

WESTERN BIRDS



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FIRST REPORT OF THE HAWAII BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

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ABSTRACT: The Hawaii Bird Records Committee (HBRC) was formed in 2014 to provide a formal venue for reviewing bird reports in the Hawaiian Islands and to maintain and periodically update the checklist of birds of the Hawaiian Islands. This is the first report of the HBRC. From 2014 to 2016, the HBRC reviewed 46 reports involving 33 species, including 20 species not recorded previously in the Hawaiian Islands, nine species reported previously that were based only on visual documentation at the time, one re-evaluation of a species pair reported previously, two introduced species whose establishment was questioned, and one species previously regarded as hypothetical. The HBRC accepted 17 new species, did not accept three new species, and did not accept five species that previously had been accepted on other checklists of Hawaiian Island birds. The Hawaiian Islands bird checklist includes 338 species accepted through 2016.

The Hawaii Bird Records Committee (HBRC) was formed in 2014 to provide a formal venue and standard protocol for reviewing bird reports in the Hawaiian Islands and to maintain and periodically update the checklist of birds of the Hawaiian Islands. The HBRC consists of seven members and is an official committee of the Western Field Ornithologists (WFO). Reports of the HBRC's activities will be published periodically in *Western Birds*. Prior to formation of the HBRC, Robert Pyle and Peter Pyle served as the de-facto records committee and maintained the Hawaiian Islands bird checklist, which culminated in electronic publication of *The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands*:

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Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status (Pyle and Pyle 2009), and which was recently updated (Pyle and Pyle 2017).

The HBRC established a set of bylaws, including a definition of its area of coverage, criteria for including species in the checklist, standards for judging establishment of introduced species, and protocols for review. The HBRC considered all species in Pyle and Pyle (2009), including those regarded as hypothetical in occurrence, and completed more thorough reviews of any species requested by any HBRC member. The HBRC also reviewed records of 20 additional species representing potential additions to the checklist that had been reported from 2010 to 2016 and were thus not included in Pyle and Pyle (2009).

According to the bylaws of the HBRC, the “Hawaiian Islands” are considered to include all islands that are part of the state of Hawaii plus Midway Atoll (which is part of the Hawaiian Archipelago but is an unincorporated territory of the United States and not part of the state) and all waters within 370.4 km (200 nautical miles) of the coast of the Hawaiian Islands (Figure 1). The Hawaiian Islands bird checklist includes all bird species known to have occurred naturally in this area and species introduced by humans that have established viable breeding populations in the wild with stable or increasing populations for at least 15 years. It includes endemic species that have become extinct since the arrival of Europeans in 1778 and introduced species that once had established breeding populations but are now extirpated, but it does not include species that are known only from fossil or subfossil remains.

Following the HBRC’s bylaws, we accepted a submitted record on the basis of identification or establishment of a viable population if all or all but one HBRC member (7/0 or 6/1) accepted the record. A record was not

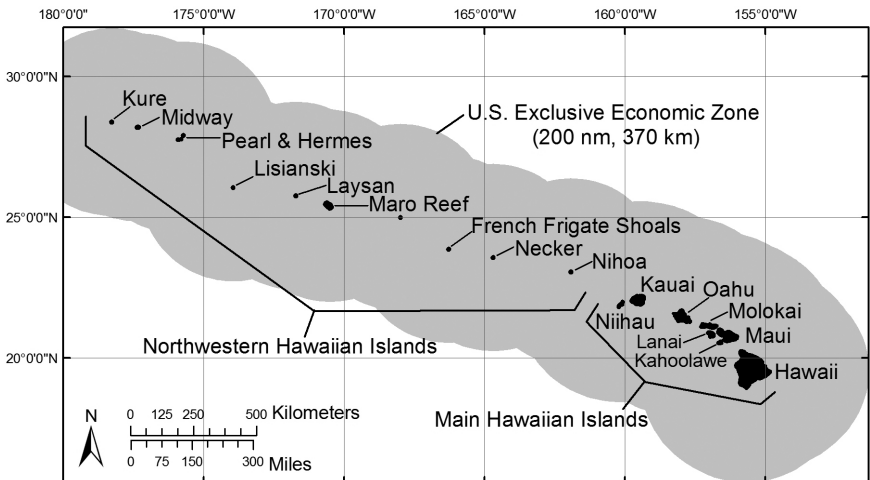


Figure 1. Map of the Hawaiian Islands, with the U.S. exclusive economic zone, defining the Hawaii Bird Records Committee’s area of coverage, in gray. All islands shown are part of the state of Hawaii except Midway, which is an unincorporated territory of the United States.

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accepted if it received four or more votes against acceptance (3/4 to 0/7). Records that received two or three votes against the identification or viable population establishment (5/2 or 4/3) were recirculated for up to three additional rounds of voting until a final decision was reached. In evaluations of natural occurrence, records that received five or more votes for acceptance resulted in acceptance, whereas those that received three or four votes to accept (4/3 or 3/4) were recirculated until a final decision was reached.

The HBRC reviewed 46 reports involving 33 species, including 20 species potentially new to the Hawaiian Islands reported from 2010 to 2016, nine species that were accepted by Pyle and Pyle (2009) but for which there was no specimen or photographic documentation at the time, one re-evaluation of a species pair that had been accepted by Pyle and Pyle (2009), two introduced species for which establishment was questioned, and one species previously regarded as hypothetical by Pyle and Pyle (2009). Of the 20 prospective new species, the HBRC accepted 17 and rejected three. The accepted species were the Surfbird (*Calidris virgata*), Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*), Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*), White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*), Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*), Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*), Rhinoceros Auklet (*Cerorhinca monocerata*), Bryan's Shearwater (*Puffinus bryani*), American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Gray Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Intermediate Egret (*Ardea intermedia*), Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*), Common Raven (*Corvus corax*), and Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*). The species not accepted were the Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*), and Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma tethys*).

