

PACIFIC LOON

Gavia pacifica

Other: Arctic Loon (<1985)

monotypic

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

The Pacific Loon is the North American counterpart of the Eurasian Arctic Loon (*G. arctica*), from which it was split in 1985 (AOU 1985). It breeds in Alaska and Canada and winters to Baja California, Mexico (AOU 1998). The difficulty in separating these two taxa has affected the status of loons in Hawaii (Pyle 1988), only one Pacific Loon being identified to species in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*.

A first-cycle loon at Lilipuna St. Pier in Kane'ohe Bay, **O'ahu** was first seen in early Dec by marine biologists from a transport boat servicing Coconut Island. It was identified as an Arctic Loon (including Pacific Loon at the time) in Jan 1982 (Pyle 1983), photographed on 4 Feb 1982 ([HRBP 0162-0165](#)), and last seen in early Mar. After the loons were split it was considered a species-pair (Pyle 1988-1997) until examination of photographs in 1997 confirmed that it was a Pacific Loon (Pyle 2002). Two additional sight records of loons are accompanied by descriptions that eliminate other species but do not distinguish between Pacific and Arctic loons. These were of individuals at Salt Lake, O'ahu 17 Dec 1972 (*E.* 33:77, 83) and just off Kihei, Maui 21 Nov 1996. There is one additional report of an unidentified loon, in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, from the Boat Harbor on Sand I, Midway 23 Nov 1949 (Bailey 1951, 1956).

[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/>