



## Peter Donaldson

Winter is normally the rainy season in the Region, but the winter of 2009-2010 was unusually dry. Rainfall was below normal on all the islands, with serious drought conditions in many areas. Like the preceding fall, this was another good season for unusual migrants, especially productive for unusual waterbirds. The cetacean researchers with Cascadia Research Collective were back in the Region for more field studies and took another large batch of seabird photographs off the Kona coast of Hawaii Island. Once again, they documented a remarkable number of gadfly petrels and other interesting seabirds.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH TERNS

Overall numbers of migrant waterfowl were not particularly high, but several uncommon species were reported. **Greater White-fronted Geese** have been considered rare in the Region, but this winter there were at least 14, with one at the Honouliuli unit of Pearl Harbor N.W.R. 5 Dec+ (KP, m.ob.), 5 at Ohiapilo Pond, Molokai I. Dec+ (ADY), and 8 at the Kii unit of James Campbell N.W.R. 9 Dec+ (ML, m.ob.). These numbers are unprecedented. There were scattered reports of single birds elsewhere around the Region, but these birds were seen for only short periods and may have ended up with the other birds noted above. Two imm. Snow Geese were at Punaluu, Hawaii I. 3 (ph. SH) & 5 Dec (ph. RD). A single imm. Snow Goose was seen at Kahana 15 Dec (MN) and 29 Jan (ADY). The Snows at Punaluu were not reported after 5 Dec, so it is unknown if the Snows at Kanaha were different individuals. Snow Geese are very rare in the Region. A Brant was observed in Kahuku, Oahu I. in Dec and later, and another was seen in the area, sometimes with the other Brant, 20 Jan+ (MO, m.ob.). Single Brant were observed at Poipu, Kauai I. 2 Dec (MS), at Punaluu 3 (ph. SH) & 5 Dec (ph. RD), and at Palaauiwai, Molokai I. 1 & 11 Feb (JB). A Cackling/Canada Goose, thought to be a Cackling, was at Kii Dec+ (ph. ML, m.ob.). Brants and Cacklings are regular in the

Region. A drake Gadwall was observed at Kii 14 Jan+ (KP, MO, ph. SL). Four Tufted Ducks were observed at the Punamano unit of James Campbell N.W.R. 15 Feb (PD, RM, MO, KP). These ducks may have been among a flock of bay ducks but unrecognized as Tufteds until they developed more distinctive plumage in late winter. A Hooded Merganser at Waiakea Pond, Hawaii I. Dec 26 (RS) was also observed there 1 (ph. RD) & 2 Jan (ph. MW). Gadwalls, Tufted Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers are all rare in the Region. A Pied-billed Grebe was at Kahana 24 Jan (ph. MW), 26 Jan (RD), 20 Feb (GE), and 23 Feb (CP).

Researchers with the Cascadia Research Collective were back out on the water off the w. (Kona) coast of Hawaii Island. They photographed a nice array of interesting seabirds, especially petrels, including Kermadec 10 Dec (one), Murphy's 20 Dec (2), Hawaiian (Endangered) 13 Dec (one), White-necked 11 Dec (one), 13 Dec (2) and 16 Dec (2), and Black-winged 16 Dec (one). Other birds photographed included Wedge-tailed 14 Dec (one) & 16 Dec (2), and Sooty Shearwaters 17 Dec (one), Leach's Storm-Petrels 10 Dec (one), 12 Dec (4), and 21 Dec (one), a White-tailed Tropicbird 21 Dec, and 1<sup>st</sup> year Masked 10 Dec (one), and Red-footed Boobies 10 Dec (one). Wedge-tailed Shearwaters are common breeders in the islands, but are uncommon in winter off Kona. Black-winged Petrels and Sooty Shearwaters are two of the more common non-breeding tubenoses in the Region, and Leach's Storm-Petrels are regular in small numbers, whereas Kermadec, Murphy's, and White-

necked Petrels have been reported only occasionally. White-tailed Tropicbirds, Masked Boobies, and Red-footed Boobies all breed in the main Hawaiian Islands but are uncommon off Kona. (Thanks to Peter Pyle for studying the photographs and helping to identify many of the species.)