Of the 17 additions to the Hawaii list, only three (the Surfbird, Elegant Tern, and American Bittern) originated in the New World, whereas nine (the Terek and Common sandpipers, Spotted Redshank, White-winged and Whiskered terns, Bryan's Shearwater, Gray Heron, Intermediate Egret, and Brambling) are primarily Old World species. With the exception of the shearwater, however, all these Old World species are known to have occurred in North America previously in varying frequency, and all except the shearwater and Whiskered Tern have strayed east from normal migration routes in Asia to reach Alaska. Of these seven, five (the Terek and Common sandpipers, Spotted Redshank, White-winged Tern, and Brambling) have also reached other parts of western North America. Four species (the Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rhinoceros Auklet, Snowy Owl, and Common Raven) occur on both the northwest and northeast sides of the Pacific Ocean, but in the case of the gull and raven some evidence suggests an origin in Asia is more likely. The Bridled Tern is a tropical species that could reach Hawaii from either the southwest or the east. Specimens identifiable to subspecies, still lacking, would answer the question of direction of origin in the case of the gull, raven, and Bridled Tern.

Of the nine species that had been on the Hawaii list of Pyle and Pyle (2009) on the basis sight records only, the HBRC accepted six. For two of these species, the Tahiti Petrel (*Pterodroma rostrata*) and Great Egret (*Ardea alba*), we reviewed photographs supporting additional reports from 2010 to 2016, and for two more of these species, the Pink-footed

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Shearwater (*Ardenna creatopus*) and Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*), photographs taken in 2017 will be reviewed by the HBRC in future reports. The other two species accepted to the checklist without a photograph or specimen are the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) and Merlin (*Falco columbarius*).

Five species accepted by Pyle and Pyle (2009) were not accepted by the HBRC: Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), Pycroft's Petrel (*Pterodroma pycrofti*), Buffy (Gray-sided) Laughingthrush (*Garrulax caerulatus*), Red-cheeked Cordonbleu (*Uraeginthus bengalus*), and Black-rumped Waxbill (*Estrilda troglodytes*). Barrow's Goldeneye and Pycroft's Petrel were not accepted because their identifications, based on sight records only, are questionable, the Red-cheeked Cordonbleu and Black-rumped Waxbill were not accepted because establishment of a viable breeding population is questionable, and the Buffy Laughingthrush was not accepted because both the identification and the establishment are questionable. The HBRC also reviewed the status of the American Coot (*Fulica americana*), which Pyle and Pyle (2009) considered hypothetical, and voted not to change its status. Pyle and Pyle (2017) provided a complete list of hypothetical species in the Hawaiian Islands, including those not accepted by the HBRC.

In addition to these changes to the Hawaiian Islands checklist, nine endemic species resulting from taxonomic splits since 2009 were added: the Kauai Elepaio (*Chasiempis sclateri*), Oahu Elepaio (*Chasiempis ibidis*), Laysan Honeycreeper (*Himatione fraithii*), Oahu Nukupuu (*Hemignathus lucidus*), Maui Nukupuu (*Hemignathus affinis*), Oahu Akialoa (*Akialoa ellisiana*), Maui-nui Akialoa (*Akialoa lanaiensis*), Oahu Akepa (*Loxops wolstenholmei*), and Maui Akepa (*Loxops ochraceus*), the last seven of which are presumed extinct.

The Hawaiian Islands bird checklist includes 338 species through 2016, an increase of 21 species over the 317 species listed by Pyle and Pyle (2009). As summarized above, this increase resulted from the addition of 26 species (17 newly accepted species and nine species resulting from taxonomic splits) and the removal of five species now considered hypothetical. An updated version of the complete Hawaiian Islands bird checklist was published recently (VanderWerf et al. 2017), and the same list of accepted species is included in the primary checklist of Pyle and Pyle (2017).

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

The accounts below cover all species reviewed by the HBRC from 2014 through 2016. All reports involved single birds unless stated otherwise. The decision about each species is given immediately after the species name, followed by the votes for/against and the HBRC's review number during each round in parentheses.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE *Bucephala islandica*. Sight record not accepted, identification questionable (3/4; HI1989-001). A single female Barrow's Goldeneye was first reported by Tom Telfer on 27 January 1989 on Pia Mill Reservoir, west of Puhi, Kauai. It was subsequently seen on several occasions by multiple experienced observers on Pia Mill Reservoir and Mauka Reservoir through 19 February 1989 (Engilis et al. 2004). No photographs were taken of the bird, and in the committee's opinion the

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field notes provided were insufficient to rule out the Common Goldeneye (*B. clangula*). Descriptions of the head shape matched Barrow's, but the bill color was described by some observers as dark, which better fits a female Common Goldeneye in mid-winter.

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*. Sight record accepted (7/0; HI1984-001). Two male Ruddy Ducks in formative or basic plumage were reported on 16 December 1984 at Heeia Marsh, Kaneohe, Oahu by Fern Duvall, Marie Morin, and Joel Simasko. No photographs were taken, but Duvall sketched one of the birds, and the original notes and sketch were available to the HBRC for review. The HBRC believed the identification to be correct, but expressed some concern that the birds could have been escapees, although whether this species was kept in captivity in Hawaii at the time is not known. Three Ruddy Ducks reported from the Waipio Peninsula, Oahu, on 22 January 1985 likely included the two reported from Heeia Marsh, but this and several other reports of this species in Hawaii did not include supporting documentation (Pyle and Pyle 2017) and have not been reviewed by the HBRC.

