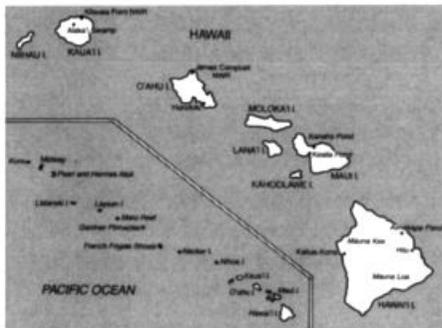


hawaiian islands region



ROBERT L. PYLE

Despite La Niña conditions now forecast to continue into next winter, rainfall remains generally sparse with annual totals to date well below normal throughout most of the state. Water restrictions and crop reductions have resulted. One exception is northeast Hawai'i Island, which has had heavier rainfall. Ni'ihau Island has gone almost a year and a half without significant rains. An overflight of this isolated and legally inaccessible island 5 Apr by Fish & Game personnel revealed that the lakes were totally dry and the few ditches with a little water were salt encrusted. Only a combined total of six Koloa, coots, and stilts (all *Endangered*) were seen from the air, indicating that normally larger populations have been forced to remain on nearby Kaua'i rather than come to Ni'ihau in spring to breed.

Abbreviations: F.F.S. (*French Frigate Shoals*); H. (*Hawai'i Island*); K. (*Kaua'i Island*); M. (*Maui Island*); J.C.N.W.R. (*Jas. Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu*); K.P.N.W.R. (*Kilauea Point N.W.R., Kaua'i I.*).

PETRELS THROUGH SWIFTS

From one-eight Hawaiian (Dark-rumped) Petrels (*Endangered*) were observed regularly flying in over K.P.N.W.R. in early evening 25 Apr through the end of May (CM). Eight others were seen 13 May with other seabirds flying off Nawiliwili Lighthouse near Lihue, K. (CM). A **Kermadec Petrel** was seen regularly at K.P.N.W.R. beginning 9 May, possibly the same individual that made a spectacular appearance at this same site last spring. During a trip from Midway to Kure 23 May a standout

bird seen well was believed to be a **Tahiti Petrel**, as distinguished from its look-alike Phoenix Petrel (RD, EV). These two are rarely reported in Hawaiian waters. A Newell's Shearwater (*Threatened*) was first heard calling at K.P.N.W.R. 17 Apr, with up to four on various nights through May (CM). One or two pairs nested there last year, one of the first records of Newell's nesting so close to the sea. Eighty-five were counted in 35 minutes flying past Nawiliwili Lighthouse 18 Apr, and 250–300 were estimated to be lingering there 13 May (CM). Also, 40+ were counted while en route to Lehua Rock 5 May (JF). These are large numbers for Newell's seen at sea.

A male Lesser Frigatebird was observed at Midway on 4 dates 13 Apr–28 May (BM, PP). One ad. and one sub-ad. Masked Booby were sighted 2 Apr and 5–6 May at K.P.N.W.R. (CM), where they are rarely reported. A Red-billed Tropicbird, rare in Hawaii, returned again to K.P.N.W.R. from 14 Feb through end of the season, perhaps the same individual there last spring. Observers again could see all three tropicbird species at one moment

An Osprey was seen well at the beach at Waipio Valley, H., 10 Mar (SO), 1 Apr (*fide* TP), and 4 Apr (GK). Two hours after his Waipio sighting, Klingler found possibly the same bird sitting on a wire near Waimea at Mana Pond, 12 km s. of Waipio. Ospreys are occasional visitors to Hawaii. One remained at Johnston Atoll, s. of the Hawaiian Is., 30 Mar to at least 5 May (DO). A probable four Wood Sandpipers (min. three, max. five) were observed well at Sand I., Midway, 21 May–1 Jun (PP et al.) Single specimens taken on Kure and Midway in the mid-1960s are the only previous records of this species in the Hawaiian Is. A Whimbrel, rare to occasional stragglers to Hawaii and probably of an Asian race, was observed among Bristle-thighed Curlews 29 Apr (PP). Nine wintering Bristle-thigheds remained at Ki'I Unit, J.C.N.W.R., 3 Apr (PB), but had decreased to three by 23 May (MSi, PD). A recently dead curlew was found entangled in monofilament fishing line on the beach near Ki'i 13 May, with another curlew standing close by (MSt). Uncommon species, too, can succumb to ocean debris.

A mild influx of breeding plumaged

SA At Sand I., Midway, the maximum roost count of Bristle-thighed Curlews in April was 38, compared to 76 in 1997 and 108 in 1998. An influx of adults occurred in late April/early May, associated with a period of stormy weather. Counts included 78 (29 Apr), 45 (30 Apr), 90 (1 May), and 142 (3 May). They stayed mainly in a barren triangular plot between the runways. Most departed that night, leaving 21 there 4 May. No more than five were seen 8–31 May, representing this year's over summering group of one–three year olds, compared to 23 birds in May–June 1998. Overall, the numbers of both wintering and summering curlews were well below last year's counts, suggesting a hypothesis that many perished last year, after departure from Midway, in the N. Pacific storms that occurred 4–8 May 1998. These same storms perhaps upset navigation patterns and brought unprecedented numbers of Bristle-thigheds to the Washington–California coast a year ago (see Patter-son 1998, *Field Notes* 52:150–155). Observation and analysis is by Peter Pyle.

