

MOTTLED PETREL

Pterodroma inexpectata

non-breeding visitor, regular migrant

monotypic

Mottled Petrels breed on islands S of New Zealand in Dec-May and disperse widely during the non-breeding season, with a portion of the population traveling to the N Pacific (King 1967, Harrison 1983, Marchant and Higgins 1990, Bartle et al. 1993, AOU 1998, CBRC 2007, Howell 2012). They migrate through Hawaiian waters regularly, with all records concentrated during brief windows in Mar-Apr and late Sep-Nov. Modeled densities at these times are variable but generally higher in waters S to SE of Hawai'i I (Winship et al. 2016).

At sea, most observations of Mottled Petrels from research cruises have been in October and April. During daily surveys of all Hawaiian waters, Rowlett (2002, Winship et al. 2016; [HICEAS data](#)) recorded 302 Mottled Petrels in waters between Gardner Pinnacles and Hawai'i I 27 Sep- 2 Nov 2002, plus one late bird SE of Hawai'i I 22 Nov 2002. The highest daily count was of 145 birds NNE of Nihoa 11 Oct 2002. Additional Mottled Petrel records were of one recorded between Kure and Midway 14 May 2000, 4 individuals 15 km SW of Midway 11 May 1999, and two flying N near Maro Reef 185 km WNW of Gardner Pinnacles 18 Apr 1995. An unseasonal report of one between Midway and Kure 8 Jul 1997 is unsubstantiated. During monthly surveys E and S of the Southeastern Islands, King (1970) recorded 50 Mottled Petrels flying S in October 1964, 10 flying N in April 1965, and only 5 other individuals (May, Nov, and Dec). Similarly, Spear et al. (1999) recorded 55 individuals in October, 3 in April, and none in other months; several of these were photographed 130 km SSE of Hawai'i I. 7 Oct 1987 ([HRBP](#) 628-632). Another 125 birds were observed at sea within 75 km SE of Hawai'i 18 Oct 1985. Several birds recorded among [CRC data](#) (e.g., [HRBP](#) 6085-6088, 6091-6093, published Pyle et al. 2011) have been of very dark-plumaged individuals, darker than are shown in field guides.

In the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, there are three records observed from or during one-day trips off *Midway*, 22 Mar 2012 (2 birds), 19 Sep 2012, and 18 Oct 2012. In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, Mottled Petrels have been reported in small to moderate numbers from shore and during single-day trips during 17 Mar-26 Apr and 9 Oct-26 Nov, 1977-2016, within a few km off *Kaua'i* (e.g., [HRBP](#) 6091) *O'ahu*, *Moloka'i* (*E* 38:57), *Maui*, and *Hawai'i I* (e.g., *E* 46:89; [HRBP](#) 5167-5168, 5614-5616, 5790-5791, 6085-6090, 6092-6093). Most of these observations have been of 1-3 birds, although up to 6 per day were recorded sw. of O'ahu 11 Apr 1997 and between Kaua'i and Ni'ihau 1 Apr 2001, and up to 16 to 102 per day were observed from Keokaha SB, Hawai'i I, during shore-based sea-watches from 28 Sep to 22 Oct 2016. Interestingly, no Mottled Petrels have been turned into rehabilitation facilities or found dead in the Hawaiian Islands.

[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/>