WESTERN GREBE *Aechmophorus occidentalis*. Not accepted, identification questionable (3/4; HI2011-003). An *Aechmophorus* grebe was observed briefly and photographed at a great distance in the Kawaihae Harbor, Hawaii Island, on 14 December 2011, by an observer experienced with this species in North America. The observer submitted a detailed written description that indicated the bird was likely a Western Grebe, but that the similar Clark's Grebe (*A. clarkii*) could not be completely ruled out. The committee considered the options of voting to accept the identification, or not, as a Western Grebe or a Western/Clark's Grebe. One member voted to accept it as a Western Grebe, two voted to accept it as a Western/Clark's grebe, and four voted not to accept the record. Those members voting against the identification acknowledged that it may well have been correct, at least as the genus *Aechmophorus*, but that the brevity and distance of observation argued against accepting this report as the first record of the genus in the Hawaiian Islands. Some also expressed concern that a Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) in winter aspect was not considered by the observer or entirely ruled out.

COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. Sight record accepted (5/2, 6/1; HI1997-001). An adult cuckoo of this Old World genus was observed and photographed on Sand Island, Midway Atoll, on 23 May 1997 (Pyle and Nestler 1998). The observers thought it was a Common Cuckoo on the basis of paler upperparts, indistinct underpart barring, and entirely white undertail coverts. However, information published at the time was not sufficient to fully eliminate the similar Oriental Cuckoo (*C. optatus*). The record was thus accepted by Pyle and Pyle (2009) as the species pair Common/Oriental cuckoo. Subsequently, Committee members Pyle and Pratt examined specimens at the U.S. National Museum, and Erritzøe (2012) published new information on the identification of the Common and Oriental cuckoos. This additional information confirms that the Oriental Cuckoo seldom or never shows underparts as described for the bird at Midway, and the HBRC accepted the record as a Common Cuckoo (to the exclusion of the Oriental Cuckoo) in the second round of voting.

AMERICAN COOT *Fulica americana*. Not accepted, identification questionable (2/5 for HI1919-001; 2/5 for HI1977-001; 2/5 for HI1986-001). Species considered hypothetical by Pyle and Pyle (2009). The Hawaiian Coot (*Fulica alai*) was split from the American Coot on the basis of a recommendation by Pratt (1987), who also summarized reports of American Coots in the Hawaiian Islands. At the request of a committee member, the HBRC reviewed three reports of the American Coot, including photographs of birds at Hanalei, Kauai, in 1977 and at James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge, Oahu, in November 1986, and a specimen taken on 4 November 1919 at Kaalualu, Hawaii Island, and now at the B. P. Bishop Museum (BPBM 4545). The specimen was identified as an American Coot by Pratt and S. L.

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Olson, but Pyle and Pyle (2009) were not confident that the Hawaiian Coot was fully eliminated. The identifications hinged on the size and color of the upper portion of the frontal shield, which varies in the Hawaiian Coot from small and dark brownish red to large, bulbous, and white or yellow. The shield enlarges gradually with age (Pratt and Brisbin 2002). Committee members that voted against acceptance believed that the specimen and photographs could represent young Hawaiian Coots, which have shields and bills that can resemble those of American Coots, and commented that we currently lack information about variation in the appearance of the frontal shield of Hawaiian and American coots by season and age sufficient to distinguish birds with a brownish upper shield with confidence (see Pyle and Pyle 2017 for more information). We believe that the specimen is not identifiable from current knowledge of morphology, but perhaps future genetic analysis will help confirm its identity.

BLACK TURNSTONE *Arenaria melanocephala*. Not accepted, identification questionable (6/1, 0/7 for HI2014-007a; 6/1, 0/7 for HI2014-007b). Our review involved two reports of single birds, one seen and photographed from a boat 37 km west of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, by cetacean researchers with the Cascadia Research Collective (see Baird et al. 2013; HI2014-007a) on 24 November 2014 (Figure 2), and another seen near Halona Point on the southeastern coast of Oahu on 10 February 2015 (HI2014-007b). The first set of photos the HBRC received was underexposed and caused the bird to appear darker than it really was (Figure 2A), but a second set showed a ruddy tinge to the upper wing coverts and a vested appearance to the underparts (Figure 2B), features found in the Ruddy (*A. interpres*) but not the Black Turnstone. The report from Oahu, for which there was no photographic documentation, was withdrawn from review in light of the photographic evidence against the report from west of Kailua-Kona.

SURFBIRD *Calidris virgata*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2012-002). A single bird was first reported by VanderWerf on 9 April 2012 near Halona Point on the southeastern coast of Oahu and seen sporadically in the same area on at least 12 different dates until 5 March 2013 (see this issue's inside back cover). Most information about the Surfbird was reported by VanderWerf (2013), but it was seen twice in February and March 2013, after that paper was published. Although the bird was not reported between 10 July 2012 and 19 February 2013, the HBRC considered all observations to pertain to the same individual, one that likely spent the fall and winter months on the island but was not detected. When first observed in 2012 it was in its first spring, retaining some juvenile feathers (VanderWerf 2013); by 5 March 2013 it was largely in definitive alternate plumage.

