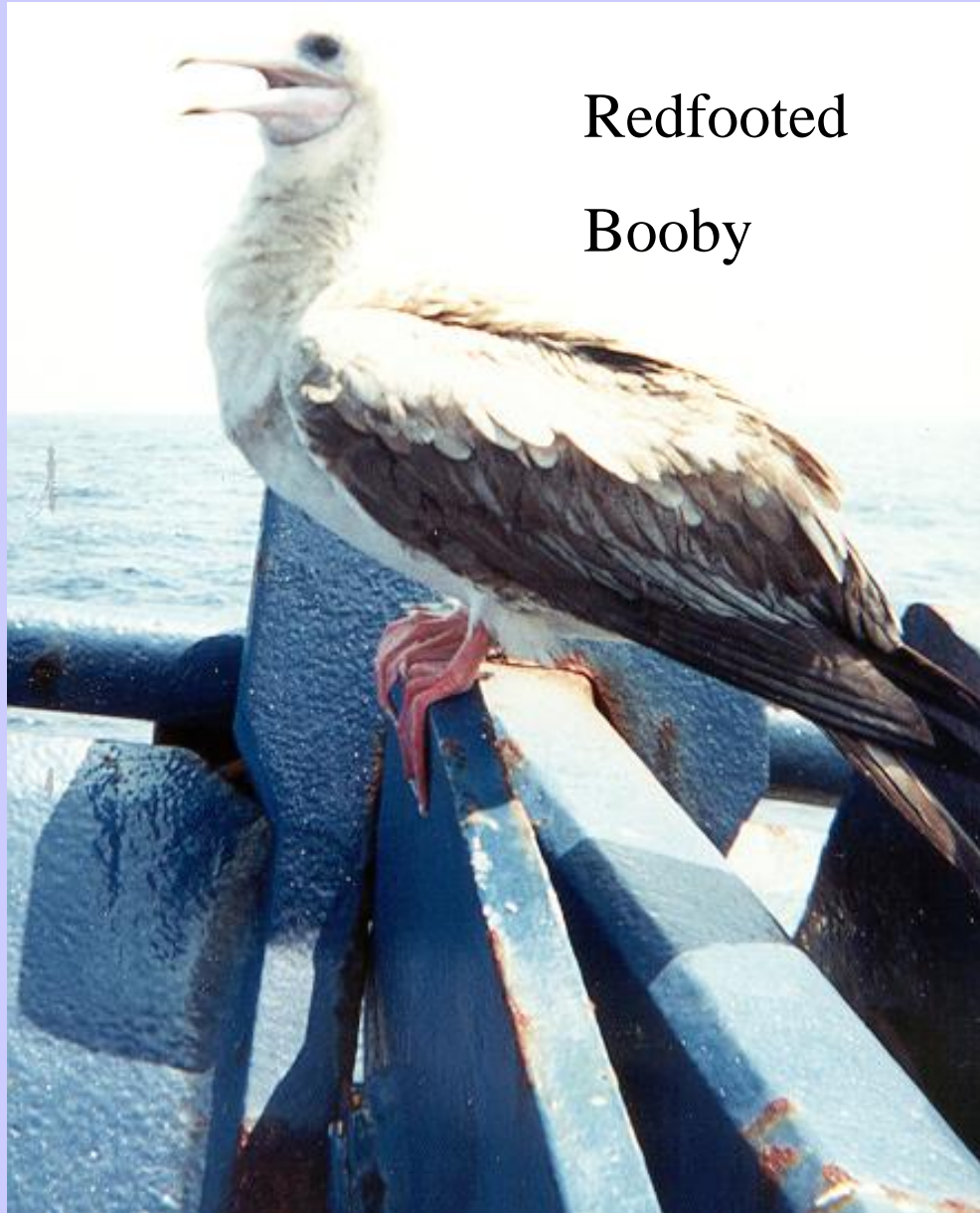


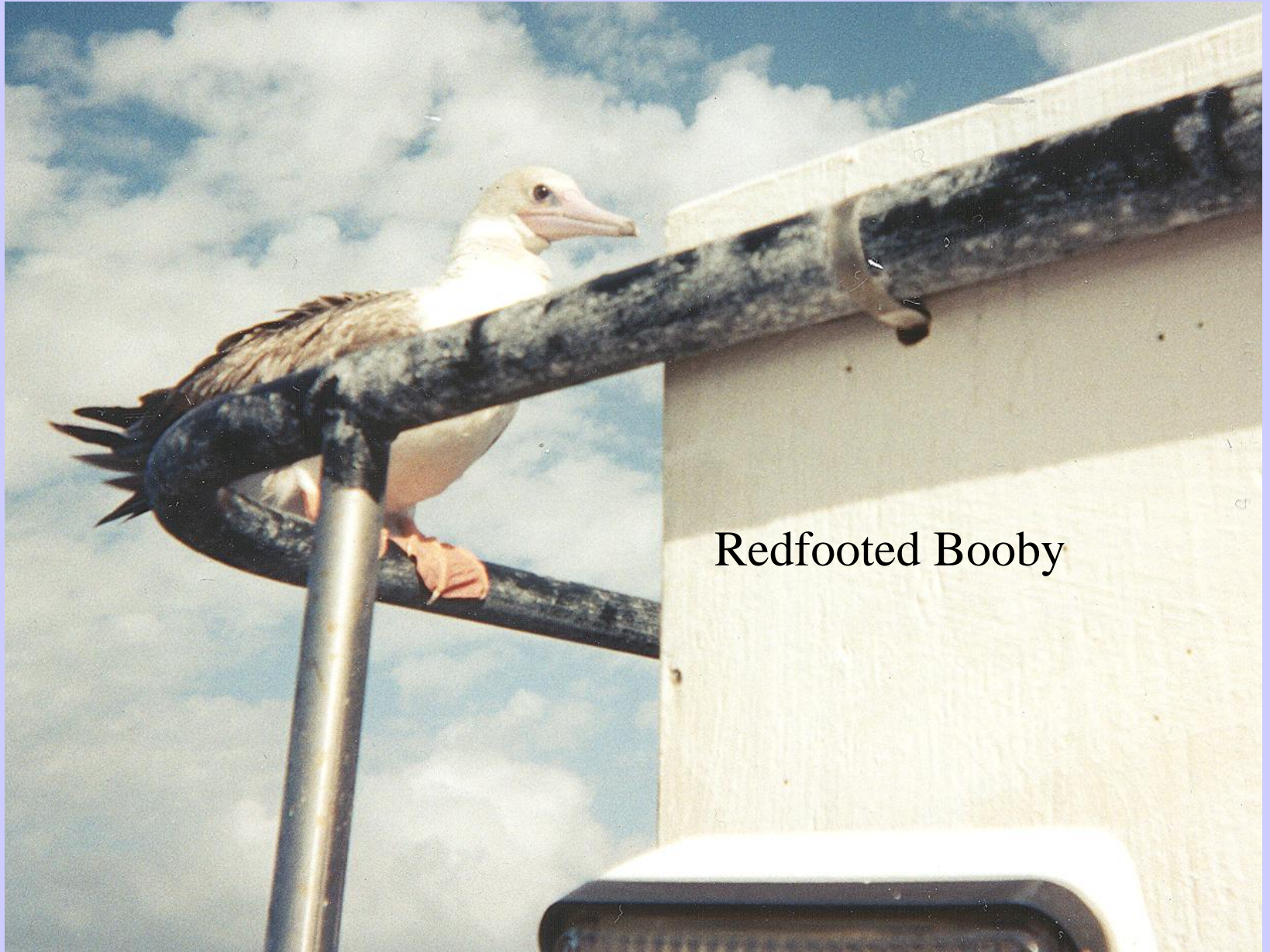
Photo by Chan Robbins

Red-footed Booby

- Smallest of all boobies
- Legs and feet are red
- Bill is a pale blue
- **Tail is white.** (juv. may have darker tail)
- Juveniles are wholly brown or brownish with a dark bill, facial skin, and gray legs

Redfooted
Booby





Redfooted Booby

Masked Booby

Sula dactylatra



Photo by Chan Robbins

Masked Booby

- The largest booby in Hawaiian waters.
- White head, body and wing coverts
- Dark primaries, secondaries, and tail
- Dark mask
- Large, greenish to pale yellow, pointed bill
- Grayish legs and feet



Brown Booby

Sula leucogaster



Brown Booby

- Dark head, breast, mantle, and tail
- White belly cleanly separated from dark breast
- Underwings white with dark border
- Large, yellow, pointed bill
- Yellow legs and feet

Other seabird species

- Frigatebirds (2 sp.)
- Wedge-tailed shearwater
- Flesh-footed shearwater
- Petrels
- Storm petrels
- Jaegers (aka skuas)
- Tropicbirds (White-tailed & Red-tailed)
- Gulls

HAWAIIAN ISLAND SEABIRD FEEDING METHODS



PIRACY: Great Frigatebird

PATTERING: Sooty Storm-petrel
Brown Noddy
Blue-gray Noddy
