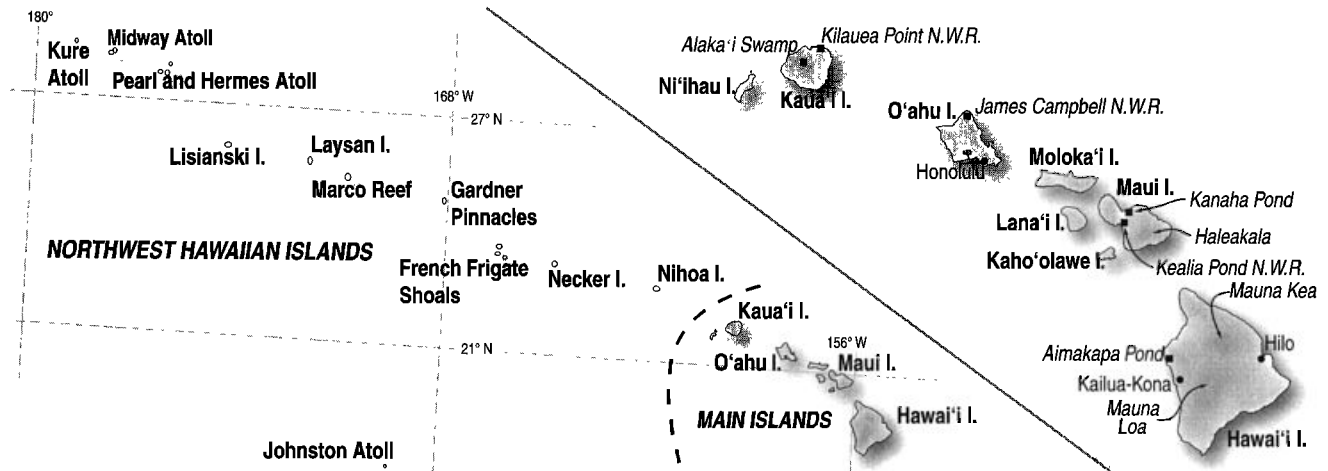


Hawaiian Islands



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For the first time in several years, our winter weather was very active. The islands were drenched by heavy rains, swept by strong winds, and battered by huge waves. There were even severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, and blizzard conditions over the higher volcano summits. In a few cases, the weather seemed to have an observable effect on the birds.

Abbreviations: H. (Hawai'i I.); Hakalau (Hakalau N.W.R., Hawai'i I.); Hanalei (Hanalei N.W.R., Kauai I.); Honouliuli (Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., Oahu I.); K. (Kauai I.); Kanaha (Kanaha Pond, Maui I.); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I.); Kii (Ki'i Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., Oahu I.); Kokee (Koke'e S.P., Kauai I.); K.P. (Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., Kauai I.); M. (Maui I.); Midway (Midway Atoll N.W.R.); O. (Oahu I.); Pouhala (Pouhala Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, Oahu I.); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., Oahu I.); Waikamoi (Waikamoi Preserve, Maui I.).

ALBATROSSES THROUGH EGRETS

Single Black-footed Albatrosses, infrequently reported from the main islands, were seen flying over K.P. 4 & 12 Feb (BZ). Observers on the Christmas Bird Count found 267,653 Laysan Albatrosses, 11,460 Black-footed Albatrosses, and 2949 Bonin Petrels on Sand I. at Midway. Wedge-tailed and Newell's (Threatened) Shearwaters become hard to find around the main islands after young have fledged in mid-Dec. This winter, our last reports of Wedge-taileds were 14 Dec at K.P. (BZ) and 2 seen from a boat w. of Kauai 23 Dec (DK). A Newell's was turned in to the staff at K.P. 14 Dec and released 16 Dec (BZ). Two storm-petrels were turned in to Sea Life Park on Oahu, one on 24 Dec and one on 28 Dec. The birds were examined and determined to be Leach's, which winter in the central Pacific (PD, ph. MM, RM). Both birds were weak and later died.

The distribution of Red-footed Boobies roosting around e. Oahu this winter changed markedly since the previous year. Numbers in Ulupau Crater, O. dropped from 1000 to 550, while numbers on Moku Manu I., about one km offshore, increased from 20 last year to 150 on 14 Dec (EV). More rainfall over the past year has increased plant cover on the offshore island, so at least some of the birds may have moved from the crater to take advantage of the additional roost sites offshore.

At least 12 Cattle Egrets were observed on Midway Dec+ (JK), with as many as 18 counted 1 Jan (MO), a new high count for the refuge. The origin of the birds is unknown. There is a large (introduced) population on the main islands, but it is possible that birds from the s. Pacific or Asia could have made their way to Midway.