TEREK SANDPIPER *Xenus cinereus*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2014-001). A single bird was first reported by Kurt Pohlman at James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge in Kahuku, Oahu (Figure 3), on 9 January 2014 and seen by multiple observers through 6 March 2014. Most information about the Terek Sandpiper was reported by Pohlman and VanderWerf (2014). Photographs taken by VanderWerf on 10 January, 16 January, and 12 February 2014 revealed that it was a first-winter bird because it retained some juvenile feathers, and that it was undergoing an eccentric molt of the outer primaries (Figure 3B). The upturned bill with an orange base and orange legs of this species are distinctive.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2010-003). One first reported by Thane Pratt at Whittington State Park southeast of Naalehu, Hawaii Island, on 30 October 2010 was seen regularly until October 2011 (Pratt et al. 2016). It was in juvenile plumage when first observed, though by March it had molted into formative plumage, and by late April it had molted into a first alternate plumage that lacked spots on the underparts. This species can be problematic to distinguish from its New World congener, the Spotted Sandpiper (*A. macularius*), but the detailed field notes and photographs documented the long tail

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extension beyond the wing tips diagnostic of the Common Sandpiper. Following acceptance of this record, Pyle and Pyle (2017) accepted as a Common Sandpiper another example of *Actitis* that lacked spots on the underparts, seen by VanderWerf at Kure Atoll on 15 May 2000, but the HBRC has not yet reviewed that report.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2014-006). A first-year bird was seen at Kealakehe Wastewater Treatment Plant, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island, by Jeremy Gatten on 3 November 2014, and was observed and photographed on numerous occasions by many others through 28 March 2015 (Figure 4). When it was first observed, it was identified by its long, bright orange legs and base of the lower mandible, gray barred breast, dark barred tail, white wedge on the back and lack of white trailing edge to the wings. The brownish tone and color pattern of retained juvenile feathers indicated it was a first-year bird. By 9 February 2015, the last date it was observed, a few first alternate feathers were growing in.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*. New species accepted (6/1; HI2010-002). An alternate-plumaged adult (no head streaking, molt of inner primaries just commencing) was photographed by Michael Force, Sophie Webb, Chris Cutler, and Richard Rowlett 128 km west-northwest of Gardner Pinnacles, French Frigate Shoals, on 9 October 2010, during cetacean and seabird surveys for the Southwestern Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) (Figure 5). The observers noted a medium-sized, dark-backed, adult gull with bright yellow legs, reddish orbital ring, and slender yellow bill with prominent red gonydeal spot. The medium gray mantle contrasted sharply with black primary tips, and white “mirrors” showed on primaries 9 and 10. These characters identified the bird as of the Lesser Black-backed Gull complex as recognized by Clements et al. (2016) and Gill and Donsker (2017) and discussed by Collinson et al. (2008). The HBRC consulted outside experts Bruce MacTavish, Nial Moores, Martin Reid, and Norman Deans van Swelm, whose consensus was that the bird could be either *L. f. heuglini* or *L. f. taimyrensis*, both of which breed in northern Asia, by its mantle paler than in the European subspecies *L. f. fuscus* and *L. f. graellsii*, the mirror on primary 9, and the bird’s retaining alternate plumage into October (Moores 2011, Burger et al. 2017). In this case it could have represented a migratory overshoot, inasmuch as subspecies *heuglini* and *taimyrensis* apparently migrate to coastal east Asia in some numbers (van Dijk et al. 2011, Moores 2011). The HBRC does not specifically vote on or endorse subspecies.

BRIDLED TERN *Onychoprion anaethetus*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2012-004). An adult in definitive alternate plumage was photographed 8 km northwest of the north tip of Niihau on 12 June 2012 (Figure 6) by Daniel Webster and others during cetacean surveys by the Cascadia Research Collective. The mantle was too pale for a Sooty Tern (*O. fuscatus*) and too dark and brown for a Gray-backed Tern (*O. lunatus*), the underwing showed too little white for the latter (Rauzon 2006), and the presence of a white collar and narrow shape of the white forehead patch identified it as a Bridled Tern. Some HBRC members also thought it represented the relatively dark-backed nominate subspecies *O. a. anaethetus* of the southwestern Pacific Basin. Another Bridled Tern was photographed by Cascadia Research Collective personnel 7 km west of Kona, Hawaii Island, 24 April 2015, a paler-backed bird that may have represented the eastern Pacific *O. a. nelsoni* (Pyle and Pyle 2017), but this report has not yet been reviewed by the HBRC. Reports of Bridled Terns in the Hawaiian Islands during the 19th century were based on nomenclatural confusion or dubious identifications (Pyle and Pyle 2017).

WHITE-WINGED TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2012-003). An adult was first reported by Arleone Dibben-Young on 25 May 2012 at the Kaunakakai Wastewater Treatment Plant, Molokai, and subsequently seen and photographed by several observers through 7 June 2012 (Figure 7). This bird was

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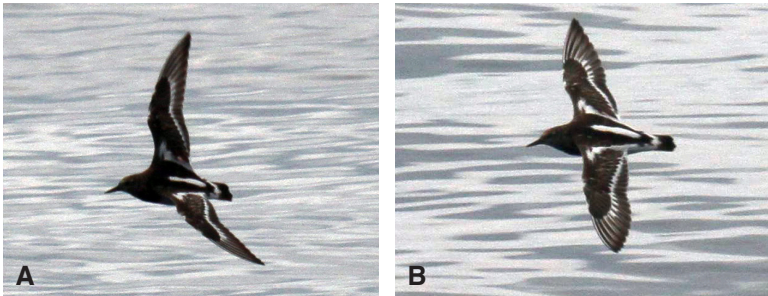


Figure 2. Ruddy Turnstone, 23 miles west of Kona, Hawaii, 24 November 2014. The bird was initially reported as a Black Turnstone and accepted as such by the HBRC on the basis of photo A. Photo B, obtained later, shows the same bird with better exposure, revealing the ruddy color on the wing coverts and a vested appearance to the underparts, features of the Ruddy but not the Black Turnstone.

