

SKUAS INLAND. On 13 April 1985 a fierce storm developed just to the south of Kangaroo Island, South Australia, bringing heavy rain and gales to southern coastal areas during the night and much of the following day. Rainfall was heaviest in the Meningie-Ashville area, where unofficial gaugings reached 175 mm. I received almost 75 mm near Langhorne Creek. The exceptional wind velocity drove water across Lake Alexandrina, lowering the level at least a metre at Goolwa in the west and causing a similar rise on the eastern side of the Lake.

On the afternoon of 14 April, I went to check the condition of my sheep, pastured on the lakefront 13 km SSE of Langhorne Creek. Visibility was poor, due to the wind-driven pelting rain. The previously dry swamps at the lake margins were now all full of water and hundreds of Silver Gulls *Larus novaehollandiae* were feeding and sheltering in these comparative havens. A larger, dark bird, initially thought to be a Crow *Corvus* sp., was seen beating through the mists, but when seen closer I suspected it to be either an immature Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus* or a Skua *Stercorarius* sp.

Not knowing of any previous record of either bird from within the Lake, I went home for

binoculars. On my return to the lakefront the rain had eased a little, and with better visibility I could see that at least six skuas were scattered over about 40 ha of swampland. They wheeled and swooped over the gulls but I did not witness any food-robbing. At least two were in light-phase plumage. Evening was approaching and with the storm starting to abate the gulls began to drift back to the west, against the wind, towards Milang. The skuas also moved slowly away in the same direction, but I was able to collect one before their complete departure.

The specimen (South Australian Museum Reg. No. B39686) proved to be a dark immature with a few pale feathers emerging on the neck and breast, indicating that it might have developed into a light-phase bird. It had not yet grown projecting central tail feathers, so its identity was uncertain until it was sent to the British Museum (Natural History) where it was diagnosed as an Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. It is possible that not all of the skuas were *S. parasiticus*, but the wild conditions prevented any chance of accurately assessing the identity of the others.

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