

KERMADEC PETREL

Pterodroma neglecta

non-breeding visitor, occasional

subspecies?

Kermadec Petrels breed in the Kermadec and other island groups across the S Pacific, and disperse widely into the N Pacific (Harrison 1983, Pitman 1986, Bartle et al. 1993, Bailey et al. 1989, Marchant and Higgins 1990, Howell 2012) including to Micronesian waters (Wiles 2005). They occur uncommonly in Hawaiian waters, mostly beyond 90 km offshore, with greater abundance reported in fall and winter. In the late 1990s-2000 and again in the early 2010s, 1-3 Kermadec Petrels frequented Kilauea Point, Kaua'i, during May-September, and breeding was suspected.

At sea, Kermadec Petrels have been found uncommonly to fairly commonly during oceanographic research cruises. King (1970) reported 20 during monthly surveys S and E of the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands in 1964-1965, more frequently in Sep-Jan than in Feb-Aug. Spear et al. (1999) recorded 10 S and E of Hawai'i Island in Jun, Oct, and Nov 1984-1991, the closest to shore being 15 km SE of Hilo 18 Oct 1985 and 50 km off Kona 19 Nov 1991. During [HICEAS](#) surveys, at least 101 Kermadec Petrels were recorded on 42 of 93 days observing during Aug-Nov 2002 and at least 12 were observed during surveys in 2010 (Rowlett 2002; [HICEAS data](#)). Birds occurred throughout the entire area within 370 km (200 nmi) of the Hawaiian Islands. Additional records include at least one in Hawaiian waters in early Nov 1976 (Gould 1983) and one 100 km NW of Lisianski 3 Nov 1984 (Pyle and Eilerts 1986).

In the *Northwest Hawaiian Islands*, one of 3 large dark-morph petrels seen in flight, over Green Island, **Kure** 20 Apr 1923, was collected by A. Wetmore (Woodward 1972, Olson 1996b; USNM 300679; [HRBP](#) 5093-5096 (reported as 30 Apr by Clapp and Woodward 1968 and Berger 1972, 1981). Given the spring date, these individuals were likely prospecting, as suspected on Kaua'i (see below).

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, a dark morph Kermadec Petrel visited Kilauea Point, **Kaua'i** in late Jun-early Sep 1998, returning 9 May-late August 1999 (AB 53:435), and 24 Apr to 11 Sep 2000 (AB 55:109). It appeared to be scouting for breeding, being present for periods of 3-4 consecutive days interspersed with similar absences (AB 52:505), harassing [Red-footed Boobies](#), and flying about and landing on Mokuaeae Islet and the point ([HRBP](#) 1304-1307). In 2011-2016 up to three different individuals per year, based on morph and individual markings, were observed at Kilauea Point exhibiting similar behavior including aerial chases between birds, with dates of observation being 20 Apr-31 Aug 2011 (1-2 intermediate-morph and at least one light-morph birds), mid Jul-6 Aug 2012 (at one dark-morph and one light-morph birds; [HRBP](#) 6064-6066), 15 Apr-26 Sep 2013 (at least one dark-morph and one intermediate-morph birds; [HRBP](#) 6067), 11 Apr-31 July 2014 (at least one each of dark-morph, intermediate-morph, and light-morph birds; [HRBP](#) 6068-6071), 2 Apr-16 Aug 2015 (at least 2 birds), and 24 Mar-21 Aug 2016 (at least 2 birds). Most of the observations were in the late afternoon, typical of breeding Kermadec Petrels, which begin to circle over nesting sites at this time of day before coming in to nests after dark. One photographed flying over the head of Kalalau Valley in the Alaka'i Swamp 28 Jun 2012 ([HRBP](#) 6063) may have involved one of the Kilauea Point birds.

Elsewhere in the Southeastern Islands, a light-morph individual was found aboard a cruise ship in Nawilwili Harbor, Kaua'i 21 Nov 2008 ([SOS data](#); [HRBP](#) 5611-5613), having reportedly landed on the ship while it was in the harbor, one was turned in to SOS 1 Oct 2009, and one was photographed off Kaua'i 16 Feb 2015 ([HRBP](#) 6073). A dark-morph Kermadec Petrel was observed on a single-day trip 7 km west of *O'ahu* 11 Apr 1997 (*E* 46:182) and a probable Kermadec Petrel was observed off Makapu'u Point 26 Sep 2010. A light-morph bird that boarded a cruise ship off Hawai'i I during the 3rd week of Oct 2008, was photographed ([SOS data](#); [HRBP](#) 5421-5424, published *NAB* 63:176) and brought ashore for release, and others were photographed off Kona, *Hawai'i I* 28 Oct 2009 ([CRC data](#); [HRBP](#) 5625, 5783-5784; published *NAB* 64:342), 10 Dec 2009 ([HRBP](#) 5726-5727), 18 Nov 2014 ([HRBP](#) 6072), and 28 Jul 2016 ([HRBP](#) 6294).

Two weakly defined subspecies are recognized, which are difficult to separate in the field (Marchant and Higgins 1990). Individuals occurring in Hawaiian waters are more likely of the nominate subspecies of the w. Pacific than *P.n. juana* which breeds primarily off Chile, but no attempt has been made to identify the Kure specimen to subspecies.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

Citation: Pyle, R.L., and P. Pyle. 2017. The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status. B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, U.S.A. Version 2 (1 January 2017)
<http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/>