

(G&LM), Curtis A. Marantz, Douglas Martin (DMa), Robert Maytum, Chet McCaugh, Robert McKernan (*Riverside*), Barbara Moore, Donald Moore (DMo), William J. Moramarco, Dorie Myers (DMy), Christopher Obaditch, Michael O'Brian, Linda O'Neill, Bob Pann, Debby and Jim Parker (D&JP), Michael A. Patten, K. Perry, Cruz Phillips, James E. Pike, David Povey, Hugh P. Ranson, Shaundra Romano (SRo), Barbara Rausch, Sean Rowe (SeR), James S. Royer, Michael San Miguel (MSM), Michael J. San Miguel Jr. (MJSM), Ronald Saldino, N. John Schmitt, Brad K. Schram, Steven Schubert, Joyce Seibold (JSe), Brad Sillasen (BSi), Arnold Small, Brian Small (BSm), Gregory P. Smith, John Sterling (JSt), Mary Beth Stow, Lee Sutton, Susan Tackett (STa), Monte Taylor, Robert Theriault, C. F. Tolman, Gerald L. Tolman, Steven Tucker (STu), Philip Unitt, David Van der Pine, Richard E. Webster, Walter Wehtje, Joel Weintraub (JWe), Robert Weissler, Douglas R. Willick (*Orange*), Susan Wineburg, John C. Wilson, Alan Woodman, Joseph Worley (JWo), Tom E. Wurster, Howard York, Kevin J. Zimmer. An additional >60 observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season.

—Guy McCaskie, *San Diego Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, P. O. Box 1390, San Diego, CA 92112*

# Hawaiian Islands Region

## ROBERT L. PYLE

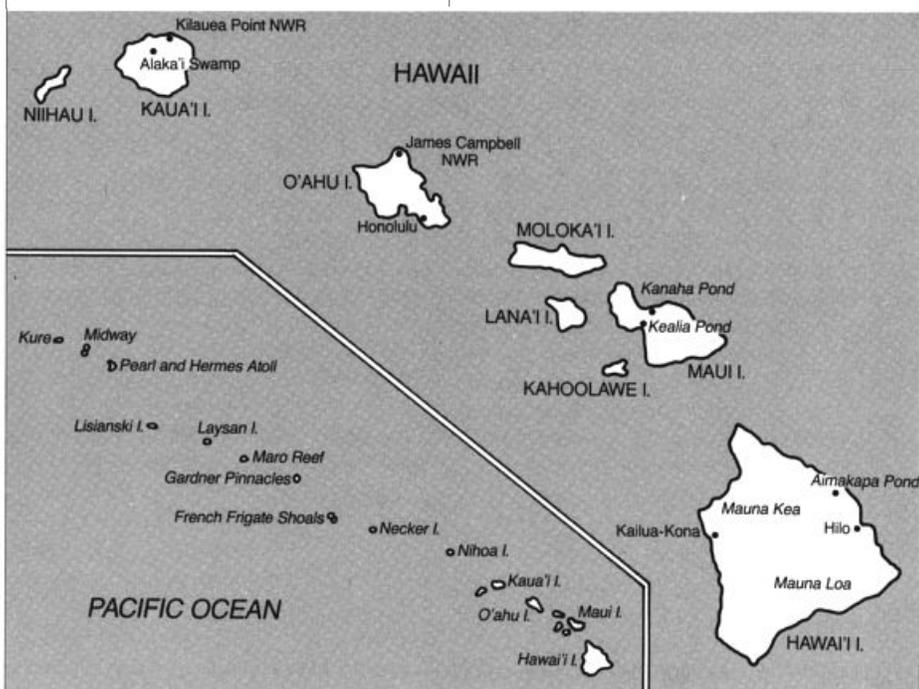
Warm weather continued to set new daily records through the fall and—except for an occasional sharp storm—dry conditions persisted, particularly in the southern islands. At the beginning of December the governor declared a drought emergency on Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i islands. No hurricanes or significant tropical storms affected the islands this year.

