



## Peter Donaldson

This was not a memorable winter for unusual species. There were no pelagic birding trips, but some very interesting observations and photographs were submitted by researchers of the Cascadia Research Collective (C.R.C.) from off the Kona coast of the Big Island of Hawaii. Their reports suggest that local birders might want to try to spend more time on the water during the winter. Dry and stable weather in early December gave way to a very wet spell from 10 December through 3 January, with serious flooding in several areas. Drier weather prevailed through the rest of the season.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH ALBATROSSES

Migrant geese were fewer and less varied than a year earlier. A Greater White-fronted Goose remained at the Kii unit of James Campbell N.W.R., Oahu I. Dec+ (m.ob.). The only other Greater White-fronted was a bird that has been resident at Waiakea Pond in Hilo, Hawaii I. for several years (m.ob.). Greater White-fronteds are rare in the Region but have appeared more frequently in the past several years. Very rare in the Region, an Emperor Goose was found dead at Midway Atoll N.W.R. 17 Dec (EV). In contrast to the previous winter, only 2 Brant were reported: one at the aquaculture ponds in Kahuku, Oahu I. Dec+ (MW, MO) and one at Aimakapa Pond, Hawaii I. 10-11 Dec (PW), 22 Dec (RD), and 26 Jan (RP). A Cackling Goose accompanied the Greater White-fronted at Kii Dec+ (m.ob.). Three Cacklings were counted at Kealia Pond N.W.R., Maui I. 8 Jan (MN), and 4 were found there 21 Jan (MN). Hawaiian Geese (Endangered), or Nene, continue to expand their range in lowland areas. One at Kealia 5 Feb represents the first record for the refuge; 2 had been seen in cornfields near the refuge for several months (MN). Numbers of some regularly occurring duck species were in rather low numbers again this winter. There were pretty good numbers of wigeon on Oahu I., with 26 American Wigeons and 6 Eurasian

Wigeons counted at the Punamano Unit of James Campbell N.W.R., Oahu I. 15 Jan (MO). The peak count of Northern Shovelers was 177 at Kealia 26 Jan (MN), and the peak count of Northern Pintails was 52 at Punamano 12 Feb (MO). The largest count of bay ducks was a flock of 10 Lesser Scaup and a Greater Scaup at the Kulima S.T.P. 23 Dec (PD, RM).

Laysan Albatross nested in record numbers on Oahu I., with 53 nests counted at Kaena Pt. and 22 at Kuaokala. These birds are extremely vulnerable to predators. Dogs killed at least 5 Laysans in Kahuku, Oahu I. 8 Feb (LY). Albatrosses are seldom reported near Hawaii I., so a Black-footed Albatross seen off the Kona coast 3 Dec was notable (ph. DW, C.R.C.). The Short-tailed Albatross (Endangered) spotted on Laysan I. early Nov remained through at least 26 Feb (ph. LD, JC, MH, MM). Four Short-taileds were observed on Midway in Dec—an unusually high count for this very rare bird there (EV).

## IBIS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A White-faced Ibis at the Honouliuli unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R. Dec+ (PD, MW) and one at Kealia 4 Dec (MN) were the only ibis reported. White-faceds have been regular for several years, but their numbers have dwindled. On Oahu I., a Peregrine Falcon was observed in Waikiki 5 Dec and in e. Honolulu 6-7 Feb (WO). A Peregrine was spotted at Kealia 21 Jan (MN). This was a quiet season for unusual shorebird species. A Black-bellied Plover was seen at Honouliuli 4 Dec (PD) and one (possibly the same individual) was seen at nearby West Loch Shoreline Park 21 Jan (PD). Two Semipalmated Plovers were found at Kealia 4 Dec (MN) and 2 at Kanaha Pond, Maui I. 13 Jan (MN). A Lesser Yellowlegs was seen at the Waiawa Unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R. 5 Dec, and one was at Ohiapilo Pond, Molokai I. 31 Dec–30 Jan (ADY). Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers and Lesser Yellowlegs are regular in the Region but have been found in very small numbers for the past several years. A Spotted Sandpiper was observed in Kapaa, Kauai I. 16 Dec (AL). The bird was also heard calling, and the observer

SA Researchers with Cascadia Research Collective (C.R.C.) spent 14 days on the water off the Kona coast of the Big Island of Hawaii 1-16 Dec studying marine mammals. They also observed and photographed seabirds. This Region spans over 2500 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean, and there are never enough pelagic observations to provide adequate distributional information on birds in this environment. Winter reports of pelagic seabirds are especially sparse, so these reports were very valuable.

