

Bridled Tern

Onychoprion anaethetus

hypothetical, erroneous report

Bloxam (1827) collected and described a tern near O'ahu as *Sterna Woahuensis* or *Oahuensis*. Although the specimen cannot now be located, the description fits a juvenile [Sooty Tern](#) (Olson 1996a). Finsch and Hartlaub (1867), followed by Dole (1869, 1879), applied the name "*Sterna panaya*" (an old name for Bridled Tern) to Bloxam's bird, apparently incorrectly. Perhaps related, Warren (1966) lists a specimen at British Museum (BMNH1847.3.4.95) as a syntype for Bloxam's *oahuensis*, which was "collected by Lord Byron and presented by Admiral Sir E. Belcher", commander of the H.M.S. Sulphur that visited Hawaii in 1837 and 1839 (Olson and James 1994). The specimen, an adult Bridled Tern, does not fit Bloxam's description and is unlikely his specimen (Olson 1996a:27), although a juvenile [Sooty Tern](#) accessioned with the same batch (BMNH 1847.3.4.95) could be the individual collected by Bloxam. Bryan (1958) gives "Bridled Tern" as another name for Gray-backed Tern, perhaps accounting for some of the earlier confusion. King (1967) records Bridled Tern from Hawaii but the basis for this is unknown to us. Finally, a tern photographed in a breeding colony on Eastern I, Midway Atoll 5 Jun 2008 ([HRBP](#) 5496-5497 published *NAB* 62:632) shows characters suggesting a hybrid of a [Sooty Tern](#) with either Bridled Tern (as suggested somewhat by the bird's appearance) or [Gray-backed Tern](#) (more likely in this mixed colony) but its identification remains unconfirmed (it may also be just an aberrant Sooty Tern). Overall, we consider Bridled Tern as unconfirmed for the Hawaiian Islands.

Bridled Terns occur uncommonly in the southwestern and eastern Pacific, without a confirmed record closer to the Hawaiian Islands than southern California (CBRC 2007). They were combined along with other terns in the genus *Sterna* until tern genera were split by the AOU (2006).

[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/>