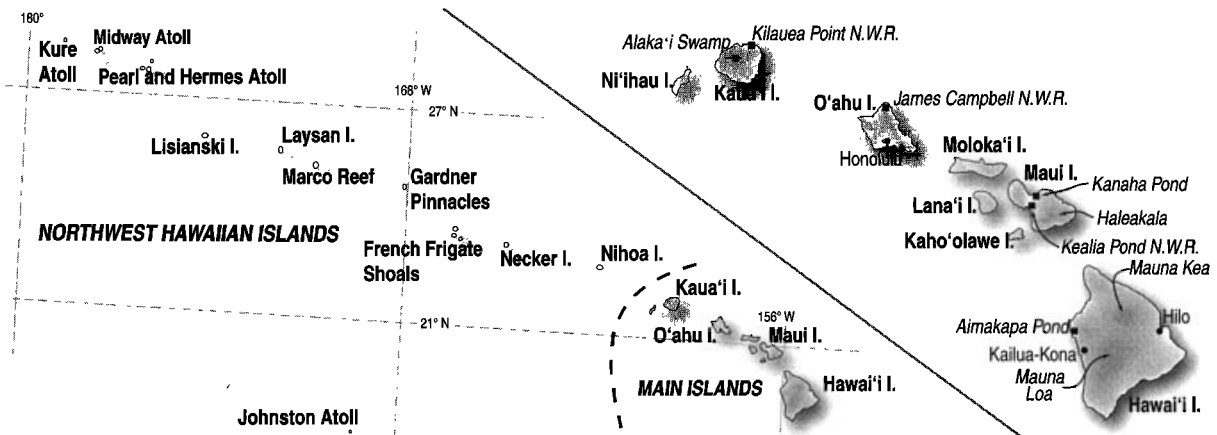


# Hawaiian Islands



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**F**all 2002 was an exciting season—one of the most interesting seasons in years for rare shorebirds. A major pelagic survey was conducted, but only a small sample of the data is yet available. Summerlike weather prevailed through early October. In mid-October, a major rainstorm affected all of the main islands. The rainstorm boosted water levels in many wetland areas. Very dry weather prevailed in November. The dry November may signal the start of an El Niño drought.

**Abbreviations:** E. (Endangered Species); H. (Hawai'i I.); Hakalau (Hakalau N.W.R., 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 I.); Kanaha (Kanaha Pond, Maui I.); Kealia (Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I.); Kii (Ki'i Unit of Jas. Campbell N.W.R., O'ahu I.); Kokee (Koke'e S.P., Kaua'i I.); K.P. (Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., Kaua'i I.); M. (Maui I.); Midway (Midway Atoll N.W.R.); O. (O'ahu I.); Pouhala (Pouhala Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, O'ahu I.); Waiawa (Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O'ahu I.); T. (Threatened Species).

## ALBATROSSES THROUGH STORM-PETRELS

Albatrosses returned to Midway on schedule, the first Black-footed on 15 Oct and the first Laysan on 27 Oct (JK), with first eggs for both species 17 Nov (JK). One Short-tailed Albatross (E.) appeared on Midway 27 Oct and a second 4 Nov (JK). These two rare birds remain on separate islands. Beside the tantalizing information from the HICEAS survey (see S.A.), we also received reports

from a few pelagic trips out of Kaua'i. A Black-footed Albatross was observed off Lehua I., near Ni'ihau, 3 Sep, an unusual date. A flock of 20 Short-tailed Shearwaters was observed between Kauai and Lehua I. 20 Sep (†DK); Short-taileds have rarely been reported in Hawaiian waters, and previous reports have been of one to a few birds. A visit to two remote valleys in nw. Kauai produced some interesting nocturnal seabird observations. As many as 200 Newell's Shearwaters and 46 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels were found 14–16 Aug (EV). These burrow-nesters come and go in the dark, so few of the shearwaters and none of the storm-petrels were seen. The rest were identified by call.

## EGRETS THROUGH HAWKS

Eleven Cattle Egrets were counted on Midway 9 Sep (TB), the highest number ever recorded there. The species is abundant in the main islands but rare on the nw. Hawaiian islands. Migrant waterfowl were scarce until late Oct, when numbers started to build. There were 63 Northern Shovelers at Kealia 21 Nov (MN), usually the most common migrant ducks in Hawai'i. The first Northern Pintails were 11 that dropped into Kii 20 Sep (PD). These birds may have been migrants just arriving from the north. On 29 Nov, 85 Northern Pintails were counted at Honouliuli (PD), making this species more numerous than the shoveler. Numbers of bay ducks were up from last year. A census at Kealia yielded a count of 17 Lesser Scaup 21 Nov (MN). A Rough-legged Hawk was seen on Midway 3 Sep (TB). Because the species is an extremely rare vagrant here, it is reasonable to speculate that this might be the same bird

**SA** The Hawaiian Islands Cetacean Ecosystem and Assessment Survey (HICEAS) conducted a remarkable and unprecedented survey of seabirds and cetaceans this fall. The area surveyed was the Exclusive Economic Zone within 368 km (200 nautical miles) of the Hawaiian Islands from Kure Atoll to Hawai'i. During 91 days of observing from shipboard, experienced observers (RR, MF, BJ) identified 44 species of seabirds including 12 species of *Pterodroma* petrels. Sixteen species of whales and seven species of dolphins were also seen.