Abbreviations: H. (*Hawai'i I.*); J.C.N.W.R. (*James Campbell N.W.R., Oahu*); K. (*Kaua'i I.*); M. (*Maui I.*); O. (*Oahu I.*); U.S.F.W.S. (*United States Fish & Wildlife Service*).

## Loons to Ibis

A loon observed just beyond the surf off Wailea/Kihei, M., Nov. 21 was identified as an **Arctic/Pacific Loon** (†JA). Both previous records of loons in Hawaii have been of this species pair. The small Pied-billed Grebe population remains at Aimakapa Pond, H., where one–two individuals were reported in late October and November (PS, TH, GW). One Short-tailed Alba-

ross first seen at Sand I., Midway, Oct. 26 was still there at year's end. This bird (band #015) occupied the same grass patch last winter and sat on an infertile egg for 60 consecutive days. It now has a golden sheen on head and neck, although still retaining some dark feathering on crown and nape (U.S.F.W.S.). Two hybrid Laysan x Black-footed albatross were reported at Tern I., F.F.S., Nov. 8–9 (SB). The shearwater fallout on Kaua'i this fall totaled 951 birds, including 867 Newell Shearwaters (*Threatened*). A few died, but most were banded and released. The totals are down slightly for the 4th consecutive year (TT). During a cruise from Kaua'i to Midway Nov. 5–18, observations at sea conducted on 3 full days and parts of 4 other days recorded counts of 27 species of seabirds (SB). Interesting visitor species included four San Juan Petrels, 14 White-necked Petrels, and 41 Black-winged Petrels. The larger count of Black-winged than the others is in line with the frequency of past reports of these species in Hawaiian waters. Other visitors included 14 Sooty Shearwaters, 43 Short-tailed Shearwaters, 11 Leach Storm-Petrels, and ten Band-rumped Storm-Petrels. Most of the Black-winged and Leaches were in the Kaua'i-Ni'ihau area. All observations of these species were recorded in the e. section between Kaua'i and Laysan. One bird identified as a Cook or Stejneger Petrel was sighted nearer Midway. Bad weather with strong winds hampered observation through much of the trip, particularly w. of French Frigate Shoals. A detailed report with analysis was prepared (SB). A dark



petrel was picked up alive near the beach at Kahului, M., Nov. 17 and was determined to be a Murphy Petrel, considered a rare straggler in Hawaiian waters. The bird was examined thoroughly, with detailed measurements and plumage notes recorded, and was photographed, banded, and released Nov. 18 (FD, PBa, HB). Eleven Bulwer Petrels found on O'ahu beaches were turned in to Sea Life Park Sept. 5–20. Seven died and four were banded and released (MB). Only about 130 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were turned in to Sea Life Park this season, compared to an average 200–300 in recent years, and to >1000 in the exceptional fall of 1994 (MB). One Black-winged Petrel turned in Dec. 7 was examined well and photographed (MB, RLP).

Lesser Frigatebirds continue to visit Tern I., F.F.S., alone among the Hawaiian Islands. One ♂ Lesser and one ♀ possibly a Lesser were there Nov. 8–9 (SB). The two Great Blue Herons, stragglers to Hawaii, that have been resident for the past year at Nuupia Ponds, O., were still there Sept. 29 (MR) and Nov. 10 (LT). A stray Cattle Egret visited Sand I., Midway, Oct. 24–26 (U.S.F.W.S.). One White-faced Ibis, a very rare straggler to Hawaii, was first reported at Aimakapa Pond, H., Oct. 21 (PS), and remained through November (TS, GW).

