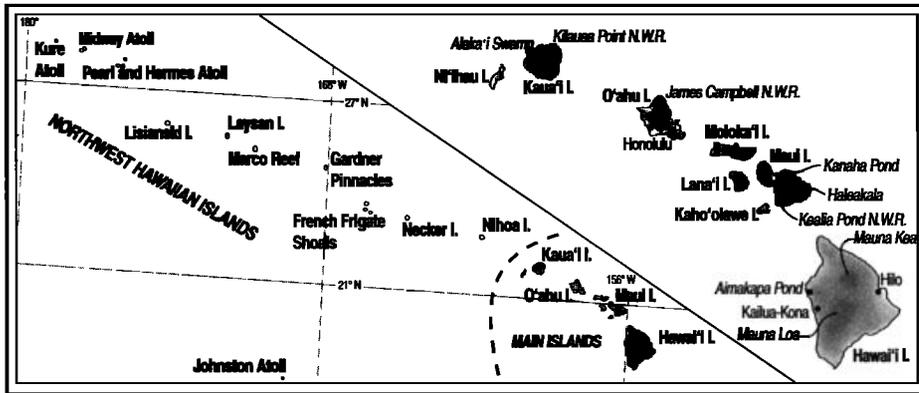


Hawaiian Islands



The Winter Season 1999–2000

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Rainfall during December and January was above normal on the windward (east) sides of the islands. That brought some relief from the drought that has continued for three years across the main Hawaiian Islands. Unfortunately, the relief was short-lived. February 2000 was one of the driest Februaries on record.

Abbreviations: H. (Hawai'i I.); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kaua'i I.); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu I.); K. (Kaua'i Island); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui Island); Kii (Ki'i Unit of Jas. Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu I.); Kilauea (Kilauea Point N.W.R., Kaua'i I.); M. (Maui I.); O. (O'ahu I.); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu Island).

Albatross Through Ibises

Three **Short-tailed Albatross** (*Endangered*) remained at Midway Atoll through the end of the season. About 18,000 active Black-footed Albatross nests were counted on Midway in Dec, down from about 20,000 a year earlier. A single Black-footed Albatross at Kilauea 8 Feb

SA Hundreds of dead birds washed up on Kailua Beach, Oahu, after New Year's Eve. The birds were mostly common introduced species such as Common Mynas and Java Sparrows. It is uncertain how the birds died, but it seems likely the deaths were related to New Year's Eve fireworks. It is not unusual for Hawaiian families to set off hundreds of thousands of firecrackers during New Year's Eve celebrations. This year there were even more fireworks than normal. At midnight, the noise was deafening and thick clouds of smoke blanketed the island. The birds might have flown offshore after being terrified by the noise, become exhausted, and drowned. An alternative explanation is that the birds died from breathing the toxic smoke.

(CM) was the only one reported from any of the main islands. Up to 25 Laysan Albatross remained at Kilauea in late Feb, but nesting success was low. By 28 Feb, only two nests still contained chicks (CM). The first Wedge-tailed Shearwater of the season was found dead on a Maui road 27 Feb (LT).

At least 27 Red-tailed Tropicbirds were seen soaring along the cliffs of Kaho'olawe 27 Jan (LT). The first Red-tailed Tropicbirds returned to Kilauea 8 Feb with numbers building to 30 by 28 Feb. A **Red-billed Tropicbird**, very rare in Hawai'i, joined the other tropicbirds at Kilauea on 18 Feb+ (CM). This is almost certainly the same individual that has appeared the previous

two springs. One imm. Masked Booby was seen at Kilauea 8 Feb and one ad. 28 Feb. Masked Boobies are seldom reported away from O'ahu in the main islands. A Brown Booby was found sitting on a newly hatched chick at Midway 14 Dec (JS), the first nesting record on the atoll.

A White-faced Ibis was seen at Kealia 8 Dec (MN). One or 2 White-faced Ibises had been seen in Kona, H. for many months but had disappeared by 23 Aug 1999 (AE). One of these birds may have moved to Kealia, where it was seen 26–30 Jul 1999 (MN). There have been no more ibis reports since the 8 Dec sighting.

Waterfowl Through Terns

Peak counts for the more common ducks were: 39 Green-winged Teal at Kealia 17 Dec (MN), 177 Northern Pintail at Kealia 5 Jan (MN), 326 Northern Shoveler at Kealia 6 Dec (MN), 11 American Wigeon at Waiakea Pond, H. 28 Jan (TP), 5 Ring-necked Ducks at Waiakea Pond all season (TP), and 13 Lesser Scaup at Kii 30 Dec (PD). Numbers of Northern Shoveler, normally the most common migrant duck, were very low on Oahu. Peak counts were only 14 birds 19 & 27 Feb (PD). One Brant was seen near Barking Sands, K. 1 Dec (DK), and 2 were present over the last three weeks of Jan (*vide* TT). A Brant was seen in Kona, H. 19 Dec–16 Jan (AJ, RD, JF). Three small, dark-breasted Canada Geese joined a 4th bird at Kii 19 Feb (PD). These 4 geese remained through the end of the season. Two small Canada Geese were at Hanalei all season (CM). There was one Blue-winged Teal at Hanalei 23 Jan+, and 10 were at Kealia 17 Dec (MN). One Eurasian Wigeon was seen at Waiakea Pond, H. 28 Jan (TP), one at Kealia 5–19 Jan (MN) and one on Midway 28 Feb (BC). A Canvasback was reported at Ohiapilo Pond, Molokai 4 Jan (KE, KU). Two Tufted Ducks remained at Midway all season (SC, NH). A lone Bufflehead was seen at Honouliuli 1 Dec (PD).

