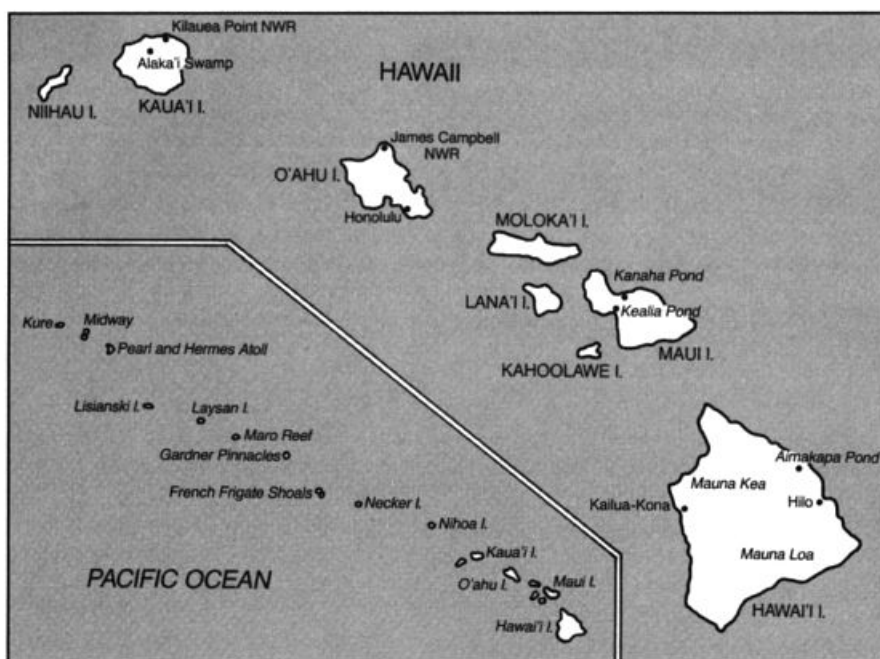


# hawaiian islands



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**D**rought has continued for three years across the main Hawaiian Islands. Rainfall for the year through May was below normal at all locations, and Lihue and Honolulu had the driest May on record. The drought reduced wetland habitat, making some areas unavailable this year for nesting Hawaiian Stilts (*Endangered*). Greater efforts this spring to observe seabirds produced high numbers for some common species and reports of several infrequent visitors. Many reports of unusual species included few or no supporting details. All observers should make an effort to include supporting notes with reports of unusual species; without them much of the value of the observation is needlessly lost.

**Abbreviations:** F.F.S. (*French Frigate Shoals*); Hawai'i (*Hawai'i Island*); Kaua'i (*Kaua'i Island*); O'ahu (*O'ahu Island*); Ki'i (*Ki'i Unit of Jas. Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu*); K.P.N.W.R. (*Kilauea Point N.W.R., Kaua'i*); P.H.N.W.R. (*Pearl Harbor NWR, O'ahu*).

**SA** Several boat trips, along with good timing of sea-watching from shore, produced reports of unusually large numbers of some locally breeding seabirds and a good selection of uncommon visitors. Eight Bulwer's Petrels were counted on a boat trip out of Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i, 7 Apr (GK) and "lots" were seen closely on another trip in the same area 15 Apr (TP). Over 5000 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters passed by Nawiliwili Lighthouse on the s. coast of Kaua'i between 1700 and 1900 on 25 Mar. The next evening 6000+ were counted and 10,000+ were tallied 1 Apr (CM). At K.P.N.W.R., Wedge-taileds offshore of the colony in the evening were estimated to be 2000+ 28 Mar and 6000+ 29 Mar (CM). The Sooty Shearwater is a regular transient through offshore Hawaiian waters, usually reported as singles or in small loose groups. This season an exceptionally high count of 500+ were observed in 1.5 hours flying ne. past Nawiliwili Lighthouse 1 Apr (CM). Counts up to 25 were reported 25 Mar–12 Apr. The large numbers of certain species may be an occasional feature each spring, but they may go unobserved unless the sea-watching effort is extensive, as it was this season.

## ALBATROSSES THROUGH BOOBIES

One of three **Short-tailed Albatrosses** (*Endangered*) wintering at Midway Atoll remained until at least 17 Apr (NH, PP). More remarkable was an imm. Short-tailed Albatross observed closely and well on the ground near Laysan Albatross, 27 Mar at Pacific Missile Range near Barking Sands, K. This is the first record of a Short-tailed Albatross in any of the main Hawaiian Islands (from Kaua'i eastward). The observer is familiar with the species on Midway. The bird had departed by the next day. (Richard Daley *vide* CM, GS). Black-footed Albatrosses are seldom seen around the main islands, but they were reported this spring from K.P.N.W.R. 7 Mar (CM) and off Hanapepe, Kaua'i, 4 Mar (DK), and over Ki'i 7 Mar (MSi).

A dark-morph **Kermadec Petrel** seen regularly at K.P.N.W.R. beginning 24 Apr (CM) may be the same individual that has appeared the past two springs. Kermadecs are rarely reported in Hawaiian waters. Single birds reported as probable Mottled Petrels (no details) were seen flying past Nawiliwili Light 1 Apr and at sea near Lehua Islet off Ni'i'hau 12 Apr. Another was reported between Midway and Kure 14 May (no details). Mottled Petrels are scarce visitors in Hawaiian waters. The rare bird highlight of this season was a **Streaked Shearwater** watched closely from a boat for an extended period off Port Allen, Kaua'i, 22 Apr (†SM, in press); no photos were obtained. A bird at Laysan in 1989 provided the only previous record for Hawaii. A Buller's Shearwater (scant details) was observed off Kaena Pt., Hawai'i 15 Apr (MaN), and a possible Buller's (no details) was reported 14 May between Midway and Kure. **Short-tailed Shearwaters** are seldom reported in Hawaiian waters, because of similarity with Sooty Shearwaters, but among the hundreds of Sooties passing Nawiliwili Light 25 Mar, 23 were carefully identified as Short-taileds and 2 more were seen from a boat off Port Allen, Kaua'i, 12 Apr (†CM). The first Newell's Shearwater (*Threatened*) of the season was heard calling at K.P.N.W.R. 10 Apr (CM).

