

LITTLE BLUE HERON

Egretta caerulea

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

monotypic

A strictly American species, the Little Blue Heron breeds and winters from the southern United States to northern S America (AOU 1998). Individuals disperse north during summer as far as s. Canada, and n. breeding populations can migrate S for winter. At least one has turned up in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* but none have been recorded elsewhere in the Pacific area (Pratt et al. 1987).

What was likely the same adult Little Blue Heron was observed on *O'ahu* on a predictable schedule for more than 20 years. A white Ardeid observed in Wet Loch, Pearl Harbor 14 Feb 1965, reported as either an immature Little Blue Heron or a [Pacific Reef-Heron](#) (*E* 25:82; see also [Snowy Egret](#)), may have been the first sighting of this individual. The first substantiated observation was recorded 11 Sep 1966 at a Waipi'o Peninsula wetland bordering the West Loch of Pearl Harbor, by which time it had obtained dark blue definitive plumage. Thereafter it was reported at the same locality in 14 of 22 years through 1987 (*e.g.*, *AB* 34:204), photographs being obtained 6 Nov 1984 ([HRBP](#) 0440-0442) and 22 Jul 1987 ([HRBP](#) 0633-0635, 0708). It was observed on only 1 or 2 dates each year (except 4-5 in 1979 and 1987), often in Aug-Oct and less frequently in May, Jul, Nov, and Dec. Cessation of sugar mill operations during the late 1980s eventually dried this wetland. Adults seen 20 Aug - 1 Sep 1990 at nearby Pouhala Marsh and 29 Jul-22 Nov 1993 at another site on West Loch are the only other confirmed reports from the Hawaiian Islands. It seems likely that these reports all pertain to a single individual that spent a majority of this 28-year period in wetlands of the Pearl Harbor area restricted to public access.

Two dark herons sighted a few minutes apart flying with Cattle Egrets flying down Hanapepe Canyon, Kaua'i 22 May 1990, were identified by an experienced visiting birder as Little Blue Herons but it seems more likely that these were stained Cattle Egrets, a frequently observed sight in Hawaii.

[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/>