Photos by Robin W. Baird (A) and Brenda Rone (B)

in full definitive alternate plumage, which is unmistakable. The timing of this occurrence coincides well with the species' northbound migration in the western Pacific.

WHISKERED TERN *Chlidonias hybrida*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2013-003). A first-fall *Chlidonias* tern was observed and photographed on Midway Atoll on 29 October 2013 by Hoku Cody (Figure 8A). On 9 November 2013, presumably the same bird appeared on Kure Atoll, where it remained until 7 December 2013 and was observed by Cynthia Vanderlip, Matthew Saunter, Scott Freeman, and Nicole Cody, and photographed by Naomi Worcester (Figure 8B and C). It had retained some juvenile feathers in the scapulars showing a three-toned pattern of bands characteristic of juvenile Whiskered Terns and unlike those of White-winged or Black (*C. niger*) terns



Figure 3. First-year Terek Sandpiper, James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge, Oahu, 10 January 2014. The pale fringes and dark subterminal bands on some upperpart feathers indicate a first-year bird. Photo B shows that it was undergoing an eccentric molt, with the fifth primary new, the sixth primary growing, the seventh primary growing or missing, and the inner four and outer three primaries old and juvenal.

Photos by Eric VanderWerf

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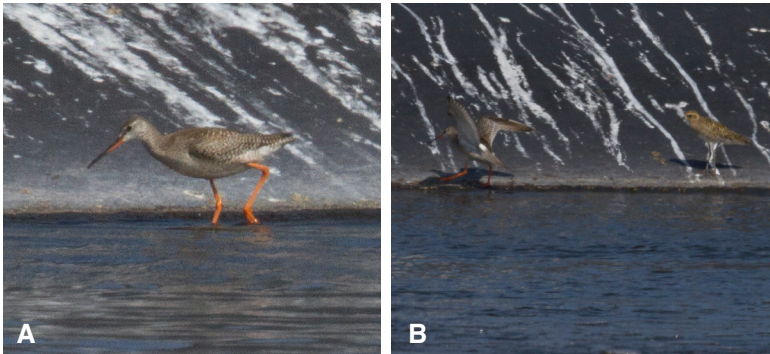


Figure 4. First-year Spotted Redshank, Kealakehe Wastewater Treatment Plant, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island, 10 November 2014 (B, with Pacific Golden-Plover, *Pluvialis fulva*).

Photos by Eric VanderWerf

of similar age. Other features of the bird, such as the head pattern and presence of a dark mark at the side of the breast, were less conclusive but consistent with a juvenile Whiskered Tern. Some committee members thought that two different birds were represented in the photos, but by a vote of 5/2 the committee accepted this record as of a single individual. At least two earlier sight reports from Hawaii Island were considered hypothetical by Pyle and Pyle (2017) and have not been reviewed by the HBRC.

ELEGANT TERN *Thalasseus elegans*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2012-001). An adult in definitive alternate plumage was first reported by David Gibson at Aimakapa Pond, Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park, Hawaii Island, on 23 March 2012, and was subsequently seen and photographed by several observers until at least 27 April 2012 (Figure 9). The identification was confirmed by several characters, including the long, thin orange bill with a yellow tip and black in the primaries less than in the Royal Tern (*T. maximus*) and Lesser Crested Tern (*T. bengalensis*). Photographs showed that the bird had replaced the inner four primaries during the prealternate molt. The timing of the bird's arrival in Hawaii coincides with the species' northward migration along the Pacific coast from South America to North America,



Figure 5. Adult Lesser Black-backed Gull in alternate plumage, 128 km west-northwest of Gardner Pinnacles, 9 October 2010. Note that the inner two primaries are growing, indicating the start of a prebasic molt; this late timing along with the medium-dark back is consistent with Asian subspecies of the Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Photos by Sophie Webb



Figure 6. Adult Bridled Tern in alternate plumage, 8 km northwest of Niihau, 12 June 2012.

Photo by Daniel Webster

suggesting it strayed west of the usual route. Although this is the first record for the Hawaiian Islands, one Elegant Tern was collected on Johnston Atoll, 1390 km southwest of the island of Hawaii, on 19 April 1969 (Pyle and Pyle 2017).

RHINOCEROS AUKLET *Cerorhinca monocerata*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2014-003). The fresh carcass of a Rhinoceros Auklet was found on the northeast beach of Kure Atoll on 26 March 2014 by Scott Freeman (Figure 10) and later deposited in the B. P. Bishop Museum (BPBM 186011). The thick orange bill and broad outer primaries of the definitive plumage specify that it was in at least its second spring (Pyle 2008). The committee considered whether the bird might have died



Figure 7. Adult White-winged Tern in alternate plumage, Kaunakakai Wastewater Treatment Plant, Molokai, 27 May 2012.

Photo by Eric VanderWerf



Figure 8. First-fall Whiskered Tern: (A) Midway Atoll, 29 October 2013; (B and C) Kure Atoll, 11 November 2013. Retained brownish juvenile feathers are visible in the scapulars.

Photos by Hoku Cody (A) and Naomi Worcester (B and C).

outside the 370-km limit of state waters but decided that it could not have floated so far and remained as fresh as it was, especially under tropical conditions. This is the first record for this species in the tropical Pacific.

