

# Hawaiian Islands Region

## ROBERT L. PYLE

Summer 1995 was hot and dry. Daily high temperatures at Honolulu exceeded or equaled the record high for the date on 23 days during the two months, including six consecutive days around July 1. Subnormal rainfall through winter and spring continued into July, with a little relief coming later in the month. No storms of hurricane strength had reached the central Pacific by July's end, in contrast to last summer's unusually busy hurricane season.

Abbreviations: H. (*Hawai'i I.*); K. (*Kaua'i*); M. (*Maui I.*); O. (*O'ahu I.*).

## Albatross to Frigatebirds

All of the Laysan Albatross chicks raised in the colony at Kilauea Point N.W.R., K. had fledged successfully by summer's end (CD). Four Hawaiian (Dark-rumped) Petrels (*Endangered*) observed in Kaua'i Channel between Kaua'i and O'ahu during the morning

of July 22 (JM) probably were from the population nesting on Kaua'i. One Black-winged Petrel, a casual visitor in Hawaiian waters, was recorded at sea 50 mi s.w. of Necker I., June 24, and single Bulwer Shearwaters were noted e. of Nihoa I., June 22 and e. of Necker I., June 24 (JM). Newell Shearwaters were more numerous: 22 were counted s. and w. of Kaua'i June 22, and 27 in Kaua'i Channel July 22 (JM). No Band-rumped Storm-Petrels were seen on the trip, despite intensive searching around Kaua'i and Ni'ihau I. During a survey of seldom-visited Necker I. in Hawaiian Islands N.W.R. in late June, Marks found hundreds of Bulwer Petrels and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters on nests. Almost all were incubating eggs in sites among rocks and underground. One pair of Christmas Shearwaters was on the ground but not at a nest, and a 3rd was seen in flight. Nest counts for other species included >250 Red-footed Boobies, >50 Masked Boobies, eight Brown Boobies, and >500 Great Frigatebirds. These, plus the tern nests mentioned below, comprise a sizable nesting population for this small island of only 23.6 hectares. On O'ahu, Chibana observed two Red-tailed Tropicbirds at Halona Blowhole overlook June 6, and one White-tailed Tropicbird flying inland over Paiko Lagoon June 8. Two Great Frigatebirds were sighted July 2 over South Point, H. (LT), an interesting locality for that species.

## Geese to Terns

A Greater White-fronted Goose, an accidental visitor to Hawaii, was first seen at Laysan I., May 3, and found dead June 20. But a healthy ♂ Green-winged Teal and an injured ♂ N. Pintail, at Laysan since last spring, were

both still present July 14 (JM). Another ♂ pintail oversummered at Hanalei N.W.R., K (CD). "Hawaiian" Com. Moorhens and Hawaiian Coots had good breeding success at Hanalei N.W.R. this year, but "Hawaiian" Black-necked Stilts had a poor year, fledging very few chicks successfully (CD). All 3 species are Endangered. Shorebirds, other than the resident stilt, reach Hawaii as winter visitors or transients, so reports in June and early July are noteworthy. This year a Pacific Golden-Plover in basic plumage and three Ruddy Turnstones were found on Necker I., June 26, and a Wandering Tattler in alternate plumage was watched circling the research ship 8 nautical mi n.e. of Necker I., June 30 (JM). Among the less common species, one of last winter's Black-bellied Plovers remained at Maalaea Flats in Kealia Pond N.W.R., M until mid-June, and a Pectoral Sandpiper was reported there June 2 (MN). A Bristle-thighed Curlew appeared at James Campbell N.W.R., O. in mid-June and was still there in early August (MS). At Laysan I., the first Bristle-thigheds were seen July 14, presumably newly arrived from Alaska. These three color-banded birds had been banded at Laysan 1989-1991 (JM).

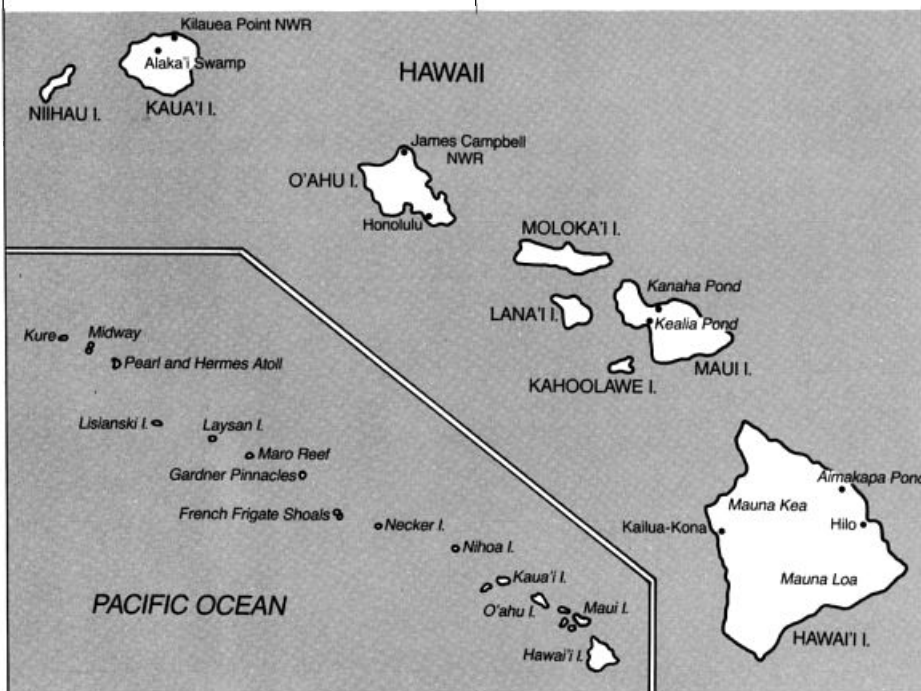
Another story concerned the banded Whimbrel with a broken wing seen at Laysan July 14. Whimbrels are accidental stragglers to Hawaii. This bird was first banded at Laysan in August 1988, and was found there a year later with a broken wing. It has been observed there—unable to fly—every year since, having survived now for 7 years on this small dry island.

