

BLACK KITE

Milvus migrans

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

M.m. lineatus

A common and widespread, migratory Eurasian species (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951b, Cramp and Simmons 1980, Marchant and Higgins 1993), the Black Kite has been recorded as vagrants in w. Micronesia (Wiles et al. 2004, Wiles 2005, VandedrWerf et al. 2006a), Wake Atoll (one in 1980-1985 and one in 2004-2005; Jones 1995, Rauzon et al. 2008), and at *Midway* in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, the only accepted records for the AOU area through 2016 (AOU 2000). Three records of four birds exist for Midway. The first is of an individual seen and captured in black-and-white movie film by C. Robbins 24 Jan-early Feb 1962 (mentioned by Glass et al. 1990). A second Black Kite was observed and photographed by USFWS biologists 28 Dec 1994-12 Mar 1995 (Pyle 1997; [HRBP](#) 1074-1075). In 1998 an individual first observed 13 Jan was joined by a second bird, suspected to have been present as early as 15 Feb, but not confirmed until 14 Mar (28 images on [HRBP Page](#); published *FN* 52:147, 272). Two together (*cf.* [HRBP](#) 1197-1200) were last observed 20 May (at which time both were molting inner primaries), and the last observation of a single bird was on 6 Jun. These birds fed on carrion (including dead albatross chicks) and one of the 1998 birds attacked a weak Bonin Petrel chick sitting in the Midway harbor ([HRBP](#) 1401-1402).

Although ship-assistance of these Black Kites to Midway was possible (*cf.* Jones 1995) the species is highly migratory in Eurasia and none of the Midway birds showed signs of captivity. Furthermore, there was an influx of records to w. Micronesia during the 1990s and 2000s (Wiles *et al.* 2004), perhaps indicating an expanding population. We here consider them natural vagrants.

Based on examination of photos by experts, the AOU (2000) identified the 1998 bird as from the *M m. lineatus* group, which breeds in e. Asia including e. Siberia and Japan and winters from the Middle East to Australia (Marchant and Higgins 1993), and the photographs show birds consistent in characters with the expected subspecies, *lineatus*, within this group. The *lineatus* group is sometimes referred to as a separate species, Black-eared Kite.

[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/rfp-monograph/>