

RUFF

Philomachus pugnax

non-breeding visitor, occasional migrant

monotypic

Although primarily an Old-World species, breeding throughout the northern Palearctic and wintering S to Africa, India, and Australia (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1983, Higgins and Davies 1996), the Ruff is also well known in North America as a regular vagrant (AOU 1998, CBRC 2007). It occurs as an uncommon but regular transient and winter visitant in the w. Pacific, having been recorded on Wake and Johnston atolls (Amerson and Shelton 1976, Rauzon et al. 2008), throughout Micronesia (Wiles 2005), and to New Zealand (Higgins and Davies 1996). In the Hawaiian Islands Ruffs were recorded annually (or virtually so) in small numbers, after going unreported until 1963.

A [minimum](#) of 50 individuals have been recorded in the *Northwestern Hawaiian islands*, on **Kure** (4 individuals, 1963-2007; Clapp & Woodward 1968, Pyle 1984; USNM 493332; [HRBP](#) 1415, 5466), **Midway** (19, 1982-2002; e.g., Pyle 1984; BPBM 159286; [HRBP](#) 0228, 0808-0810, 1148-1150, 1161-1162, 1242, 1356-1360, 1414), **Pearl and Hermes** (1, 27 Aug 1967; Amerson et al. 1974; USNM 543042), **Laysan** (14, 1980-2007; e.g., [HRBP](#) 0612, 5566), and **French Frigate** (11, 1979-2004; e.g., *E* 41:74, 47:69; BPBM 175795, 184822). Individuals recorded solely in fall comprised 33 of these 50 records, 10 were of over-wintering birds, and 7 were apparent spring transients (16-20 May 1982 at French Frigate, 5 May 1988 and 23-25 May 1999 at Midway, and 4 birds 4-7 Apr 2007 on Laysan). The high count was of 5 birds on Midway 8-10 Sep 2002 (Rowlett 2002) and 4 were recorded there 6 Sep 1999 and on Laysan 4-7 Apr 2007. A one-year-old male found exhausted at French Frigate 17 June 1987 (subsequently remaining through the following winter) constituted an usual arrival; otherwise, one on Kure 27 Jul 2007 ([HRBP](#) 5466) was the earliest fall arrival, the Midway bird 25 May 1999 constituted the latest spring record, and one on Midway 3 May 1998 was the latest date that an over-wintering bird was observed.

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* a [minimum](#) of 66 Ruffs have been recorded on **Kaua'i** (8, 1979-2007; e.g., [HRBP](#) 5237, 5320), **O'ahu** (28, 1977-2007; e.g., *E* 38:104, 40:28, 41:90; [HRBP](#) 0006-0008, 0062-0063, 0540-0541, published *E* 43:61), **Moloka'i** (4, 2007-2009; e.g., [HRBP](#) 5467-5469, 5841-5842, published *NAB* 62:176), **Maui** (20, 1971-2009; e.g., *E* 32:39, 32:55, 42:78; [HRBP](#) 5032), and **Hawai'i** (6, 1997-2008; e.g., [HRBP](#) 5206). Forty-six of these were apparent fall transients while the remaining 20 were over-wintering birds. Several records of returning adults to the same wintering locale (e.g., a female returning to Waipi'o, O'ahu, each winter during 1978-1986) indicate successful wintering and round-trip migration to the breeding grounds. The high counts were of 5 at Waipi'o 6-14 Sep 1986 (*E* 47:42) and 4 there 10 Sep 1978. The earliest fall migrant arrived on 2 Aug (1999, Waipi'o, adult male) and the latest spring departure (of a wintering bird) was 7 May (1999, Kealia Pond NWR, Maui). An analysis of individuals throughout the Hawaiian Islands that were aged and sexed indicates a roughly equal sex ratio and that about 22% of fall transients were adults, a proportion that was higher in the Northwestern (~57%) than in the Southeastern islands (~13%).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)