Single White-faced Ibis were at Kealia Dec+ (m.ob.), at Kanaha Dec+ (m.ob.), and at Hanalei N.W.R., Kauai I. 3 Jan (DP). Small numbers of White-faceds have been reported regularly over the past 15 years or so. An Osprey was seen at Kawaele, Kauai I. 22 Dec (DK) and 11 Jan (JD). There were scattered reports of Peregrine Falcons over or near



Among the uncommon geese that showed up in winter 2009-2010 in Hawaii, the rarest were the Snow Geese, including these two at Punaluu, Hawaii Island 5 December 2009. Photograph by Reg David.



In Hawaii, an influx of uncommon waterfowl included unprecedented numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese, including this one at Punaluu, Hawaii Island 5 December 2009. Photograph by Reg David.



This male Gadwall was observed at the Kii unit of James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge, Hawaii Island, Hawaii over a period of several weeks (here 14 January 2010, the date of discovery) but was sometimes frustratingly difficult to find. Photograph by Satoko Lincoln.



This Pied-billed Grebe at Kahana Pond, Maui Island, Hawaii was often difficult to observe, so this image from 24 January 2010 was a fortunate shot. Photograph by Michael Walther.



Among the many photographs provided by Cascadia Research Collective working off the Kona Coast of Hawaii Island, Hawaii was this image of a Kermadec Petrel taken 10 December 2009. Photograph by Daniel Webster/Cascadia Research Collective.



Killdeer are very uncommon in Hawaii and infrequently photographed; this one at the Hansen Road Ponds, Maui Island 24 January 2010 was one of at least four found on Maui in winter 2009-2010. Photograph by Michael Walther.

Oahu I. through the winter: one was over Manana I. 5 & 8 Dec (ph. MW), 2 over Portlock 7 Dec (vt. SC), one over Manana Trail 3 Jan (JH, LH, DD), and one at Kii 29 Jan (KP) and 4 Feb (ph. SL). Peregrines were also observed in Polihale, Kauai I. 25 Jan (DK), and at Makena, Maui I. 14 Feb (RP). It is difficult to tell from these reports how many different individuals were involved. Peregrines are regular but uncommon in the Region. This was

an unusually good winter for unusual shorebirds. Two Killdeer, rare but regular in the Region, were seen at Kealia 10 Dec (MN), and Killdeer were also reported from various locations in cen. Maui Jan+ (m.ob.). It is difficult to know how many were present, but on 18 Feb, 3 were seen at Kealia and one was seen immediately afterwards at the Kahului-Wailuku S.T.P. (GE), so it appears there were at least 4, an unusually high count. A Whimbrel of the *hudsonicus* subspecies accompanied up to 5 Bristle-thighed Curlews on Molokai I. Sep+ (ADY); Whimbrels are uncommon but regular in the Region. Numbers

of Bristle-thighed Curlews in the main islands remained good, with 42 counted at Kii 14 Jan (KP), 5 seen on Molokai 20 Jan, and 2 seen at Hualalai Resort, Hawaii I. 15 Feb (RP). Bristle-thigheds are regular in small numbers locally in the main islands. A Bar-tailed Godwit was observed at Kealia 25 Jan (ph. MW). A Curlew Sandpiper in Kahuku, Oahu I. 6 & 12 Dec (ph. MW) may have been the same bird seen at Pouhala Marsh, Oahu I. 16 Feb (ph. MW). The Cascadia Research Collective photographed one Red Phalarope off the Kona coast 10 Dec. Bar-tailed Godwits and Curlew Sandpipers are rare in the Region, while Red Phalaropes are uncommon.