The three observers tallied 40,066 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Wedge-taileds breed on all of the Hawaiian Islands. Perhaps more surprising was a count of **37,874** Short-tailed Shearwaters, which breed off s. Australia. Loose flocks of Short-taileds were all headed southward in determined rapid flight. The vast majority crossed the islands chain between Pearl and Hermes Reef and French Frigate Shoals. Daily counts of 1000 to >8000 were made in this zone in mid-Sep and mid-Nov. The location and date window of the Short-tailed Shearwater fall passage through Hawaii had not previously been documented. White-necked Petrels, which breed near New Zealand, were common s. of the nw. Hawaiian Is., while Juan Fernández Petrels, which breed near Chile, were common e. of the main islands. The two were considered conspecific in the past.

The HICEAS was conducted by the NOAA/NMFS Southwest Fishery Research Center in La Jolla, California, where the survey data will be processed and analyzed. We look forward to seeing more data from this important survey (JB).

that was on Midway last fall through spring. No Ospreys or Peregrine Falcons were reported this fall, which is unusual. Both species are rare but regular in Hawai'i.

## SHOREBIRDS

We received more reports of Semipalmated Plovers than we have for several years. The highest count was of 5 birds at Kii 20 Sep (PD). Hawaiian Stilt nesting was unusually protracted last year, but this year the season ran even longer. There were still downy chicks at Kealia 27 Sep (GN). Two newly-hatched chicks at Kii 23 Oct (PD) were about three months later than usual. This was not a boom year for stilts, but nesting success seemed pretty good on O'ahu. (PD) and Maui (NM). A Marsh Sandpiper was spotted at Pouhala Marsh O. (DS) 19 Nov. Its identity was confirmed 21 Nov (†RM, PD). This was only the 2nd record for the Region and first for the main islands. The only previous record was of a bird on Midway 25–26 Oct 1998. A Solitary Sandpiper was discovered at Kii 25 Sep (MS, GF), remaining through at least 5 Oct (ph. KP, m. ob.). There are only four previous reports from the Region. A Willet, found at the Kona S.T.P. 4 Nov (RD) stayed there through at least 11 Nov (RD, SD, PM); there are six previous reports from the Hawaiian Islands.

A Whimbrel (North American race) that has appeared at Kii each fall since 1997 was observed again this year 2 Sep+ (PD, m. ob.). There were good numbers of Bristle-thighed Curlews again at Kii. Numbers there built to 20 by 23 Nov (PD, RM, AW, DW). Over 50 Bristle-thigheds were counted on Midway 8–10 Sep (RR). A

lame Bar-tailed Godwit was seen at Honouliuli 11–14 Nov (ph. MS). Bar-tailed Godwits are rare in the main islands. A Stilt Sandpiper

was identified at Kii 19–26 Sep (†MO, ph. KP, m. ob.), for the first record of the species in the Tropical Pacific. We received more than the usual number of reports of Ruffs, with multiple birds being 5 on Midway 8–10 Sep (RR), 2 at Kii 12 Sep (KP), and 2 at Honouliuli 22 Sep (PD). No snipe were reported this fall, which is unusual.

## DOVES THROUGH PASSERINES

Mourning Doves, formerly confined to nw. Hawai'i I., have been reported several times in recent years on Maui and Kaua'i. This fall,

one Mourning Dove was seen at Kokee 4 Sep (PP), the first report from that part of Kaua'i. Two Mourning Doves studied at Kii 14 Sep (†MO, RLP) were the first reported on O'ahu.

A pair of O'ahu 'Elepaio (E.) were observed building a nest above Makakilo, O. 29 Nov, over a month earlier than any previous nesting record (EV). We received only one report of a Puaiohi—a subad. in Kokee 4 Nov (RR, DK). Two Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrushes were observed engaging in possible courtship behavior on Po'omau Canyon Trail, K. 24 Nov (DK). This introduced species is rarely reported.

'Akiapola'au (E.) had good nesting success this year (JJ) but were hard to find in the Pua'akala area of Hakalau, where birding tours often go (DP). As usual, small numbers of 'Akiapola'au were reported on Pu'u 'O'o ranch, H. Aug+ (RP). Two 'Akiapola'au were spotted 6 Nov along Pu'u 'O'o Trail, H. (RRD).

Three family groups of 'Akiapola'au were found along 'Ainapo Trail, H. 11–12 Oct (EV). This species had been rarely reported here in the past but has been reported regularly in recent years. 'Akepa were reported to be especially numerous at Hakalau in Oct (DP). 'Iwi

were reported to be more numerous than they have been recently in Oct at Kokee (DP). Observers on Hawai'i also reported good numbers of 'Iwi (DL, PM).

One Red-cheeked Cordonbleu was glimpsed 12 Oct near Pu'u'anahulu, H. (DL). Small numbers of Black-rumped Waxbills were seen in the Pu'u'anahulu area 6 Aug (RP) and 12 Oct (DL). Both of these little finches are uncommon and local.

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Several rare shorebirds were seen in the Hawaiian Islands this fall, but this Stilt Sandpiper at James Campbell N.W.R. 19 September 2002 was the zenith—a first record for the Hawaiian Islands or anywhere in the Tropical Pacific. Photograph by Kurt Pohlman.



This Solitary Sandpiper at James Campbell N.W.R. 3 October 2002 provided the fifth record for the Hawaiian Islands and only the second record with photographic documentation. Photograph by Kurt Pohlman.