### Geese to Coots

The one remaining Fulvous Whistling-Duck was still present at Ki'i Unit, J.C.N.W.R., Oct. 20 (MO, PS *et al.*). Two Greater White-fronted Geese, very rare in Hawaii, were discovered at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., Oct. 14 (AE, RLP), remaining at least through Nov. 1 (MN). A Brant, casual in Hawaii, was reported at Ki'i Pond, J.C.N.W.R., Nov. 24 (MO, RLP), and remained into winter. A small Canada Goose, probably either an Aleutian or Taverner race, appeared on Sand I., Midway, in mid-November (SR *et al.*), and remained at least into January. It foraged daily on lawns among densely spaced nesting albatross, and appeared noticeably smaller than the Laysans. Other small, pale-breasted Canadas were reported at Hanapepe Salt Pond and Kuiuila boat harbor, K. (perhaps the same bird; DK, TT), at Kaelepulu Sanctuary, O. (LT *et al.*), and at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M. (MN), all in the last 2 weeks of November. Two Canadas together at Olomana Golf Course in Waimanalo, O., through most of November may have been "Lesser" Canadas (PY, RLP). A Green-winged Teal at Tern I., F.F.S., first seen Oct. 7 was found dead Nov. 22 (U.S.F.W.S.). Two were at Sand I., Midway,

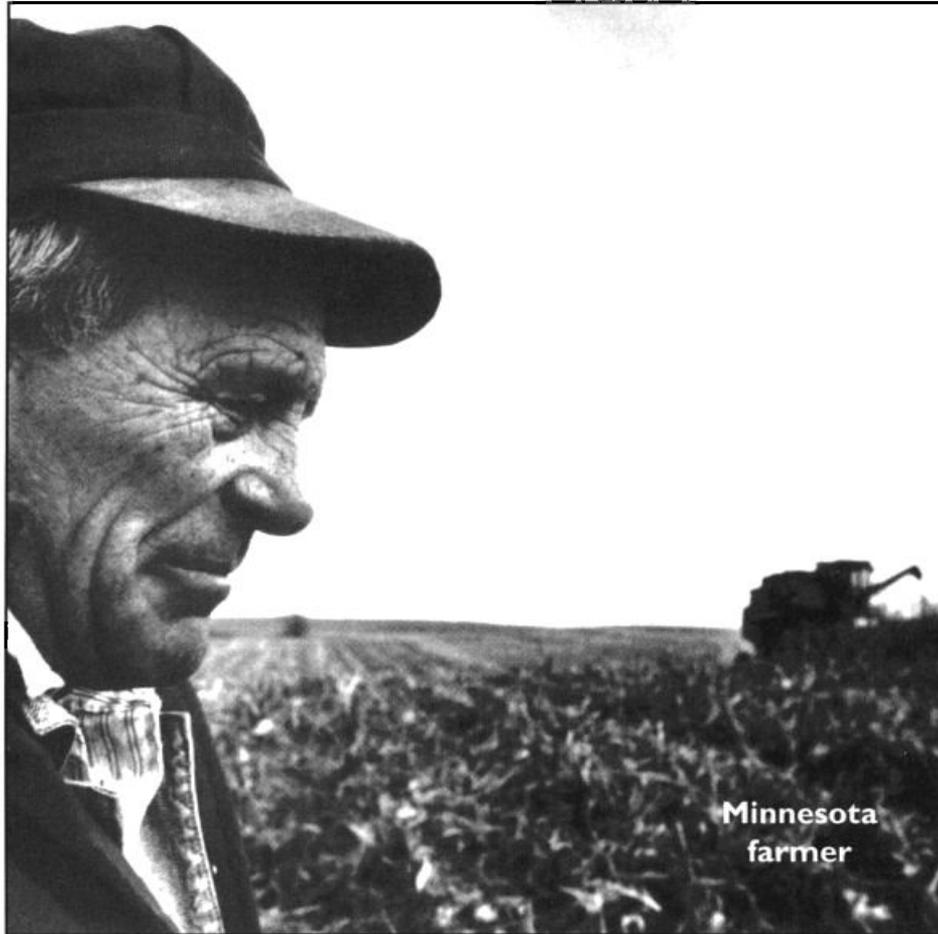
Nov. 18+ (SB, SR). Up to 14 N. Pintail were seen at Tern I., F.F.S., Nov. 8–9 (SB), and six–twelve reported at Sand I., Midway, Sept. 25–Oct. 29 dropped to two through November and December (U.S.F.W.S.). Fifty pintails, an unusually high count, were at Koloa Mill Pond, K., Nov. 18 (DK), and 20 were still there Nov. 27 (TS). Twelve at Kuilima Water Treatment Ponds, O., Oct. 20 (EV *et al.