

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER

Puffinus tenuirostris

non-breeding visitor, occasional migrant

monotypic

The Short-tailed Shearwater breeds on islands off S and SE Australia in Nov-May, disperses northward through the W Pacific to the Bering Sea in May-Aug, and migrates rapidly southwestward in large flights across the central Pacific back the breeding grounds in Sep-Nov (King 1967, Harrison 1983, AOU 1998). In the Hawaiian Islands, large numbers have been recorded during well-defined pulses in fall migration, and several sight observations of one to a few birds suggest a smaller passage in spring. The Short-tailed Shearwater is extremely difficult to separate from the similar Sooty Shearwater in the field (see [Sooty Shearwater](#)), especially when viewing isolated individuals (King 1970); thus, confirmation of the spring passage with specimen or photographic evidence is desirable.

At sea, Rowlett (2002) recorded 37,874 Short-tailed Shearwaters on 52 of 93 observing days from W of Kure to S of Oahu. They were observed from 1 Sep to 14 Nov 2002. Over 1,000 birds were recorded on each of seven dates, with a large peak of >28,000 recorded 13-22 Sep 2002 between Midway and Lisianski and a smaller peak of >4,000 recorded 30 Oct-14 Nov between Laysan and Kaua'i. All birds were flying SSW in concentrated groups. In contrast to [Sooty Shearwater](#), Short-taileds were clearly more abundant in Northwestern than Southeastern Hawaiian Island waters during fall passage; only 66 birds were recorded by Rowlett on 3 of 35 dates during this period off the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands. During monthly surveys March 1964 through June 1965, King (1970) recorded 400 Short-tailed Shearwaters on 10 Nov 1964 near 92 km ESE of Hawai'i. The only others recorded by King in Hawaiian waters were 17 birds 11 Nov-20 Dec 1964 within 370 km (200 nmi) of the eastern Southeastern Hawaiian Islands. Other at-sea records from Hawaiian Island waters in fall include one on 3 Nov 1984 between Pearl and Hermes and Lisianski (Pyle and Eilerts 1986) and 43 between Gardner Pinnacles and Kaua'i 6-11 Nov 1996 (Bailey 1996). The only spring record at sea in Hawaiian Island waters involves an unverified sighting of one between Nihoa and Necker on 6 Mar 1976. King (1970) also recorded one on 25 Mar 1965 over 370 km ENE of the Southeastern Islands. It appears that Short-tailed Shearwaters may migrate well to the W of the Hawaiian Is in spring (cf. Wiles et al. 2000, Ito 2002).

The only specimen for the islands is of a bird found dead in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* on *Midway* 1 Dec 2000, of which the wing was saved (BPBM 184381; [HRBP](#) 5670-5671 of specimen). There is also a report of 4 seen from Midway on 13 Jan 2000. The only fall report from shore is from the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, of at least 15 from Kilauea Point, *Kaua'i*, 13 Oct 2002 and one off Kona, *Hawai'i* 25 Nov 2006. Recent (1990-2000) spring sight reports that we consider likely valid include observations of 10-15 individuals on single-day boat trips or from Kilauea Point, during the period 25 Mar-5 May, offshore of Kaua'i and *O'ahu*.

[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/>