A **Red-billed Tropicbird**, rare in Hawaii, was seen at K.P.N.W.R. 18 Mar+ (CM). It may have been the same individual that appeared the previous two springs. Two adult Masked Boobies and a juvenile appeared at K.P.N.W.R. in Mar and one adult was seen there almost daily throughout Apr (CM). A few Masked Boobies reside on Moku Manu Islet off O'ahu, but they are rarely reported elsewhere in the main islands.



## GEESE THROUGH TERNS

A flock of 35 *Endangered* Hawaiian Geese (Nene) was at K.P.N.W.R. 4 Mar (CM), and 33 including 2 goslings were seen at Pu'uuanahulu, Hawai'i, 31 Mar (JL). Both furnished high counts for these localities. A group of 24 captive-raised Nene released at Hanalei N.W.R. in early Apr were all doing well in Jun (TT). Overwintering waterfowl had started to depart in early March. Four small, dark-breasted Canada Geese at Ki'i were last seen 10 Mar (GS). Two Tufted Ducks on Midway since Dec were still present mid-Apr (PP). One lone Northern Shoveler at Ki'i 30 Apr (PD) was the last migrant duck reported (typical). The Peregrine Falcon that has been seen on Midway was not reported after mid-April (PP).

The season's first nest of the Hawaiian Stilt (*Endangered*) was found 16 Mar at the Honouliuli Unit of P.H.N.W.R. (MSi). The first nest at Ki'i was found 14 Apr (quite late; MSi). By 31 May, 6 chicks had hatched at the Chevron Refinery at Kalaeloa (GS). The diversity of migrant shorebirds seems to have decreased in the past several years as sugar mills close and prime habitat provided by their wastewater settling ponds disappears. Flocks of Pacific Golden-Plovers were seen departing northbound 23 Apr (PD). A Killdeer (rare in Hawaii) was at Ki'i through 4 Mar (RM, m.ob.). The flock of 14 Bristle-thighed Curlews overwintering at Ki'i had decreased to 5 birds by 23 May. The remaining birds may be summering (MSi, PD). Bristle-thighs were also seen on the N. Kona coast, Hawai'i, where rarely reported. One was at Makalawena Pond 22 Apr (LS) and 2 at Kona Village Resort 25 May (AD). A Whimbrel of the North American race, associating with the curlews at Ki'i, was last seen 24 Apr (MSi). A Whimbrel of the Asiatic race was seen on Midway 1 Mar (PP). Red Phalaropes were seen at Hanalei, Kaua'i, 4 Apr and Ki'i 6 Apr (MSi). Up to 7 Long-billed Dowitchers overwintered at Ki'i (PD, MSi, m.ob.). The last sighting, at Ki'i, was 26 Apr (MSi). Up to 3 Common Snipe wintered at Ki'i. At least one bird was still present 27 Mar (MSi). A scattering of gulls reached Hawaii during the season, the most unusual being a Black-legged Kittiwake on Midway 1 Mar (PP).

Least/Little Terns were reported at P.H.N.W.R. beginning the first week of May (MSi, DS). Two in breeding plumage were identified as Least Terns (PD). A Little/Least Tern at Midway 16 May and was joined by two others by end of May (NH). A tern at the Kona STP 31 Mar through at least 3 Apr

was reported as a Whiskered Tern by an observer familiar with the species, but no photos were obtained (DP, JL). A Common Tern was observed in mid-April at the same location (vt. SM).

## OWLS THROUGH PASSERINES

**SA** Things continue to look bleak for the Hawaiian Crow (*Endangered*). Only three wild birds remain. Because of continuing problems with the survival in the wild of captive-reared birds, none have been released this year (GK).

Pueo (the Hawaiian subspecies of Short-eared Owl) are now rarely reported on Oahu. One or 2 were seen at Ki'i 14 Mar+ (PD, MSt, m.ob.). A Guam Swiftlet was seen in N. Halawa Valley 2 May (RS). The introduced Japanese Bush-Warbler continues to expand its range on Hawai'i. Reports this spring came from Kona district on the w. side and from Ka'u district on the se. side, and from Hualalai in the nw.

A survey in the 'Alakai Swamp on Kaua'i did not turn up any of the rarest native forest birds, but two *Endangered* Puaiohi were

found as were good numbers of the more common species. 'Akeke'e were especially common (TP). At Hakalau Forest N.W.R., Hawai'i *Endangered* 'Akepa and Hawai'i Creeper were fledging at the end of March. Some of the 'Akepa have been nesting in artificial nest cavities. There were lots of juvenile 'Apapané and 'Tiwi and a few juvenile 'Amakihi (JL). Many Black-rumped Waxbills (introduced) were at Pu'uuanahulu, Hawai'i, 31 Mar (JL), where they are normally considered to be scarce.

**Winter 1999-2000 season:** The Hawaiian Islands report for winter 1999-2000 has been delayed. It will appear in a future issue of *North American Birds*.

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