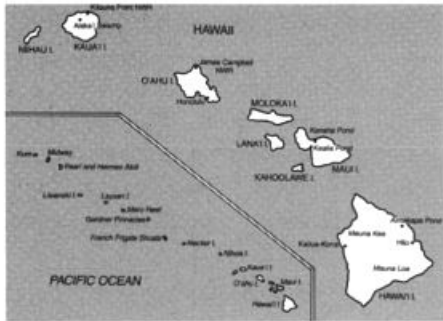


hawaiian islands



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Dry conditions persisting for many seasons were eased a bit by fall showers in some areas, but Kaua'i, west Moloka'i, and up-country Maui remained very dry. Tropical storms *Dora* and *Eugene* passed well south of Hawaii in August and no other hurricanes approached the islands this year. Johnston I. was evacuated as *Dora* threatened to come close, but no damage to property or wildlife occurred.

Abbreviations: F.F.S. (*French Frigate Shoals*); H. (*Hawai'i I.*); K. (*Kaua'i I.*); M. (*Maui I.*); O. (*O'ahu I.*); W.T.P. (*Water Treatment Ponds*).

ALBATROSSES THROUGH DUCKS

The female Short-tailed Albatross (*Endangered*) returned again 28 Oct to her favorite spot on Sand I., Midway, (HA) as she has done the past dozen years. A fully adult-plumaged male returned in early Nov to a spot 300 meters up the runway from the female. The two did not approach or interact with each other. Taking a management action 19 Nov, staff of Midway Atoll N.W.R. moved the male to a spot several meters from the female (NH). Soon the two approached and performed some mild posturing and dancing, after which the female flew out to sea and the male returned to his favored spot. Daily observations have not shown further interaction. Both birds were banded as chicks 12 (male) and 18 (female) years ago at the research colony on Torishima I. s. of Japan. These two, and a third one on nearby Eastern I., totaled three Short-taileds recorded on the Christmas Bird Count in late Dec.

Two active Wedge-tailed Shearwater nesting burrows discovered 26 Sep on a

coastal dune in the isolated nw. corner of Moloka'i I. were the first known nestings of seabirds on The Nature Conservancy's long standing Mo'omomi Preserve (AD). An astounding 200 chicks hatched this year in the relatively new Wedge-tailed breeding colony on Kaena Pt. Natural Area Reserve at the nw. corner of O'ahu. (BB). Intensive predator control continues at both sites. Six hundred Great Frigatebirds were marked with numbered yellow patagial tags (Don Dearborn) over the past two years in the breeding colony at Tern I., F.F.S. One was recovered in the Philippines, eight were sighted at Wake I., 30+ at Johnston I., and numerous others in the nw. Hawaiian Is., suggesting that they range farther from breeding colonies than was suspected. Perhaps other frigatebird species do so as well. A male **Lesser Frigatebird** was well seen 19 Aug at Sand I., Midway, where one was seen sporadically last spring (AE, notes, sketch). One or two were seen continuously through fall at Tern I., F.F.S. (USFWS).

Numbers of migrant ducks wintering in Hawaii have been well down in recent years and were meager through most of fall this year until late Nov. At Kealia Pond, M., where counts are highest, Northern Pintails climbed to 60 and Northern Shovelers to 245 on 23 Nov (MN). Similar increases were noted at this time at one or two other important waterfowl sites in the state. A female Tufted Duck and a probable second one were identified in a group of six *Aythya* ducks observed briefly in the water treatment basins on Sand I., Midway, 19 Nov (DK). The most exciting bird of the season was an eclipse-male **Harlequin Duck** in mid-Nov in the tugboat harbor at Sand I., Midway (DK, LC). It remained mostly behind pilings and seawalls, where driven to escape constant harassment by Com. White-Terns. It was found moribund in late Nov during a severe storm (RS).