IBISES THROUGH HAWKS

The high count for *Plegadis ibis* in the Region increased to 11 when a group of 10 plus a lone bird were counted at Hanalei 6 Jan (BZ). All 11 were seen together 21 Jan (ph. BZ). The ibis were observed regularly Dec+ but remained in juv. plumage, leaving us uncertain if the birds are White-faced Ibis, the only species previously documented in the Region, or Glossy Ibis.

A single Canada Goose remained at Kii early Dec+ (MS, ph. PD, m. ob.). Two Brant were observed at Hanalei 2 Dec-21 Jan (BZ). One Brant at Kealia 5 Dec was joined by another 5 Jan+ (MN). A single Brant at Kawaiie, K. 11 Feb might have been one of the Hanalei birds, and a single Brant on Molokai 8 Feb (AD) may have been one of the Kealia birds.

Numbers of many migrant duck species were rather low again this winter. Wigeons were reported on Kauai, Oahu, and Maui, with high counts of 8 Eurasian Wigeons and 4 American Wigeons at Honouliuli 21 Jan (PD, JP, LTK). Single Blue-winged Teal were spotted at Kealia 5 Dec (MN) and in Kaneohe, O. 21 Dec (EV). The two most common migrant ducks are usually Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail. The peak count for shovelers, 180 at Kealia 14 Feb (LT), was higher than the dismal numbers of the previous two winters but still quite low. The peak count of pintails, 88 at Kealia 5 Dec (MN), was also low. A count of 120 Green-winged Teal at Kealia 19 Feb (JR) was nearly twice as high as the previous high count for the Region. It is possible that these secretive little ducks may have been undercounted in the past. Clearing of vegetation at Kealia may have enabled us to get a better picture of ac-

tual numbers. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was observed at Kii 4 & 6 Dec (MO). A single Canvasback, uncommon in the Region, was at the Kona S.T.P., H.12–30 Dec (R&S D), and a single Tufted Duck, rare in the Region, was at the same location 14 Dec–31 Dec (R&SD, H.F.T.).

As usual, native Hawaiian Hawks (Endangered) were reported regularly on Hawai'i I., the only island where they are found (H.F.T.). Single Peregrine Falcons were observed on Lehua I. 31 Jan and 6 Feb (DK).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

One Black-bellied Plover was observed in Kaneohe, O. 21 Dec (EV), and 2 were seen at Makapu'u Beach Park, O. 12 Feb (LF). Single Semipalmated Plovers were reported at Kealia 5 Dec (MN, AH), in Kaneohe, O. 21 Jan (EV), and at Kii 31 Jan (PD). These plover species are uncommon but regular in the Region. Much rarer was a Killdeer observed in sw. Kaua'i 8 Feb (ph. DK).

Hawaiian Stilt (Endangered) nests were discovered at Waiawa 21 Jan (PD, JP, LTK) and at Hanalei 28 Jan (BZ), and chicks had hatched at both locations in Feb. These were unusually early dates; the species normally begins nesting in late Mar. Water levels at Waiawa had been very low for many months before heavy rains filled the ponds. It seems likely that the rain and rising water prompted the early nesting.

The count of 25 Bristle-thighed Curlews at Kii 27 Dec (PD) was rather high for the main islands. A Bristle-thighed at Kiholo, H. 30 Jan (GD), an unusual location, was reported to have been there for eight months or more. Observers on the C.B.C. found 108 Bristle-thighed Curlews on Sand I. at Midway 1 Jan (MO). A Red Knot—rare in the Region—was observed at Kealia 3 Dec (†LT). Single Pectoral Sandpipers were observed at Kealia 5 & 18 Dec (AH, MN) and 5 Feb (CP), and a Ruff was seen at the same location 30 Jan (RP, CP). Pectoral Sandpipers and Ruffs are both regular in fall but rare in winter in the Region. A flock of up to 15 dowitchers at Kealia Dec+ included both Long-billeds, regular in the Region, and Short-billeds, which are rare. A snipe at Kii 4 Dec–10 Jan (MO, ph. PD, m. ob.) was observed well enough to determine it was a Wilson's Snipe. Single snipe at Kealia 3 Dec (LT) and Waipahu, O. 9 & 20 Dec (PD) were not seen well enough to determine the species.

Gulls were unusually widespread and abundant. The three most common species in the Region are Laughing, Glaucous-winged, and Ring-billed Gulls. Laughings were reported in several locations Dec+ (m. ob.), with 6 at Kii 27 Jan (MS). That matched the highest count ever reported in the Region. Glaucous-wingeds were also widespread Dec+ (m. ob.), with 4 at Kii 13 Jan (PD). Somewhat surprisingly, no Ring-billeds were reported over the winter. A single Bonaparte's Gull remained on Maui 5 Dec+ (MN, AH). One to 3 Caspian Terns were observed on O'ahu at Kaneohe and Kii Dec+ (m. ob.). The Caspians were probably flying back and forth between the two locations. By late Feb, the tropical terns were returning on their breeding sites. An estimated 20,000 Sooty Terns were observed swirling around Manana I., off O'ahu, 27 Feb (PD).

