

Hawaiian Islands Region

ROBERT L. PYLE

Below-normal rainfall with weak and less persistent trade winds continued through spring, affecting the Main Islands and particularly parts of Hawai'i Island, which is suffering its worst drought conditions in two decades. Relief is not likely before late fall, when the winter wetter season is due to return.

Abbreviations: F.F.S. (*French Frigate Shoals*); H. (*Hawai'i I.*); K. (*Kaua'i I.*); M. (*Maui I.*); O. (*O'ahu I.*).

Albatross to Frigatebirds

In the thriving Laysan Albatross colony at Kilauea Point N.W.R., K., 24 chicks were banded from 91 nests started, a good high percentage. Six more chicks were banded in nests outside the refuge. All were expected to fledge successfully in early summer. Black-footed Albatross were observed again this season flying past Kilauea Point; one seen Mar. 5, two Mar. 13, and 4 Mar. 14 (KV). Black-footeds are reported in the Main Islands much more

rarely than Laysans now, in contrast to several decades ago when Black-footeds were seen regularly just off Honolulu harbor. Two Black-footeds were observed Apr. 13 during an all-day pelagic trip from Honolulu out to fish aggregation buoys 10–13 mi offshore. Other *Procellariids* reported during this unusually productive pelagic trip included two Mottled Petrels, two Hawaiian (Dark-rumped) Petrels (*Endangered*), an unidentified *Pterodroma* (possibly a Black-winged Petrel), one Bulwer Petrel, an estimated 300 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, 50 Sooty Shearwaters (an unusually high count), and two Newell Shearwaters (*Threatened*) (PP, EV, RLP *et al.*). One Mottled and one Black-winged petrel were also reported at sea Apr. 18 between Maro Reef and Gardner Pinnacles (JM) in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands. Later, while heading eastward s. of Ni'ihau and Kaua'i Apr. 23, Marks counted 41 Newell Shearwaters ("conservative" count) during the day, but observed no Band-rumped Storm-Petrels, which are thought to nest on Kaua'i.

Lydgate Beach Park on the e. shore of Kaua'i was found to be a good observation point for seabirds in late afternoon during April (KW). One Hawaiian Petrel was clearly observed flying 100 ft offshore Apr. 22. Newell Shearwaters were seen several evenings flying across the beach headed inland; the highest count was 24 in an hour or so Apr. 22 (KW). More than 200 birds, mostly Wedge-tailed Shearwaters with possibly a few others among them, were seen well offshore in late afternoon Apr. 22 & 23 (windy, cloudy), but birds were very

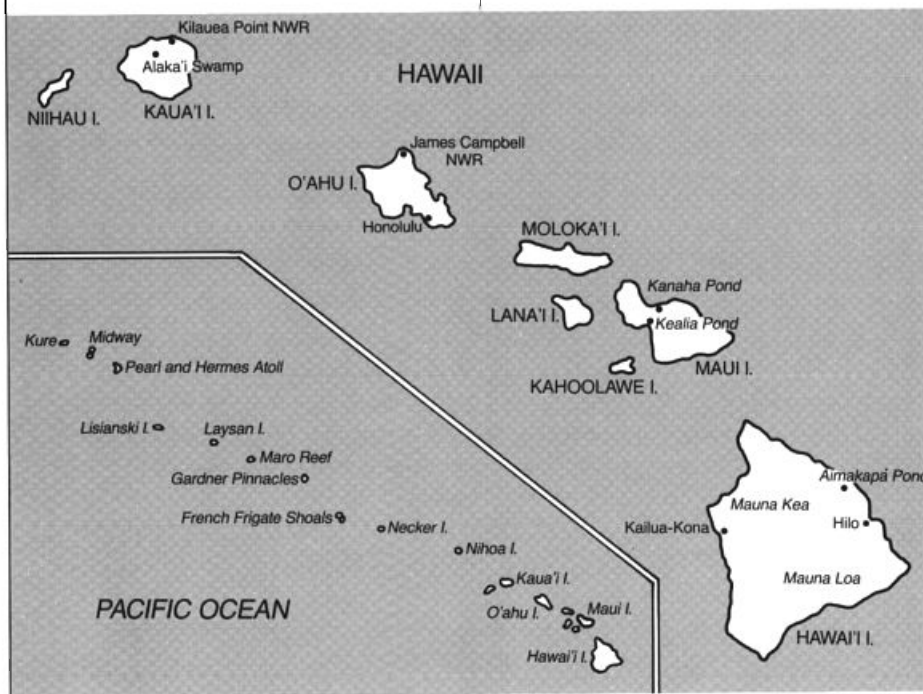
scarce Apr. 20 & 25 (mild weather). Lydgate Park has good public access. One ♀ Lesser Frigatebird remained at Tern I., F.F.S., throughout the season, and one male was also observed there May 9 & 21.

Nene to Terns

Thirty-two young Nene (Hawaiian Goose, *Endangered*) from the state propagation facility at Olinda, M., were released in February and April at isolated Nualolo Aina on Kaua'i's n.w. coast, in an attempt to establish a 3rd wild population on that island. Within weeks, the majority of birds had dispersed in small groups, including four which traveled 26 mi across the island to Westin Lagoons near Lihue (TT). The original Kipu Kai population in s.e. Kaua'i is now estimated at 130 birds, and the group transplanted to Kilauea Point N.W.R. in n.e. Kaua'i now numbers 35. The 20 goslings fledged this year at Kipu Kai and the three at Kilauea Pt. were disappointingly few, probably resulting from the unusually dry conditions and some predation (TT). Northern Pintails wintering at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., decreased steadily in bi-weekly counts from 46 Mar. 1 to none May 16, and N. Shovelers went from 12 to none (MN). Straggler Ospreys reported on 3 Main Islands in recent seasons were still present this spring: one seen at Kahalu'u fish pond, O., Apr. 30 (EV); one at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., Mar. 15 & May 3 (MN); and one on Kaua'i at Poipu May 1 and several times during May at Puu Lua Res. near Koke'e (*vide* TT).