QUAILS THROUGH DOWITCHERS

A covey of 16 Gambel's Quail was observed well 31 Oct along the Saddle Road on Hawai'i I., at the entrance to Pohakuloa military facility (RPa, DP et al). This site is not far from the Keanakolu Rd. area where single birds have been reported occasionally in recent years. Otherwise this quail occurs in Hawaii only as small populations

on uninhabited Kaho'olawe and possibly still on Lana'i. A bird described and identified as an Am. Coot was at Aimakapa Pond, H., 30 Oct (DP). Post-breeding counts of Hawaiian (Black-necked) Stilts (*Endangered*) were encouragingly high. At Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., a peak fall count of 586 was reached 5 Nov (MN). Counts of 100+ on 4 Sep and 90 on 16 Oct at Kulima W.T.P., O., (MO) were high for that site. The colony at Nu'upia Ponds, O., had 106 adults and 21 fledglings 18 Aug, indicating good recruitment (MR). At Kaelepulu Pond in nearby Kailua, 24 adults and 13 chicks were encouraging (MR). At Kaunakakai W.T.P., Moloka'i, 55+ were counted 12 Oct (AD).

Migrant Bristle-thighed Curlews, uncommon in the Main Hawaiian Is., reached high counts of 10 to 12 during fall at Ki'i Pond N.W.R., O., and adjacent dunes and remained near that level well into winter (MS, PD, MO et al.). From one to four Pectoral Sandpipers, a regular visitor in small numbers, were reported widely on at least four islands. Six Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., 25 Oct (DP), and one to two were reported elsewhere, a relatively lean year. Sightings of Ruffs, an unusual species in Hawaii, came from Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., 1 Oct (AE);

SA Wandering Tattlers are common visitors to Hawaii in fall and winter but a color-banded tattler observed in a pond in Hilo 28 Aug was something special. It was banded by Bob Gill in a study project at a lake 250 km ssw. of Anchorage, AK, 17 July 1999. When banded it was with its brood of two chicks, but later departed in time to be discovered in Hilo 42 days later. It was found again 18 Sep and 4 Nov at Waialea Pond in Hilo (TP). As if that were not enough, another color-banded Wandering Tattler was discovered in mid-Sep across the island at Kona Village resort n. of Kailua-Kona (AD, good photo showing bands). This bird, with a different color combination, had been banded 24 May in the same Alaska project at a different lake. Other than the well-known Pacific Golden-Plover project and an occasional Bristle-thighed Curlew banded initially at Laysan, no one here can recall previous records of banded shorebirds from the Arctic showing up in Hawaii.

Honouliuli unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O., 10 Oct (PD); in taro fields at Haleiwa, O., 22 Oct (MO); Amorient aquafarm adjacent to Ki'i Ponds, O., 24 Oct (DP); and at Ki'i Ponds unit, James Campbell N.W.R., O., 27 Nov (MO). The steady northward progression with time suggests that some or all sightings perhaps involved the same bird. A Ruff was also sighted at Sand I. 6 Sep (USFWS). Scarcer species reported this season include a (North American) Whimbrel regularly with Bristle-thighed Curlews at Ki'i Ponds unit, O.; a Red Knot (rare in Hawaii) at Kealia Pond N.W.R., M. 25 Oct (DP); a juv. female Western Sandpiper at Kealia Pond 1 Oct (AE); a probable Rufous-necked Stint at Cyanotech Ponds. H. 23 Aug (AE); and a Short-billed Dowitcher at Honouliuli unit 11 Sep (PD) and at Ki'i Ponds unit 5 Oct and Waiawa unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O., 7 Oct, (both *fide* MS).