PYCROFT'S PETREL *Pterodroma pycrofti*. Sight reports not accepted, identification questionable (2/5 for HI1989-002; 2/5 for HI2002-002). Pyle and Pyle (2009) accepted Pycroft's Petrel on their primary Hawaiian Island checklist on the basis of sight reports of 10–15 individuals in Hawaiian waters by experienced seabird observers during June 1986, 1988, and 1989 and during cetacean and marine bird surveys by SWFSC in August and September 2002 (Spear et al. 1999, Pyle and Pyle 2017). Specimens of Pycroft's Petrel have been collected as close as 750 km southeast of Hawaiian waters (Spear et al. 1999). The HBRC considered two reports, of a single bird seen 230 km from South Point, Hawaii Island on 27 June 1989 (Spear et al. 1999), and seven birds observed from 24 August to 11 September 2001 during the SWFSC's cetacean and seabird surveys. In both reports, documentation was provided by observers experienced with the identification of Pycroft's Petrel at sea, and included detailed criteria on how to distinguish this species from Cook's (*P. cookii*) and Stejneger's (*P. longirostris*) petrels, such as smaller body and bill size, quicker flight behavior, darker upperparts, medium-gray crown, and white face plumage extending into the cap behind the eye. However, there were no specific descriptions of the birds observed within Hawaiian waters and considered by the HBRC, and no information about which specific features were used to identify them. Some HBRC members noted that more recent references, such as Onley and Scofield (2007) and Howell (2012), have suggested that some of the distinguishing characteristics proposed by Howell et al. (1996) and Spear et al. (1999) may be more variable than previously realized. Addition of this species to the Hawaiian Islands list may require a photograph or specimen. The AOS does not include Pycroft's Petrel in its *Check-list of North American Birds*.

TAHITI PETREL *Pterodroma rostrata*. Three reports accepted (6/1 for HI1999-001; 7/0 for HI2012-005; 7/0 for HI2014-008). Pyle and Pyle (2009) accepted one record of this species in the Hawaiian Islands, of a single bird seen (but not photographed) by HBRC members David and VanderWerf 5 km west of Midway Atoll on 23 May 1999.



Figure 9. Adult Elegant Tern in alternate plumage, Aimakapa Pond, Kona, Hawaii Island, 11 April 2012.

Photos by Eric VanderWerf

Our review reconsidered that previous record and also two more recent reports, of a bird that landed on a cruise ship 2 km west of Nawiliwili Harbor, Kauai, on 26 January 2012 and was photographed in the hand (Morin et al. 2018), and another seen and photographed 24.6 km southwest of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island, on 14 November 2014 during cetacean research by the Cascadia Research Collective (Figure 11). The Kauai bird had the very long narrow wings and massive bill typical of this species, and it lacked the pale patagial bar and white chin patch of the similar Phoenix Petrel (*P. alba*). The photographs of the Kona bird showed the long, heavy bill, long tapered tail, long narrow wings, a crisp demarcation between the dark of the throat and the white belly, and the lack of a pale panel on the underwings. The lone committee member dissenting from acceptance of the Midway record commented that this species is difficult to distinguish from the Phoenix Petrel and that the white chin patch of that species is rarely observed at sea and thus could have been missed.

PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER *Ardenna creatopus*. Sight report accepted (6/1; HI2006-001). Force and Ballance (2009) reported one 296 km southeast of South Point, Hawaii Island, on 24 August 2006. The HBRC accepted this report because a detailed description of the bird was available and because others of this species have been recorded close to Hawaiian waters (Force and Ballance 2009, Pyle and Pyle 2017). The lone member dissenting from acceptance believed the description of the plumage did not include enough detail for other Pacific shearwater species to

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Figure 10. Adult or second-spring Rhinoceros Auklet, Kure Atoll, 26 March 2014.

Photos by Naomi Worcester

be ruled out. Subsequently, in September 2017, at least two additional Pink-footed Shearwaters were photographed by SWFSC observers in Hawaiian waters, though those reports have not yet been reviewed by the HBRC.

BRYAN'S SHEARWATER *Puffinus bryani*. New species accepted (7/0; HI1963-001). Pyle et al. (2011) described Bryan's Shearwater as a new species on the basis of an adult collected by Binion Amerson on Sand Island, Midway Atoll, on 18 February 1963. A second individual was photographed and videotaped on Sand Island by Bruce Eilerts and R. E. David in December 1990 and January 1991 and again from 17 December 1991 to January 1992 (Pyle et al. 2014). This species has been confirmed breeding in the Ogasawara (Bonin) Islands off Japan (Kawakami et al. 2012, K. Kawakami, in litt.) and should be looked for in winter on rocky Northwestern Hawaiian Islands such as Nihoa and Necker (Pyle et al. 2014). The HBRC followed the AOU (Chesser et al. 2012) in accepting Bryan's Shearwater as a new species,

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Figure 11. Tahiti Petrel 24.6 km southwest of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island, 14 November 2014.

Photo by Daniel Webster

and added it to the Hawaiian Islands list. The Midway records had previously been considered, incorrectly, to be of Little Shearwaters (*P. assimilis*) (Pyle et al. 2011).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanites oceanicus*. Sight reports accepted (7/0; HI1984-001). At least 18 sightings of Wilson's Storm-Petrel have been reported from waters around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, three on 3 November 1984 (Pyle and Eilerts 1986) and 15 between 21 September and 21 October of 2002 and 2010 by experienced observers during cetacean and marine bird surveys by the SWFSC; two additional reports by such observers come from waters off Hawaii Island in Oct 2010 (Pyle and Pyle 2017). On the basis of a detailed description of the three birds in Pyle and Eilerts (1986), the HBRC accepted Wilson's Storm-Petrel to the Hawaiian Islands list. The reports in 2002 were not accepted (2/5; HI2002-001) because they lacked descriptions of the birds. Those in 2010 have not yet been considered by the HBRC but also lacked descriptions. The committee believes that the 2002 and 2010 reports were almost assuredly correct, but, as with Pycroft's Petrel (see above), most HBRC members were not willing to accept them without descriptions of the birds and characters used in the identifications. Subsequently, in September 2017, at least one additional Wilson's Storm-Petrel was photographed by SWFSC observers in Hawaiian waters, though this report has not yet been reviewed by the HBRC.