Up to three Black-bellied Plovers were still at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., through the spring, the last one seen May 3 (MN). The Greater Yellowlegs wintering at Kealia Pond was reported again Mar. 1 & 15 (MN) and Apr. 11 & 12 (PP). A bird studied well at Kanaha Pond, M., Mar. 23 was identified as a Gray-tailed Tattler (good ♂, SM). A Bristle-thighed Curlew was found again Apr. 14 at Hanalei airstrip, K. (PP *et al.*), where one has been seen off and on in recent seasons.

A flock of 81 Ruddy Turnstones in breeding plumage was at Lydgate Beach Park, K., Apr. 24 (KW). One Red-necked Phalarope, very rare in Hawaii, turned up at Laysan I., Mar. 29 & 31 (JM). Two Red Phalaropes were reported off Kaho'olawe I., Mar. 26 (SM), and one about 15 mi off Honolulu Apr. 13 (PP, EV). Pomarine Jaegers are regular in winter in waters around the Main Islands, but Long-tailed Jaegers have been recorded in Hawaii only 5 times and Parasitics only once—during an ocean voyage nearly 200 mi from the islands. Thus, it was an outstanding event



when all 3 jaeger species were seen on one pelagic trip Apr. 13. Along with 10 Pomarines during the trip, one **Parasitic Jaeger** was found 5 mi off Honolulu, and one **Long-tailed Jaeger** about 8 mi off Mails Pt., n.w. of Honolulu (†PP, †EV). The winter-plumaged Black Tern (accidental in Hawaii) wintering on Laysan I. was still there Apr. 15 (JM).

Passerines

Red-whiskered Bulbuls (as opposed to the abundant Red-vented Bulbuls) have slowly spread throughout most of Honolulu proper, but have been reported only sparingly across the Ko'olau Mts. on the windward side of O'ahu, mostly in the Kailua-Kane'ohe area. This spring 2 observers reported sightings on the windward side. One was spotted Mar. 22 on Ko'olaupoko Trail back of Maunawili (LP), and ≤four were seen Mar. 19–23 in the Kokokahi area of Kane'ohe (LT). Both sites are in Kailua-Kane'ohe, not far from Ho'omaluhia Gardens, where a small population of Red-whiskered has been resident and breeding since the late 1980s (MM).

The continuing search for Elepaio on O'ahu (current candidate for *Endangered* listing) yielded an encouraging count of 25 and 2 nests in Pia Valley back of e. Honolulu Mar. 5, and 13 in Waikane Valley on the windward side May 2 (EV). In 3 one-week surveys in Alaka'i Swamp, K., during April and May, numerous encounters with Puaiohi (*Endangered*) were attributed to probably four separate adults, one juvenile, and one fledgling. One recently active nest and one old nest were found (TC, AL). The breeding season for Palila (*Endangered*) on Mauna Kea, H., was mediocre at best this year, in response to a mediocre crop of mamane flowers and pods. Nine nests with eggs or chicks were being followed at the end of May, with 3 additional nests awaiting eggs (*fide* TS).

Three Akiapolaau (*Endangered*) were reported in a kipuka on Powerline Rd. off of Saddle Rd., May 11 (DS), a good locality for this species. At least four and possibly six Akikiki (Kaua'i Creeper) observed on Alaka'i Swamp Trail, K., near the stream crossing (TS) represented an unusually high count for recent years. At Hakalau Forest N.W.R., H., Hawaii Akepa (*Endangered*) and Hawaii Creeper (*Endangered*) had poor nesting seasons ending earlier than normal, probably resulting from the prolonged drought conditions there (EV). Other endemic landbirds probably also had reduced nesting seasons, although Elepaio nesting seemed to be going normally at Hakalau (EV). Three Java Sparrows were reported during

March at a feeder e. of Kaunakakai, Moloka'i (HJ), an island not yet colonized by this species.

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West Indies Region

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Precipitation measured at Cruz Bay, St. John, United States Virgin Islands (100+ year POR) was 31 percent below average for the period: March -2 percent, April +52 percent, and May -76 percent. This deficit somewhat negates the winter period's above-average water balance. The six month period yield is up 4.5 percent, but the spring period water balance suggests a return of a drought cycle.

Reports were received from Bermuda and the Bahamas. From the Lesser Antilles, Keith sent in the first list of birds reported from Montserrat after (or, dare I say, during) continuous volcanic activity. Only 19 species of landbirds were counted in three days there. Resident landbird population status was also the focus of a brief, but buggy, survey of little visited South Andros Island, Bahamas, by Bainton and White. Breeding was in its initial stages there, and several migrants still found time to linger in the tropics. Also from the Bahamas, Bracey is beginning to see some troubling declines of West Indian Woodpeckers, formerly plentiful at Treasure Cay, Abaco.

Abbreviations: BA (Bahamas); BE (Bermuda); NP (New Providence, Bahamas); s. Andros (South Andros I., Bahamas); StL (St. Lucia, Lesser Antilles)