TERNS THROUGH JAVA SPARROW

At Sand I., Midway the second Little Tern nest reported in July also failed. Three Least and two Littles were still there 21 Aug (AE) but became difficult to distinguish by plumage. A juv. Com. Tern was at Kona W.T.P. 30 Nov (KU) and a Great Crested Tern was reported at Tern I., F.F.S. 11 Aug (USFWS). Both species are rarely seen in Hawaii. Two Mourning Doves were observed at Nu'u Pond near Kaupo, M., 21 Aug and two were at the Mokulele Hwy. entrance to Kealia Pond N.W.R., M., 4 and 7 Sep (FD, RD). One was found later at Kealia Pond N.W.R. 19 Oct (LT). These sightings follow two earlier isolated sightings on Maui as the only records away from the small population established for many decades in coastal sections of nw. Hawai'i I. A Hawaiian (Short-eared) Owl was observed well several times through the fall at Ki'i Ponds unit of James Campbell N.W.R. (MO), one of few localities on O'ahu where this species is still occasionally reported. Two tour groups had close observations for up to an hour or two of the three adult 'Alala (Hawaiian Crow) still known in the wild at McCandless Ranch near Captain Cook, H., 2 Nov (DP) and late Nov (DK). Wild birds were attracted to a large outdoor aviary containing two captive-raised young awaiting release.

Saffron Finches are still doing well on O'ahu, particularly in the Salt L. and Pearl City areas. One was seen and another heard at Leeward Community College. sw. of Pearl City 13 Nov (SM). A good collection of alien finches and estrildids were coming to pools at a country club near Pu'uana-

hulu, H., 30 Oct, including Saffron Finches, Yellow-fronted Canaries, Red Avadavats, Warbling Silverbills, Nutmeg Mannikins, one Black-rumped Waxbill, and one Red-cheeked Cordonbleu heard (DP). Java Sparrows were observed again on Waimea Canyon Rd. just above Waimea, K., 15 Jul (DK).

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west indies

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Another dread hurricane season pressed through the Region, with a record number of intense storms. Hurricane *Floyd* raced toward the northern Lesser Antilles in Sep producing some interesting seabird reports for Barbados; i.e. Red-footed Boobies, jaegers, Bridled Terns, and noddies, all rarely seen from land. Hurricane *Gert* washed over nesting islands of Bermuda's endangered gadfly petrel, the Cahow, for the second time in four years. The damage was not as bad as last time, when 40% of nest sites were affected. Repair and preventative maintenance reduced losses this time. Hurricane *Irene* sliced through the northern Bahamas at Abaco causing severe damage in September. *Lenny*, a Category 4, made an unprecedented mid-Nov run from the western Caribbean Sea to the northeast Lesser Antilles, with winds of 150 mph and a 15- to 20-foot storm surge. *Lenny* stalled as it approached St. Martin, leaving 25 to 30 in. of rain. The tiny limestone rock and seabird nesting site at Sombrero in the middle of the Anegada Passage no doubt suffered near wash-over conditions. This islet was the proposed site of a joint US-UK satellite launching facility; with projections for an increase in hurricane activity and intensity in the next decade (Gray), *Lenny* may just be a prelude to the folly planned for Sombrero. *La Niña* conditions continue to provide outstanding landbird records in the northern islands, with sparrows and warblers in higher numbers and more widespread. An unusual shift in migratory



patterns produced two extralimital kite species records, one new for the hemisphere.

Abbreviations: Ba (Bahamas); Bd (Barbados); Be (Bermuda); Cu (Cuba); Do (Dominica); Gu (Guadeloupe); Ha (Haiti); RNC (Rand Nature Center, Grand Bahama, Ba); StJ (St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands); StL (St. Lucia).

GREBES THROUGH TERMS

An Eared Grebe, the second record for Be, was at Spittal Pond 7 Nov (*fide* AD). Least Grebes numbered 10+, including young of the year at Grand Bahama, Ba, 6-12 Oct (TW et al.). Cahows returned to nesting burrows mid-Oct, but faced a major challenge with over-washing seas and erosion to nesting islands by hurricane *Gert* (DW). A juv. **Gray Heron** was observed 10 Oct at North Point, St. Lucy, Bd, (MF, EM) and a second-year bird was moving between Graeme Hall Swamp and Chancery Lane, Christ Church (EM, MF, MG). Has breeding been confirmed for this species yet? An apparently non-breeding **Little Egret** stopped briefly at Club Fortuna Beach, Grand Bahama, during the passage of hur-