Here is a summary of the C.R.C. bird observations:

Black-footed Albatross	1
Hawaiian Petrel	5
Unidentified gadfly petrel	39
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	212
Sooty Shearwater	11
Leach's Storm-Petrel	3
Red-tailed Tropicbird	1
White-tailed Tropicbird	9
Unidentified tropicbird	2
Masked Booby	1
Brown Booby	7
Red-footed Booby	2
Great Frigatebird	2
Red Phalarope	3
Laughing Gull	3
Black Noddy	3
Unidentified jaeger	3

Peter Pyle assisted in the review of nearly 1000 seabird images, and we were able to identify a number of Black-winged and **White-necked Petrels** and a Long-tailed Jaeger among the images. It is starting to look as though Black-winged Petrel is one of the most regular migrant petrels in the Region, found year-round but perhaps with lower densities in winter. White-necked Petrels have been rarely reported, but they may be more regular than previously supposed, with the great majority of records occurring Nov–Dec. Long-tailed Jaegers are very rare in the Region, and this is the first record for Dec.

was familiar enough with both Spotted and Common Sandpipers to rule out the possibility the bird was a Common. Spotted Sandpipers are rare in the Region. A Hudsonian Whimbrel remained in s. Molokai Nov+ (ADY). Whimbrels are rare but regular in the Region. Up to 7 Whimbrels wintered on Molokai I. Dec+ (ADY), and as many as 26 wintered in the Kahuku area on Oahu I. (m.ob.). Numbers on Oahu may have been higher than that, but the curlews did not gather in one large flock in the

evening, so they were not so easy to count. Two Least Sandpipers were observed at Kealia 4 Dec (MN). Least are regular but uncommon in the Region. A Pectoral Sandpiper was seen at Waiawa 5 Dec (PD), and one was seen at Poipu, Kauai I. 24 Dec (AL). Pectorals are regular in the fall but much less common in winter in the Region. A Dunlin and a Curlew Sandpiper were seen at Waiawa 5 & 30 Dec and 24 Feb (PD). Dunlins are regular and Curlew Sandpipers are rare in the Region, so it was good the two species could be compared. A snipe was seen at Honouliuli 3 Jan (PD, RM), and another was seen at Kii 21 Feb (PD, RM); neither was seen well enough to determine the species, but the bird at Honouliuli was in the same area a Common Snipe had been seen during the fall. Wilson's Snipe are regular in the Region, while Common Snipe are rare. Besides the 3 Red Phalaropes seen off Kona in Dec (C.R.C.), 3 were observed on Laysan I. 21 Dec–19 Jan (ph. LD, JC, MH, MM), and one was seen on Midway 22 Dec (EV). Red Phalaropes are rare enough in the Region that it is unusual to receive this many reports in a season.

## GULLS THROUGH PASSERINES

Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls are two of the most commonly reported gull species in the Region. One to 2 Laughings and one to 3 Ring-

billets were seen regularly in Kahuku, Oahu I. Dec+ (m.ob.). A Bonaparte's Gull, an uncommon species in the Region, was observed at Honouliuli Dec+ (MW, RM, PD). Large gulls were sparse, but an unusually dark first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull was seen on Laysan I. 14-15 Dec (ph. LD, JC, MH, MM), and up to 2 first-cycle Glaucous-wingeds were seen on Midway 23-27 Dec (EV). Glaucous-winged Gulls are regular in the Region but have been unusually scarce in the past few years. A Black-legged Kittiwake was found recently dead on Midway 23 Dec (EV), and one seen alive on Laysan I. 30 Jan was found dead the next day (ph. LD, JC, MH, MM). The species is rare in the Region. A Caspian Tern was seen in Kaneohe, Oahu I. 20 Dec on the C.B.C. (PD et al.) and spotted again 5 Jan (MW). A Common Tern observed at Hanapepe, Kauai I. 10 Dec (ph. AL) has been present for several months. A Black Tern, rare in the Region, was seen on the Kuilima G.C. in Kahuku, Oahu I. 19-20 Dec (DC). The bird was seen nearby at Kii 22 Dec (GF) and at Punamano 23 Dec (ph. PD, RM). The bird was searched for repeatedly through late Dec but was not seen again.

One Puaiohi (Endangered), a very rare native thrush, was seen in the Alakai Swamp, Kauai I. 28 Jan (JR). Eight Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrushes were spotted along Kalalau Trail in n. Kauai 3 Jan (AL), and 2-4

were found in Huleia N.W.R. in s. Kauai 28 Jan (DL). These exotic babblers seem to be widespread but are very elusive. Saffron Finches were reported in scattered locations of e. through sw. Kauai (CG, NH, PW, DL); they seem well on their way to becoming established on Kauai I. Single Akekee were found in Kokee S.P., Kauai I. 14 (AL) & 29 Jan (DL), and 3 were found 28 Jan (JR, DK, JB, MW). This species seems to have decreased in number over the past several years and is now difficult to find in areas where it could be found easily several years ago.

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