Black Noddy
Harcourt's Storm-petrel

SCAVENGING: Black-footed Albatross

DIPPING: Great Frigatebird
Bonin Petrel (?)
Blue-gray Noddy
White Tern
Black Noddy
Wedge-tailed Shearwater



PLUNGING: White Tern
Sooty Tern
Gray-backed Tern
Brown Noddy
Red-tailed Tropicbird
Red-footed Booby
Brown Booby
Masked Booby
White-tailed Tropicbird

PURSUIT PLUNGING: Christmas Shearwater
Wedge-tailed Shearwater
Newell's Shearwater

SURFACE SEIZING: Black-footed Albatross
Laysan Albatross
Bonin Petrel (?)
Bulwer's Petrel
Dark-rumped Petrel

Frigatebird



Wedge-tailed Shearwater





Photo by Tony Santos, Observer NWO Inc.

Flesh-footed shearwater



Juan Fernandez petrel, side view



Juan Fernandez Petrel, dorsal view



Storm petrel

Longtailed Jaeger



Image from USGS

- White breast & neck
- Long, pointed feathers extend from tail
- Black (dark) face & cap (muck like a tern)



White tailed tropicbird

Photo by H.R. Spindlow Jr.



Red-tailed tropicbird

Franklin's gull



- gray mantle, white breast & neck
- dark head w/ white crescents above & below eye
- legs & feet are black/red
- beak is black/red.





A mixed flock. Wedgetails, storm petrels, terns and one Masked booby.