WEDGE-RUMPED STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma tethys*. Sight report not accepted, identification questionable (3/4; HI2010-001). Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels breed in the Galapagos Islands and along the South American coast and forage widely at sea in the eastern Pacific Ocean, as close as 600 km south-southeast of Hawaii Island (Spear and Ainley 2007). One was reported by an experienced observer during surveys for cetaceans and marine birds by the SWFSC, 325 km southeast of Hawaii Island, on 9 Oct 2010. Although a detailed description was submitted and the committee believes that the identification was likely correct, the observation was made in low light and high winds. Committee members were concerned that Townsend's Storm-Petrel (*O. townsendi*), at the time considered a subspecies of Leach's Storm-Petrel (*O. leucorhoa*), was not adequately eliminated, given that the record was based on a sighting only and the identification of storm-petrels at sea is so challenging (see



Figure 12. First-year American Bittern, Pearl Harbor, Oahu, 21 January 2013.

Photo by Eric VanderWerf

Pyle et al. 2016). This and other sight records for Hawaii could be accepted once a specimen or photograph has been obtained.

AMERICAN BITTERN *Botaurus lentiginosus*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2013-001). A first-year bird retaining juvenile wing coverts was at a watercress farm in Pearl City near the shoreline of Pearl Harbor on Oahu from at least 16 January through 29 March 2013. The owner of the farm reported seeing there an unusual heron-like bird, presumably the bittern, since around November 2012. Donaldson and May first identified the bird as an American Bittern on the biennial Hawaii waterbird survey on 16 January 2013. The only photos of the bird were obtained on 21 January 2013 by VanderWerf (Figure 12).

GRAY HERON *Ardea cinerea*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2011-001). Two adults in definitive basic plumage were seen on Kure Atoll from 13 April to 25 May 2011 (Figure 13). They were distinguished from the similar Great Blue Heron (*A. herodias*) by their white rather than chestnut thighs and white rather than mauve-gray sides of the neck.

GREAT EGRET *Ardea alba*. Species with only sight records accepted (7/0; HI2010-004). Pyle and Pyle (2009) had accepted this species on the basis of four pre-



Figure 13. Adult Gray Heron, Kure Atoll, 25 May 2011.

Photo by Ilana Nimz



Figure 14. Great Egret, Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge, Kauai, 13 November 2010.

Photo by Chris Malachowski

vious records, none of which was documented with photographs. Our review involved a single bird of unknown age seen from 2 November to at least 15 December 2010 at Hanalei and Huleia National Wildlife Refuges, Kauai, and photographed by Chris Malachowski on 13 November 2010 (Figure 14). In the photograph, note the bird's large size in comparison to the Hawaiian Stilt (*Himantopus knudseni*), long neck, and dark line extending back from the corner of the gape. Because of the extensive yellow on the bill (Pyle 2008), this individual was likely of the American subspecies *egretta*, rather than of a subspecies from Asia or Australasia (*modesta* or *alba*).

INTERMEDIATE EGRET *Ardea intermedia*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2013-002). One in its first fall was seen on Midway Atoll from 24 October to 7 November 2013 by Pete Leary (Figure 15). Photos of it were sent to 18 experts prior to the formation of the HBRC, and among them there was some debate whether it might be a Great Egret, possibly of the Asian subspecies *modesta*. In accepting the bird as an Intermediate Egret and distinguishing it from the Great Egret, outside experts and HBRC members noted that the bill was too short for a Great Egret, that the gape did not extend behind the eye, that the proportionally shorter neck and legs better fit the Intermediate, the neck was less kinked than in the Great, and the bird was reported by the observer as too small to be that species. A supposed Intermediate Egret reported on Midway in June and July 1997 (Richardson 1999) was actually a Cattle Egret of the Asian subspecies *Bubulcus ibis coromandus* (Pyle and Pyle 2017).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*. Five sight reports accepted: Midway Atoll, November 1991 to 12 March 1992, by Don Williamson, Bruce Eilerts, C. Kirkpatrick, J. Pretare, HRBC member David, Scott Richardson, and S. Marston (6/1, HI1991-001); Kilauea Point, Kauai, 4 March 1993, by David Stirling (6/1, HI1993-001); Puu Anahulu, Hawaii Island, 30 October 1995, by William P. Smith and Susan A. Smith (7/0, HI1995-001); Nuupia Ponds, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Oahu, 22 December 2001, by HBRC member VanderWerf (6/1, HI2001-002); and Honouliuli Unit of Pearl Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, Oahu, 15 November 2009, by HBRC



Figure 15. Intermediate Egret, Midway Atoll, 24 October 2013.

Photo by Pete Leary

members Donaldson and Pyle (7/0, HI2009-001). Another report from Midway Atoll on 28 October 2016 (1/6, HI2001-001) was not accepted because there was no description of the bird. Some members voted against certain reports, and two rounds of voting were required before five of the records were accepted, but overall the committee was generally satisfied that the descriptions confirmed identification as the Merlin, and that cumulatively they indicate a history of vagrancy to Hawaii by this species, despite the lack of a photograph or specimen.