Franklin Gulls included a weak individual at Laie, O., 9 Apr (collected; PB), and single birds sighted at Sand I. 24 Apr (BM), at Kealia Pond, M., 3 May (MN), and at Ki'I Unit, J.C.N.W.R., 19 May (*fide* Msi). A fine, breeding-plumaged **Little Tern** at Sand I. 15 May was joined by another and three Least Terns in June (PP), creating an unprecedented mixed group of these 2 species that will be reported next season. A Guam Swiftlet was seen twice (possibly two birds) along Aiea Ridge Trail, O., 28 May (PD), one of the rare sightings of this introduced and established species away from nearby N. Halawa Valley, where it nests. A **Fork-tailed Swift** found freshly dead at the hangar on Sand I. 30 Apr joined another specimen at Bishop Museum found several years ago at the same hangar as the only 2 records of this species in the Hawaiian Islands.

PASSERINES

The release program for captive Puaiohi (*Endangered*) in the Alaka'i area of Kaua'i reported last season continues to be a landmark success. Eight of the 14 birds released last winter are confirmed to be already breeding in the wild, including captive-captive and captive-wild pairs. Of 6 confirmed nests thus far, one has hatched two chicks, one is incubating, 2 should receive eggs soon, and only 2 are failed or abandoned (BW). In contrast to the difficult problem with the 'Alala, this is a really notable achievement by The Peregrine Fund and

SA The captive rearing and release program for 'Alala (Hawaiian Crow, very critically *Endangered*) had been going well for several years, until last year when environmental threats began to take their toll on the young released birds (see last 2 season reports). Of 27 captive-reared young birds released beginning in 1993, 14 are known dead (7 killed by 'Io, four died from toxoplasmosis acquired probably from feral cats, two died from bacterial and fungal infections, and one of unknown cause), six more are missing and presumed dead, four were returned to captivity as protection from predators and disease and to preserve genetic diversity, and three survive in the wild (one released 1998, two in 1997; DB). Other than one or two instances of trying to form a pair, none of these young released birds had attempted to breed.

Of the 12 original wild birds (none in recent captivity) known in 1993, eight were confirmed dead over succeeding years, and one more is missing this year and presumed dead. Two of the remaining three have been a long time pair, last producing a malformed egg in 1997 and still starting nest-building in spring. All three of these wild old-timers are considered senescent seniors and no longer productive (DB).

This story is a grim one. The captive hatching, rearing, and release techniques developed by The Peregrine Fund have proven successful. But the still greater challenge is how to "educate" these young birds to protect themselves from environmental perils (directly or indirectly human-caused), without wild-living birds from which to learn. It is a daunting task.

the Biological Resources Division of U.S.G.S., with a somewhat easier species.

One egg was taken from the nest of a wild Maui Parrotbill (critically *Endangered*) in the Hanawi area of Maui 19 Mar and brought to the Maui Bird Conservation Center. It hatched 2 days later. The chick joins the only other Maui Parrotbill hatched in captivity, a female.

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west indies region



ROBERT L. NORTON

A wide range of sight reports covering the breadth of the Region provided an interesting retrospective following last fall's series of hurricanes, especially *Georges*, which swept through most of the Greater Antilles. A report from Cuba again provides a glimpse of that island's endemics and accessibility. An interesting report from Haiti included descriptions of habitat that warrant some form of protection. Indeed, an abundance of waterfowl following the floods of *Georges* are hunted and sold along roadsides in Haiti, and nesting Audubon's Shearwaters are consumed by Cuban boat-people on Cay Sal, and perhaps other uninhabited landings in the Bahamas.

Rainfall at Haiti following *Georges* was

at least beneficial to resident and migrant waterfowl (and hunters) at L. Bois Nef, Pierre Payen, and Savanne Desolee, near Gonaives, where Crouse estimated that levels may have been three feet above normal in an otherwise denuded and overworked landscape. On the other side of the *Georges* coin, Oberle reported that many Puerto Rican species, especially quail-doves and parrots, were nesting late because of low food after the hurricane. By late April migrants stalled by sweeping fronts in the central and northern Bahamas (*vide* Bracey) included 15 species of wood-warblers and black-billed forms of Roseate Tern.

Abbreviations: Ba (*Bahamas*); Bd (*Barbados*); Be (*Bermuda*); Cu (*Cuba*); GC (*Grand Cayman*); Gr (*Grenada*); Ha (*Haiti*); PR (*Puerto Rico*); StL (*St. Lucia*); StV (*St. Vincent*).

SHEARWATERS THROUGH TERNS

A large passage of Greater Shearwaters was noted from South Shore, Be, during May (AD). A Cory's Shearwater was among 30 Audubon's between Little and Great Inagua, Ba, 9 May (BH). Dozens of Audubon's Shearwater carcasses were found at campfires around Cay Sal, Ba, where presumably birds were attracted by fire and eaten by Cuban or perhaps Haitian boaters.