

BONAPARTE GULL

Chroicocephalus philadelphia

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

monotypic

Bonaparte Gulls breed across N America from w. Alaska to Quebec, and winter S to c. Mexico and the W Indies. Vagrants have reached Europe and Japan (Cramp and Simmons 1983, AOU 1998, Howell and Dunn 2007); in the Hawaiian Islands Bonaparte Gull is a rare visitor, primarily in winter. Bonaparte and [Black-headed](#) gulls were placed along with other gulls in the genus *Larus* until split by the AOU (2008).

Three Bonaparte Gulls have been recorded from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, from *Midway* (29 Jan 1963; Sibley and MacFarlane 1968), *Laysan* (27 Dec 1912; Bailey 1956; USNM 240984), and *French Frigate* (10-11 Nov 1987; [HRBP](#) 0738, 0829; USNM 596391). In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* there are records of adults returning to the Kahuku area of O'ahu for consecutive winters during 1981-1985, 1987-1990, and 1992-1995, indicating that at least some individuals are capable of successful trans-Pacific migrations to breeding grounds and back. Given this, a [minimum](#) of 42 Bonaparte Gulls have been recorded, from *Kauai* (7, 1891-2005; e.g., Rothschild 1900, *cf. E* 68:24; [HRBP](#) 5127-5128), *O'ahu* (19, 1952-2009; e.g., Frohling 1952, *E* 18:49; [HRBP](#) 0304-0308, 0542-0543, 5333-5334), *Moloka'i* (5: 4 at Palaau Fish Pond 25 Mar 1919, one of which was collected, BPBM, uncatalogued; and one 14 Dec 2009, [HRBP](#) 5733), *Mauai* (7, 1957-2009; e.g., *E* 21:80, 39:63; [HRBP](#) 1106), and *Hawai'i I* (6, 1959-2005; e.g., *E* 22:7, 39:18, 39:63). Over half of these were recorded in pairs or groups (up to 6, at Kihei Lagoon, O'ahu 11 Dec 1971; *E* 33:9), suggesting that these vagrants travel as such to Hawaii. The earliest fall arrival was 26 Oct (1989, Ki'i, O'ahu, returning adult) and the latest spring date for a wintering bird was 16 May (2005, Hanapepe, Kaua'i). An alternate-plumaged bird observed in Hilo, Hawai'i 14-25 May 2002 and one At Apua Pt, Hawai'i Volcanoes NP 5 May 2005 had not been recorded the previous winter and may have been transient spring vagrants.

[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/>