One Osprey was reported 21 Dec at Hawi, H (KE, KU), and one was seen at Waiakea Pond, H 26 Jan (RD). A Northern Harrier on Oahu was seen over Kawainui Marsh 8 Dec (TC) and 16 Dec (DA) and at Kii 7 Feb (KP). One Peregrine Falcon remained on Midway all season and was seen almost daily (KL, m.ob.). More typical were Peregrines seen only once at Na'alehu, H. 9 Dec (DL), at Lanikai, O. 9 Jan (EV) and at Kealia 29 Feb (MN). The Na'alehu bird was plucking its prey while hovering over a sea cliff. The Lanikai bird was chasing Rock Doves. These three raptor species are rare but regular.

One Black-bellied Plover was seen in the Kona area, H. 9 Dec (AJ) and one was seen at Kealia 14 Jan–11 Feb. Black-bellied Plovers have become scarce recently. A Killdeer frequented Kii and the nearby aquaculture ponds

9 Jan+ (RM, MSi, PD, v. ob.). Killdeer are rare in Hawaii. A single Whimbrel of the North American race and about 14 Bristle-thighed Curlews remained at Kii all season (PD, MSi). Up to 7 Long-billed Dowitchers and up to 3 Common Snipe were seen regularly at Kii through late Feb (PD, MSi).

Gulls were rather scarce this season. Single first-winter Laughing Gulls were seen on Kaua'i at Kekaha 14 Dec (DK) and Barking Sands 22 Dec (PB). An imm. Laughing Gull was at the Kona S.T.P., H. 22 Jan (GK). An ad. Laughing Gull was seen on the far side of the Big Island of Hawai'i at Waiakea Pond 26 Jan (RD) and 28 Jan (TP). Single first-winter Ring-billed Gulls were seen in Kona, H. 21 Dec (AJ) and 22 Jan (GK). One to 2 were at Sand Island, O. 7 Jan–13 Feb (MO, PD). A large, first-winter gull seen around Kii since late Dec was thought by most observers to be a Herring Gull (RM, PD, MO, RPy). A first-winter Glaucous-winged Gull at Laie, O. flew into a fishing line and was turned into the Hawaii Humane Society 12 Jan (CC). First-winter Glaucous-winged Gulls were also reported in sw. Kaua'i 4 Jan–5 Feb (DJ, v. ob.) and on Midway 21–29 Feb (SC, KL). An ad. winter-plumaged Black Tern at the Kona S.T.P., H., 21 Jan was carefully described (†RD).

Passerines

The most intriguing report of the season was a *Phylloscopus* warbler, possibly an Arctic Warbler, reported at Kilauea by an observer familiar with several *Phylloscopus* species (†CM, *in litt.*). Any migrant passerine is very rare in the Hawaiian Islands—a *Phylloscopus* warbler would be unprecedented. The observer had a camera, but the bird did not remain in view long enough to be photographed. The bird was not very vocal and was never relocated.

At least 12 pairs of O'ahu 'Elepaio live in the Honouliuli Preserve, O. Fourteen of these birds were found 10 Jan (EV). Two Greater Necklaced Laughing-Thrushes were spotted at Hanalei 15 Feb (CM). Although rather large and noisy, these birds are seldom reported. One Hawai'i Creeper was seen along Pu'u 'O'O trail, H. 1 Dec (AJ). Up to 12 vermilion and black 'Iwi feeding on cherry blossoms in Koke'e, K. during Jan must have been spectacular (DK). Two 'Iwi were heard 18 Dec along Schofield-Waikane Trail on O'ahu, where 'Iwi are very rare (EV). Twenty-four Orange-cheeked Waxbills and 4 African Silverbills were found in Kaneohe, O. 19 Dec (EV). Both of these introduced species are seldom reported on O'ahu.

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 143.

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10-16 June

Annual Convention - Duluth, Minnesota

Prime birding habitats include the Boreal Forests, grasslands and marshes, and mixed deciduous woodlands. Kim Eckert, author of "A Birder's Guide to Minnesota" and a VENT tour leader will be coordinating the field trips. As always, top field experts will conduct our programs and workshops, and we'll enjoy entertaining informative evening programs. Program and registration will be published in the January 2002 issue of *Winging It*, or call Nanci Hawley at 800-850-2473 ext. 233.