*) provided a good count for that site. Some less common duck species turning up were Eur. Wigeon at Koloa Mill Pond and Hanalei N.W.R., K. (TS, TH), a Garganey at Sand I., Midway, from late October to Nov. 19 (SB, SR), a ♀ Cinnamon Teal at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., Oct. 14 (AE, RLP), and a ♀ Com. Merganser at Kealia Pond Oct. 25 (DK), the last perhaps the same female seen irregularly at Kealia Pond over the past 5 years. Three Buffleheads remained at Sand I., Midway, from mid-November (SB, SR) until at least late December. Three raptors sighted this season, all stragglers to Hawaii, were an Osprey at Loko Waka and Waiakea Ponds near Hilo, H., Nov. 9 (TS), a very rare N. Harrier at Tern I., F.F.S., Oct. 4 (U.S.F.W.S.), and a Peregrine Falcon flying over Aiea Trail, O., Oct. 19 (PS). A Kalij Pheasant was seen and heard Aug. 25 on a trail off of Saddle Rd. near the 16 mi marker out of Hilo, H., and two were heard Oct. 14 in the Puu Makaala Natural Area Reserve on the lower trail off of Stainback Hwy. about 17 mi out of Hilo (FB), both interesting localities in e. Hawai'i I. Fourteen Kalij on Mauna Strip Rd. in Hawaii N.P. (JB) provided an interesting count in one of its favored localities. Several Gambel Quail were found Nov. 11–13 in c. Kaho'olawe I. and also on its n.w. coast, the only island where this species may be found regularly. Seven Hawaiian (Com.) Moorhens (*Endangered*) observed Nov. 30 at Kaelepulu Sanctuary in Kailua, O. (RLP), represented an encouragingly high count for this tiny wetland. One straggler Hawaiian Coot (*Endangered*) was observed at Sand I., Midway, Aug. 25 and Sept. 4 (U.S.F.W.S.). Hawaiian Coots built up to 200 birds on 2 small ponds at Kuilima Water Treatment Ponds Aug. 25 (PD), then to 400 birds Oct. 6 (MO, RLP), dropping off to 250 Oct. 20 (MO *et al.*). These unprecedentedly high numbers of birds may well have come from nearby Amoriant Aquafarm, whose >100 ponds went dry during spring and summer after Amoriant stopped production.