Two Least/Little Terns, first seen at Sand I., Midway Atoll July 2, remained into August (NS). During the survey of Necker I. in the last week of June, counts of nests with eggs or chicks came to 118 for Gray-backed Tern, 774 for Sooty Tern, and 496 for Brown Noddy. Many White Tern adults and chicks were seen on the high cliffs. More than 100 Black Noddies and smaller numbers of Blue-gray Noddies were observed on cliffs and ledges, but no nests were found (JM).

## Passerines

One Alala chick (Hawaiian Crow, critically *Endangered*) was hatched successfully in the captive flock at Olinda Endangered Species Facility, M. late this spring, and was doing fine at summer's end. A fledgling Hwamei was captured in a shopping center parking lot at Waikale, O., July 4 and taken to the Honolulu Zoo (RL). The Hwamei is still quite scarce on O'ahu. The ♂ Great-tailed Grackle resident for 9 years at Sand I. Park in Honolulu was still there this summer, reported June 12 (MP) and July 18 (PB).

The National Biological Service is initiating a special program of field studies in the



Alaka'i region of Kaua'i to monitor native landbird populations and particularly the remaining Endangered species. During a survey trip the 3rd week of June, biologists found perhaps 5 separate pairs of Puaiuhi (Endangered), some with accompanying juveniles. Good news indeed. The critically Endangered Kaua'i Nukupuu was sighted possibly 3 times during May and June surveys, but none of the other Endangered Kaua'i species have yet been encountered (*vide*TS).

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# West Indies Region

## ROBERT L. NORTON

Now that drought in the West African Sahel region has abated and the influence of the last El Niño is professed dead (see Gray, Colorado State University), precipitation in the Eastern Caribbean should return to normal from the devastating dry period that lasted nearly a year.

— Tropical storm *Erin* opened the hurricane season in the West Indies, bringing heavy rains to the northern Bahamas in late July. Rainfall measured at St. John, United States Virgin Islands (approximately mid-point of the Puerto Rican marine platform) was average for the season (+2%); June was down 32% and July up 28% (100-year POR).

— A very serious situation, however, is occurring on Montserrat, where tremblers and emission from its sleepy volcanic peak, Soufriere, in the southeast part of the island have terrorized residents since July 18.

— Evacuation plans for the capitol city, Plymouth, in the southwest to Old Fort Point in the north have been put into motion for all residents. Ash, deadly gases, and debris could cause mortality of birds and loss of habitat for

regional endemics, the Forest Thrush and Monserrat Oriole, already close to extinction.

Abbreviations: Andros (*Andros I., Bahamas*); BA (*Bahamas*); ENSO (*El Niño Southern Oscillation*); GB (*Grand Bahama*); StL (*St. Lucia*).

## Grebes to Terns

Least Grebes were at Andros, where Baltz found four immatures with an adult at Small Hope pond July 30.

— A Brown Pelican was seen at Goulding Cay, New Providence, BA July 1 (AB), and Baltz observed a Brown Pelican in breeding plumage at Staniard Cr., Andros, July 27. The status of Brown Pelican in the n. Bahamas is curious and breeding should be carefully noted. They formerly nested at the Biminis.

— A Great Egret was seen at Eau Piquant pond near Vieux Fort, StL June 1, and a pair of breeding plumaged Little Egrets were also noted at Eau Piquant Pond (PW&SAS). It's quite possible these birds are nesting at St. Lucia, since breeding has been confirmed at Barbados (*AFN*49 (2): 203) to the east.

— An imm. White Ibis was noted at Staniard Cr., Andros, July 31 (MB), and three Roseate Spoonbills, including one immature, were seen foraging together for several hours at Staniard Cr. Five Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were reported (PM, *vide*AB) at a residence pond the last two weeks of June at New Providence, BA.

— Among the over-summering shorebirds seen at Staniard Cr., Andros, July 27 were five Black-bellied Plovers, four Semipalmated Plovers, three Ruddy Turnstones, and ten peeps, including one W. Sandpiper (MB). A Willet in breeding plumage was