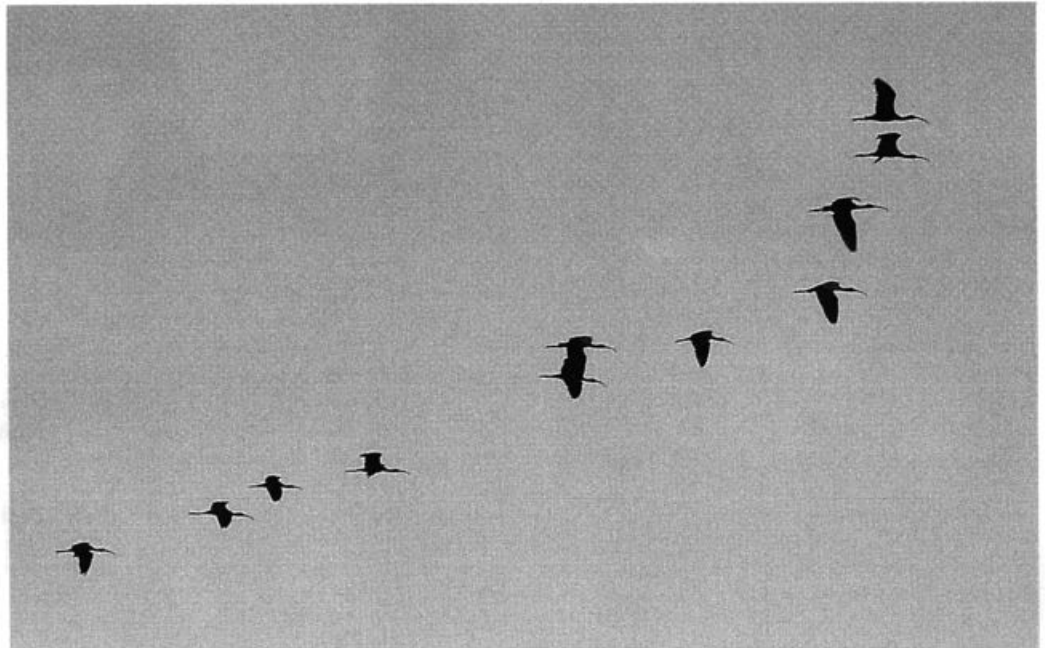
DOVES THROUGH PASSERINES

A single Mourning Dove was heard and seen at Honouliuli 26 Jan (MS). This represents only the 2nd record of the species on O'ahu. As many as 120 Mitred Coures were observed in e. Maui in late Jan (CP, LT). The increasing numbers of introduced parrots is causing concern in the Region.

Pu'u La'au, H., small numbers of 'Akiapola'au (Endangered), and Hawaii Creepers (Endangered) on Pu'u 'O'o Ranch, H. Dec+ (H.F.T.) and 'Akepa (Endangered) in Hakalau Dec+ (H.F.T.). Some of the world's rarest birds were seen in the remote Maui rainforest on the Pu'u O Kaka'e C.B.C. Researchers found 3 Maui Parrotbills (Endangered), 2 'Akoheohe (Endangered), and one Po'ouli (Endangered) in Hanawi 14 Dec (M.F.B.R.P.). One 'Akoheohe was seen from the boardwalk at Waikamoi 15 Feb (RPt).

Red-cheeked Cordonbleus were seen regularly early Nov through late Jan near Pu'uwa'awa'a, H. (RP). This species is the rarest of the introduced finches established in the Region, and it is unusual for the species to be reported regularly anywhere.

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Ibises make their way to the Hawaiian Islands rarely and usually in small numbers, so a count of 11 on Kauai was completely unexpected. These unidentified *Plegadis* ibis were photographed near Hanalei on 21 January 2004. As of the end of February, these birds remained in juvenal plumage and had not yet developed the characteristic facial pattern of either Glossy or White-faced Ibis; the latter is the only species of ibis so far recorded in Hawaii. Digital photograph by Brenda Zaun, United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

Eric VanderWerf reported that many O'ahu 'Elepaio (Endangered) nests failed because of the heavy rain. The wet weather also resulted in an increase in avian pox affecting the 'Elepaio. Birding tour groups continued to find Palila (Endangered) at

Robert Pyle (RPy), Jaime Rader, Bill Rathman, Jason Rogers, Kevin Schneider, Mike Silbernagle, Forest and Kim Starr, Keith Swindle, Leilani Takano (LTK), Lance Tani-no, Eric VanderWerf, Dave & Abby Watson, Brenda Zaun. 📷