

Observations on the flesh-footed shearwater

*Aju K. Raju¹, Miriam Paul Sreeram¹, Sreekumar K. M.¹, Divya K. A.¹, K. Vinod² and K. K. Joshi¹

¹ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi

²Calicut Research Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kozhikode

*e-mail : ajukrajuifs@gmail.com

A dead specimen of the flesh-footed shearwater *Ardenna carneipes* (Gould, 1844) was collected on 21.07.2017 from Paravoor beach, Alappuzha district, Kerala. The bird had a total length of 40 cm (bill tip to tail tip) and a wingspan of 86 cm. The specimen was deposited in the National Designated Repository, ICAR- CMFRI, Kochi under the Accession No. Misc.36. The bird is distinguished from other shearwaters in this area, namely, the Persian shearwater, Audubon's shearwater, Sooty shearwater, Wedge-tailed shearwater, Short-tailed shearwater and Streaked shearwater by its pale bill with distinct black tips. It also has darker underwings and a shorter rounded tail as compared to other shearwaters of the region. Its flight is described as "a stiff-winged glide interspersed with slow lazy flaps" (Kazmierczak, 2015, *A field guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent*, p.34). Flesh footed shearwater are currently classified under the Near Threatened category by (IUCN). During its non-breeding period it ranges over vast distances in the north Pacific and west to the Indian Ocean up to South Africa

(Reid *et al.*, 2013. *Biological Conservation* 166:3-10). The specimen obtained appears to be one such passage migrant. All sightings in Kerala are limited to the months March to October (<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist>). This bird is perhaps common in the Arabian sea during its non-breeding season. More pelagic surveys are required to determine its pattern of distribution. On enquiry with the fishers it was learnt that a flock of these birds were present offshore during the period.

