

MURPHY'S PETREL

Pterodroma ultima

non-breeding visitor, occasional at sea

monotypic

Murphy's Petrel breeds in the Austral, Tuamotu, and Pitcairn Islands in the central S Pacific, with non-breeding birds ranging into the central and eastern N Pacific (King 1967, Harrison 1983, Pitman 1986, Bailey et al. 1989, Bartle et al. 1993, AOU 1998, CBRC 2007, Howell 2012). Murphy's Petrel appears to be an uncommon but regular transient through Hawaiian waters, while several other records have come from land. Records from Jun-Aug were of worn birds, one record in mid-Oct was of a second-year bird commencing molt, while many records are of fresher birds in Oct-Feb. This suggests that some birds may undergo northbound migration in spring-summer to molt in the N Pacific and southbound migration in late fall and winter, while others may molt in winter in the N Pacific (*cf.* Bailey et al. 1989, Bartle et al. 1993, Pyle 2008, Howell 2012). This possibly suggests origins from breeding populations that show differing breeding and molting phenologies

At sea, a Murphy's Petrel was observed 27 Jun 1989 about 325 km SSE of South Point, Hawai'i (Spear et al. 1999), and another was observed during an at-sea survey in this area 19 Dec 2015. During HICEAS surveys, 5 Murphy's Petrels were observed off O'ahu to Hawai'i I 21-28 Nov 2002 and two were observed off Hawai'i I 8-10 Oct 2010 (Rowlett 2002; [HICEAS data](#)). Some of these in 2002 were originally identified as Murphy's Petrels but may also have included one or more [Herald Petrels](#) from Henderson Island. Likewise, a dark *Pterodroma* petrel photographed off Kona, Hawai'i I 6 Dec 2006 ([CRC data](#); [HRBP](#) 5437-5440 published *NAB* 61:350) was thought to be of a Murphy's Petrel but may also have been of a dark Henderson Petrel. Other Murphy's Petrels have been photographed and/or recorded by experienced observers off Kona, *Hawai'i I*, 20 Dec 2009 ([HRBP](#) 5753-5755), 18 Oct 2010 (molting bird, [HRBP](#) 6074), and 24 Oct 2013 ([HRBP](#) 6076-6077), well south of Hawai'i I 16 Nov 2011 and 19 Dec 2015, between O'ahu and Kaua'i in late Jun 2011 (worn bird, [HRBP](#) 6075, published *NAB* 65:699), and off *Kaua'i* 13 Oct 2014 ([HRBP](#) 6078).

Regarding birds seen ashore, in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, adult female Murphy's Petrels were collected flying over the central plain of Green Island, *Kure* 7 Oct 1963 (USNM 492988), and over Tern Island, *French Frigate Shoals* 9 Sep 1966 (USNM 497224) (Clapp and Woodward 1968). On *Midway*, a Murphy's Petrel was observed for several hours flying, landing and calling from the ground 14 Aug 2014 ([HRBP](#) 6079-6082, published *NAB* 69:517), and undoubtedly the same individual returned to the same area and exhibited the same behavior during mid-Aug-6 Oct 2015 ([HRBP](#) 6083) and on 24 Oct 2016. In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, an adult male collected 7 miles SW of Barbers Point, *O'ahu* 29 Oct 1966 (USNM 543917) was originally reported as a Kermadec Petrel (*E* 27:83) but later determined to be a Murphy's Petrel (Clapp 1974a). Four Murphy's Petrels have been turned into the seabird rehabilitation facility at Sea Life Park: a first-fall female picked up alive NE of Koloa, *Kaua'i* 25 Nov 1986 ([HRBP](#) 730-733) died 22 Feb 1987 (BPBM 175801; [HRBP](#) 5667 of specimen); one found stranded at an unknown locality on O'ahu 17 Jan 1995 ([HRBP](#) 1061-1069) was released 31 Jan 1995; one picked up alive in Kahului, *Maui* 17 Nov 1996 was photographed ([HRBP](#) 1137-1139) and released; and one that flew aboard a ship off Honolulu, O'ahu 18 Jan 2005,

died the next day ([SOS data](#); BPBM 184828, [HRBP](#) 5191-5193 of corpse and [HRBP](#) 5667 of specimen).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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