### Plovers to Owls

Several Black-bellied Plovers, casual fall and winter visitors to Hawaii, were at Kealia Pond N.W.R. from Sept. 4+, peak-

ing in mid-October (MN, TH). More of these are found at Kealia than in the rest of the state combined. One was reported at Waihua Mill Pond, O., Oct. 6 (MO, RLP), and one at Koloa Mill Pond, K., Nov. 27 (TS). Single Semipalmated Plovers, also casual in Hawaii, turned up at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M. (MN, TH), at Honouliuli Unit, Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O. (MO *et al.*), and at Koloa Mill Pond, K. (DK), all during mid-September–mid-November. One Killdeer, a very rare visitor to Hawaii, was found at Kealia Pond N.W.R., Nov. 3 (TH), two at Kanaha Pond, M., Nov. 16 (FD), and one at Koloa Mill Pond, K., Nov. 18 (DK) and Dec. 2 (TS). Counts of 125 Hawaiian (Black-necked) Stilts (*Endangered*) at Waihua Mill Pond and 60 at Kuilima Water Treatment Ponds Oct. 6 (MO, RLP) represented high numbers for these localities. Populations are larger at J.C.N.W.R. and at Kealia Pond N.W.R., for example the season's high count of 232 at Kealia Oct. 2 (MN). Interesting counts of 30 stilts Sept. 4 (PBr) and 25 stilts Oct. 6 (MO) were made at Punaluu, O., in some abandoned aquafarm ponds which, however, may soon give way to a new development nearby. A Com. or Spotted Sandpiper (probably Spotted, a straggler to Hawaii) was also reported at Punaluu Ponds Sept. 4 (PBr). Two Greater Yellowlegs were observed at leisure at Honouliuli Unit, Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O., Oct. 20 (MO, PS *et al.*), perhaps the first occurrence of more than one of these rare stragglers together in Hawaii. Single Lesser Yellowlegs, a more regular visitor to Hawaii, were reported at Kealia Pond N.W.R., Oct. 14 (AE) and Nov. 19 (MN), and at Ki'i Unit, J.C.N.W.R., Oct. 20 (MO *et al.*). Bristle-thighed Curlews appeared widely this fall. In and near Ki'i Unit, J.C.N.W.R., their most regular haunt in Hawaii, one was first reported Aug. 25 (PD), increasing to seven through September (PBr), then dropping to three in October and November (PBr *et al.*) At Hanapepe Airstrip, K., another regular haunt in the last few years, two appeared Aug. 30, increasing to three and five through September (TS, DK), then back to three and to one at season's end (TS, DK, EV). Elsewhere, single birds were spotted at Kanaha Pond, M., in early August (FD), at Sandy Beach Park, O., Aug. 27 (RC), at a wetland along Hamakua Road in Kailua, O., Nov. 15 (TC), and at Keahole Pt., H., Nov. 17 (RD). Two Whimbrels (a rare straggler) were reported at J.C.N.W.R., Sept. 7 (PBr), and one at Sand I., Midway, Nov. 24 & 26 (SR). At both sites the birds were

# Just one of the species protected by the Endangered Species Act.



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among Bristle-thigheds for close comparison. Two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at Tern I., F.F.S., Sept. 1–16 were observed daily, studied closely, and described well (U.S.F.W.S., MW *et al.*). Buff-breasteds have been recorded fewer than 5 times previously in Hawaii. Pectoral Sandpipers appeared at Kealia N.W.R. in good numbers:  $\leq 20$  Oct. 14 (AE, RLP) and 40 Oct. 17 (MN). Eleven were at Waialua Mill Pond Oct. 20 (EV), and lesser numbers appeared at other locations. One—two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were reported at 5 localities on 4 islands Oct 2–Nov. 9 (v.o.). One Com. Snipe was at Kealia N.W.R., Oct. 14 (AE, RLP), and a Red Phalarope turned up at Hanapepe Salt Pond, K., Nov. 18 (DK). A bird identified as a Com. Black-headed Gull was seen briefly but well at Sand I., Midway, Nov. 26 (SR *et al.*). This species was photographed at Midway some years ago, and has occurred elsewhere in the state only once or perhaps twice. An ad. Herring Gull, thought perhaps to be of an Asiatic race, was observed at sea 20 mi n.w. of Ni'ihau I., Nov. 6 (SB), and two Ring-billed Gulls appeared at Kealia N.W.R., Nov. 19 (MN). Two Least/Little Terns first seen at Sand I., Midway, Jun. 8 were observed regularly through August and September until the last sighting of one Sept. 27 (U.S.F.W.S.). One Hawaiian (Short-eared) Owl was seen Oct. 2 just outside Ki'i Unit, J.C.N.W.R., one of the last sites on this island where this bird is still occasionally seen.