Ten Laughing Gulls, a high count for the Region, were seen at Ohiapilo 20 Jan and 12 Feb (ADY), and a Bonaparte's Gull was also seen at Ohiapilo Dec+ (ph. ADY). The Cascadia Research Collective also photographed a Laughing Gull off the Kona coast. Large gulls remained scarce: the only reports were of single Glaucous-winged Gulls on Oahu I. at Kaena Pt., 7 Dec (MO, LY), Yokohama Beach, 27 Dec (ph. MW), and Kaawa 27 Dec (ph. GS). A gull at Palaaui, Molokai I. 14 Dec (ADY) may also have been a Glaucous-winged. The only unusual tern reported over the winter was a Caspian Tern in Kaneohe, Oahu I. 30 Dec (RM, PD). Caspian Terns are uncommon but regular in the Region. One Pomarine and 2 Long-tailed Jaegers



This Bar-tailed Godwit was photographed at Kealia Pond National Wildlife Refuge, Maui Island, Hawaii 26 January 2010. Photograph by Michael Walther.



Curlew Sandpipers have become more regular in the Hawaiian Islands over the past twenty years or so, but they remain rare. This bird Pouhala Marsh, Oahu Island 16 January 2010 may have been the same individual as photographed at Kahuku 6 and 12 December 2009. Photograph by Michael Walther.

were photographed off the Kona coast 20 Dec & 8 Dec respectively (C.R.C); the latter species is thought to be relatively rare in the Region, whereas Pomarine is recorded regularly. Up to 58 Red-masked Parakeets, plus 4 Red-masked Parakeet × Blue-crowned Parakeet hybrids, were counted in e. Honolulu 12 Feb (MO). This is the highest count so far for the species.

## PASSERINES

Two Chestnut Munias found at Kualpuu, Molokai I. 20 Jan (ADY) represent the first observation of the species on that island. Single Maui Parrotbills (Endangered) were found in Waikamoi Preserve, Maui I. 26 Dec (CP), 13 Feb (RP), and 20 Feb (CP). There were five reports of Akohekohe (Endangered) in Waikamoi 26 Dec (CP), 13 Feb (RP), 19 Feb (high count of 4; CP, GE, MO), 20 Feb (CP), and 21 Feb (RH). Observers on Hawaii I. were able to consistently find very small numbers of Palila, Akiapolaau, Hawaii Creeper, and Akepa (all Endangered), but this should not be taken as an indication that these species are present in healthy numbers: most of the reports are from tour leaders and local observers skilled in finding these species and very familiar with the area. Numbers of indi-

viduals seen are very low. For example, H.F.T. groups usually find only 110 Palila, 13 Akiapolaau, 110 Hawaii Creepers, and 10 Akepa.

**Contributors:** Steve Ackers, Gail Andrews, Winston B, Jade Brujell, Phil Capitolo, Cascadia Research Cooperative (C.R.C), Sunway Chong, Patrick Cotter, Reg David, Bob Dellinger, Savannah Dellinger, Jim Denny, Arleone Dibben-Young, David Dickinson, Peter Donaldson, Darren Dowell, Marc Dragiewicz, Don Drake, Gil Ewing, Mel Goff, John Hall, Hawaii Forest & Trail (H.F.T.), Steve Hess, Joshua Heywood, Lynn Hodgson, Gene Hunn, Roger Hunt, Douglas Johnson, Jake Kaauwai, John Klavitter, David Kuhn, Michael Libbe, Satoko Lincoln, Kurt Lindsay, Mike Lohr, Richard May, Steve Montgomery, Rich Nicholson, Mike Nishimoto, Mike Ord, Rob Pacheco, Jim Pea, Giles Pettifor, Kurt Pohlman, Deborah Powell, Chuck Probst, Sue Reel, Brooks Rownd, Mike Russell, George Shoemaker, Forest & Kim Starr, Sonia Stephens, Mark Sullivan, Jesse Swift, Darrah Thomas, Michael Walther, Megan Westervelt. 🌿

---

**Peter Donaldson**, 2375 Ahakapu Street  
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782, (pdnldsn.bird@mac.com)