

TAHITI PETREL

Pseudobulweria rostrata

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

P.r. rostrata?

Tahiti Petrels, considered members of the genus *Pterodroma* until the late 1990s (e.g., AOU 1998), breed in the Society and Marquesas Islands and on New Caledonia, and range widely in the S Pacific (King 1967, Harrison 1983, Pitman 1986) and to Micronesia (Wiles 2005). They are difficult to distinguish at sea from [Phoenix Petrels](#) (Spear et al. 1992), which also occur in the tropical Pacific (including a specimen from Johnston Atoll; Amerson and Shelton 1976); thus, Tahiti Petrel was only accepted as one of a "species-pair" in Hawaiian waters until 2005 (Pyle 1979-2005; see also Pyle 1988, AOU 1989). In 1964-1965, during monthly cruises *at sea* within 370.4 km (200 nmi) E and S of the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands, King (1970; *E* 48:106) recorded at least 4 individuals identified as either Phoenix or Tahiti petrel, but thought more likely the latter. These occurred about 135 km WSW of Hawai'i I on 10 and 14 Nov 1964 and about 185 km N of Moloka'i 27 Mar 1965 (2 birds). Spear et al. (1999) recorded 1-2 Tahiti Petrels approximately 240 km SE of Hawai'i I 5 Nov 1984, the only records for which we consider substantiated from Hawaiian waters (*cf.* Pyle 2002). A briefly-seen bird at sea, 9 km W of Midway on 23 May 1999 was thought more likely a Tahiti than a Phoenix petrel. Rowlett (2002) did not record any Tahiti or Phoenix petrels during 93 days of observing in Hawaiian waters in Aug-Nov 2002. There are no photographs or specimens of this species from Hawaiian waters and the species is not accepted on the main list by the AOU (1998 in Appendix).

Individuals recorded in Hawaiian waters have not been diagnosed to subspecies, although only the nominate race from the Marquesas and Society Is has been documented from the N Pacific and is likely that which occurs in Hawaiian waters; two other subspecies occur in the sw. Pacific. A small species of petrel (*Pterodroma jugabilis*), found in the subfossil record of O'ahu and Hawai'i Is, was reported to have been related to Tahiti Petrel (Olson and James 1991) but is probably best left in *Pterodroma* (S. Olson, pers. comm.).

[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/>