### **Native Hawaiian passerines**

At season's end, 14 Alala (Hawaiian Crow, very critically *Endangered*) were known to remain in the wild on Hawai'i I., with four more young birds from the captive flock on Maui awaiting release to join them in December or January. The survey of Elepaio continues on O'ahu. One bird was found Sept. 15 in Kawaipapa Gulch near Hau'ula, and six were netted and banded in Waihole Valley Sept. 23. These are 2 of only 3 sites in the windward side of O'ahu where Elepaio have been found in this survey (EV). In the area of Mohihi, K., three Puaiohi (*Endangered*) were observed Aug 15 and two were there Aug. 30, each sighting including one immature (DK). Fledgling Puaiohi recorded by the Kaua'i rare bird survey team indicates breeding continued into September (TS). Good numbers of Oahu Amakihi, now a separate full species, were observed Sept. 28 back of e. Honolulu on Kuliouou Ridge Trail, and also in Kuliouou Valley down to 500 ft elevation (PBr). Akikiki (Kaua'i Creeper) were sighted as individuals, or in flocks of mixed species, half a

dozen times throughout the season along Mohihi, Pihea, and 'Alakai Swamp trails out of Koke'e, K. (DK). Among the non-endangered endemic forestbirds on Kaua'i, Akikiki have been the most difficult to find in one-day hikes from Koke'e. A bird seen well on Mauna Loa Strip Rd. in Hawaii N.P., Oct. 27 was identified, with good written details, as a Hawai'i Creeper (PS). This species had not been seen on the Strip Rd. in many years. Two Iwi were observed Nov. 29 on the s.e. slope of Mt. Kaala in the Waianae Mtns., O. (EV). This site on a military reservation, normally prohibited from entry, is near where a population of Iwi was found on a survey in 1977, and has rarely been visited since. Although Iwi are nearing extinction on O'ahu, this sighting—together with the few birds discovered by the same observers a year ago in the Koolau Mts.—indicates this world class species is not yet gone from O'ahu. In a year-long search by the recovery team involving many hours and days afield, an estimated total of six Poouli (very critically *Endangered*) remain now in the extensive Hanawi Natural Area Reserve on the n.e. slope of Haleakala Mt., M. (PBa,HB). Despite thorough searching, no Maui Nukupuu nor Maui Akepa were found. Both are near extinction.

### **Alien passerines**

In e. Honolulu one Hwamei was heard singing in lower Kuliouou Valley Oct. 6, and in nearby lower Pia Valley two were heard Oct. 20 and  $\geq$ four heard Oct. 27. They apparently have moved into this area recently, as Hwamei had not been observed in at least 15 prior survey visits to each of these valleys (EV). Red-crested Cardinals reported last season at unexpectedly high elevation in Koke'e, K., were seen there again Oct. 13 at Koke'e Museum (TS). This species has been steadily expanding its range on Kaua'i in recent years. Two Red-billed Leiothrix, a species now recovering well on O'ahu, were seen at Lyon Arboretum in upper Manoa Valley in Honolulu, O., Oct. 31 (EG). Lavender Waxbills, very scarce now on O'ahu, have been seen recently in Kamole Mini Park in Honolulu. Five were found there Oct. 20 (EV *et al.*). Fourteen Warbling Silverbills were observed again Oct. 20 along Waimea Canyon Rd. just above Waimea, K., and four were found Oct. 21 on the nearby Kekaha-Koke'e road just above Kekaha (TS). Silverbills are irregularly seen and rarely reported on Kaua'i. A Red Avadavat, also irregular and scarce on Kaua'i, was reported at Koloa Mill Pond Sept. 23 (DK). And three Chestnut Manikins were found Aug. 2 near Koke'e, K.,

at 3100 ft (TS), an unusually high elevation for this species.

**Contributors:** John Acorn, Steve Bailey, Paul & Helen Baker, Donna Ball, Francis Benevides, Marlee Breese, Phil Bruner, John Buckman, Rodney Chiojogi, Tom Coles, Reginald David, Peter Donaldson, Fern Duvall, Andrew Engilis, Evelyn Giddings, Tom Heatley, David Kuhn, Mike Nishimoto, David Preston, Mark Rauzon, Scott Richardson, Kathy Smith, Tom Snetsinger, Paul Sykes, Lance Tanino, Tom Telfer, Eric VanderWerf, Gary Wiles, Peter Yamashita.

—Robert L. Pyle, 741 N. Kalaeo Ave, Kailua, HI 96734.