SNOWY OWL *Bubo scandiacus*. New species accepted (7/0; HI2011-002). A single bird was shot and killed by personnel of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services at Honolulu International Airport, Oahu, on 24 November 2011. The bird was photographed on a runway (Figure 16) before it was collected for the sake of aircraft safety and deposited as a specimen at the Bernice P. Bishop Museum (BPBM 185577). The specimen was a first-year male by gonadal examination, the extent of black markings to the body feathers, and the retention of juvenile wing feathers. The occurrence coincided with an irruption of Snowy Owls in North America during the winter of 2011–2012; one even reached Bermuda (Brinkley 2012). Therefore the committee agreed the owl on Oahu was likely a naturally occurring vagrant.

COMMON RAVEN *Corvus corax*. New species accepted (6/1; HI2014-002). A single bird was observed on Kure Atoll by Naomi Worcester and Matthew Saunter from 12 February to 13 March 2014. The bird was wary and did not allow people to get close, allowing only distant photos (Figure 17). Committee member Pyle and outside expert Daniel D. Gibson (*in litt.*) believed the bill was too large for any of the

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Figure 16. First-year male Snowy Owl, Honolulu International Airport, Oahu, 24 November 2011.

Photo by Erik Rutka/USDA Wildlife Services

North American subspecies of raven, of which *principalis* is the largest, and thought it more likely to be the Asian subspecies *kamtschaticus*, which also occurs in the Aleutians. But other HBRC members concluded the photographs were not clear enough to identify the subspecies. The lone committee member dissenting from acceptance did not question the identification but thought the bird could not have made such a lengthy journey over ocean without the assistance of a ship.

BUFFY (GRAY-SIDED) LAUGHINGTHRUSH *Ianthocinclia* (*Garrulax*) *berthemyi*. Sight records not accepted, identification and establishment of population questionable (1/6, HI2016-001). Unidentified laughingthrushes were reported sporadically in the vicinity of Poamoho Trail on Oahu from 1928 to 1978 (Pyle and Pyle 2017). Descriptions of the birds suggest they were what is now called the Buffy Laughingthrush of southern China, split from the Gray-sided Laughingthrush (*I. caerulatus*) by Collar (2006), under which name the Oahu birds were formerly listed. The birds were last reported by Taylor and Collins (1979), who also provided a history of observations on Oahu. No specimens, photographs, or sound recordings of the Oahu birds exist, and, because of some inconsistencies in published descriptions, the committee concluded that certain identification was impossible and that more than one release and/or species could have been involved in the reports. Therefore, the HBRC also questioned whether a population, now presumed extirpated, was ever truly established.



Figure 17. Common Raven, Kure Atoll, 14 February 2014, being mobbed by White Terns (*Gygis alba*).

Photo by Naomi Worcester



Figure 18. First-year male Brambling, Kure Atoll, 17 October 2014. One of 13–15 birds present from 1 October 2014 to 2 March 2015.

Photo by Adam Fox

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*. New species accepted (7/0, HI2014-005). Groups of up to 13–15 Bramblings were seen on Kure Atoll by Adam Fox and Naomi Worcester from 1 October 2014 to 2 March 2015 (Figure 18), though not all birds in the largest flocks were photographed. The observers reported males and females and also noted the buzzy “zweet, zweet” call and the undulating flight. This report is especially interesting because it probably parallels the colonization that led to the evolution of Hawaiian honeycreepers, which are descended from a single species of cardueline finch (Pratt 2005). Another Brambling was observed at Midway Atoll on 30 Oct 2015 (Pyle and Pyle 2017), but this report has yet to be reviewed by the HBRC.

RED-CHEEKED CORDONBLEU *Uraeginthus bengalus*. Establishment of viable population not accepted (4/3, 4/3, 3/4; HI2017-002). Our review consisted of two parts, whether the species is currently established, and whether it ever was established. The committee voted unanimously that the species currently is not established, and, on the third round, voted 3/4 that it never was established. This escaped cagebird formerly bred on Oahu and Hawaii Island, especially the latter, where a small population, probably originating in 1972 with the release of birds from a local aviary (Giffin 2003), built up around Puu Waa Waa into the late 1980s. The number of birds declined rapidly after the turn of the 21st century, with the last sighting in 2006. The possibility that these populations may have been supplemented by continued releases of captive birds cannot be discounted, especially on Oahu, where the species still can be found in pet shops.

BLACK-RUMPED WAXBILL *Estrilda troglodytes*. Establishment of viable population not accepted (4/3, 4/3, 3/4; HI2017-001). As with the Red-cheeked Cordonbleu (see above), our review consisted of two parts, with the committee voting unanimously that the species is not currently established, and 3/4 on the third

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round that it never was established. Black-rumped Waxbills were among a variety of small estrildids released on the slope of Diamond Head above Kapiolani Park, Oahu, in the mid-1960s. They built up a local population there into the 1970s, but subsequently died out (Pratt et al. 1987, Pyle and Pyle 2017). Subsequent reports of this species on Oahu probably resulted from confusion with the Common Waxbill (*E. astrild*; Ord 1982). On Hawaii Island, a small population built up around Puu Waa Waa (Giffin 2003), along with the Red-cheeked Cordonbleu, and remained steady until about 2006, then precipitously declined, the last report being in 2009 (Pyle and Pyle 2017). The crash coincided with the invasion of Hawaii Island by the Common Waxbill, but whether that caused the disappearance of the Black-rumped is not known. The latter was never reported far from Puu Waa Waa, the number of birds reported always was small, and the committee found insufficient evidence that it was ever totally self-sustaining.

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