

LEACH STORM-PETREL

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

non-breeding visitor, regular winterer

O.l. leucorhoa

Leach Storm-Petrels breed in the N Atlantic and Pacific (as far S as Baja California) and migrate to temperate and tropical waters in winter, throughout the Pacific to 30° S (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951a, Cramp and Simmons 1977, Harrison 1983, Pitman 1986, AOU 1998, Spear and Ainley 2007). They have been recorded stranded on or near many tropical Pacific islands (Pratt et al. 1987), including Wake Atoll (Rauzon et al. 2008). They are fairly common in Hawaiian waters, with most records for Oct-Mar.

At sea, Crossin (1974) indicates moderate winter densities and sparse summer densities in the Hawaiian Island region based on observations and specimens collected by the POBSP in the 1960s. Rowlett (2002) observed no birds throughout Hawaiian waters 6 Aug-17 Sep but 125 during 18 Sep-28 Nov. Birds were observed consistently from W of Kure to S of Hawai'i I, and numbers generally increased throughout the latter period. Daily high counts were of 17 on 9 Nov S of Gardner Pinnacles and 16 on 28 Nov NW of Maui. King (1970) recorded them commonly during monthly surveys S and E of the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands Mar 1964-Jun 1965. Substantial peaks in April of both years suggest a northbound migration through Hawaiian waters at this time. Only 31 of 1,050 observations (3%) were recorded in Jun-Sep. Spear *et al.* (1999) recorded 35 individuals SE and S of Hawai'i I in spring and fall 1984-1991 and also found them to be significantly more common in spring than in fall. Scattered other at-sea observations exist between November and February (e.g., Gould 1983, Pyle and Eilerts 1986, Bailey 1996).

In the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, at least 22 Leach Storm-Petrels have been found dead, stranded, or observed during single-day offshore boat trips, from **Kure**, **Midway**, **Laysan**, and **French Frigate**, primarily in Nov-Mar. On Kure, a storm-petrel that was undoubtedly a Leach, was observed captured by [Great Frigatebirds](#) over land, from which it may have escaped (Rauzon 1978). P. Bartsch collected 4 Leach Storm-Petrels near Midway 5-11 Nov 1907 (Mearns 1909), and at least 10 dead birds have subsequently been preserved from the Northwestern Islands as specimens at USNM and BPBM (e.g., Clapp and Woodward 1968, *E* 45:4). One observed 9 km S of Sand I., Midway, 3 Jun 1998 is one of few mid-summer records for the Hawaiian Islands. Similar records of at least 70 dead, stranded, and single-day offshore observations exist from the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, from **Ni'ihau**, **Kaua'i**, **O'ahu**, **Maui**, and **Hawai'i I**, in Sep-May (e.g., [HRBP](#) 0032-0037, 0382-0384, 1135-1136, 5623, 5634-5635). Off Kona, Hawai'i I, they were regularly recorded during two-week surveys for cetaceans by Cascadia Research Collective in Jan, Mar-Apr, and Oct-Nov of 2004-2009 (e.g., [HRBP](#) 5160, 5787-5789, published *NAB* 59:170), with single-day high counts of 40+ on 28 Apr 2008 and 22 on 20 Apr 2009, suggesting peak northward migration in late Apr. Several have been turned into SOS and SLP rehabilitation facilities on O'ahu and Kaua'i. Some of these were photographed (e.g., [HRBP](#) 5026-5027) and released (*E* 40:13) whereas at least 19 have died or were found dead, and were preserved as specimens at BPBM, BYUH, and USNM (e.g., *E* 25:79, *E* 27:83; [HRBP](#) 5028). The predated remains of a storm-petrel found atop **Kaho'olawe** on 15 May 1998 were initially thought to be of [Band-rumped Storm-Petrel](#) but were later confirmed to be of Leach.

A specimen collected near Midway on 11 Nov 1907 (USNM 211228) was identified by H. C. Oberholser as "*O. l. beali*", which breeds in California, whereas one collected on Kure 10 May 1964 (USNM494243) was identified as nominate *leucorhoa* from Alaska (Clapp and Woodward 1968); we consider *beali* to be a synonym of *leucorhoa* (cf. Pyle 2008). All specimens found dead or collected at sea in the Hawaiian Islands have shown characters (size, uppertail-covert pattern) consistent with the nominate subspecies (Crossin 1974, PP examination at BPBM, USNM, BYUH). Three other subspecies occur off the Pacific N American coast (Pyle 2008).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

Citation: Pyle, R.L., and P. Pyle. 2009. The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status. B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, U.S.A. Version 1 (31 December 2009) <http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/>