

RED PHALAROPE

Phalaropus fulicarius

Other: Gray Phalarope

monotypic

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

Red Phalarope has a N circumpolar breeding distribution and winters primarily at sea, as far south as Chile and New Zealand in the Pacific (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1983, Higgins and Davies 1996, AOU 1998). It is more pelagic in distribution than [Red-necked Phalarope](#), and thus is a regular transient and winter visitor to the Hawaiian Islands in small numbers. It has also been recorded on Johnston Atoll (16 Mar 1992) and at Kiribati (Pratt et al. 1987). Other than several over-wintering individuals on Laysan, occurrences in the Hawaiian Islands are either of migrants at sea or of sick or weak individuals on land (*cf. E* 4:24-25, Munro 1944). There is one report of a storm-driven bird at Hawaii Volcanoes NP, Hawai'i I, in 1949 (Dunmire 1961) and at least 17 specimens of grounded individuals from Hawaii are present in collections (BPBM, USNM; FMNH 188914).

As with [Red-necked Phalarope](#), a majority of the records from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* have been from *Laysan*, where a [minimum](#) of 46 individuals have been recorded from 1896-2009 (e.g., Shaunisland 1899, Bailey 1956, Ely and Clapp 1973; [HRBP](#) 0336). Long-staying individuals recorded during the winters of 1992-1993, 1994-1995 (2 birds), 1996-1997 (3 birds), and 2006-2007 (2 birds) plus many other observations during brief visits by researchers in Nov-Mar indicate a preference for over-wintering residency here, which is not observed elsewhere in Hawaii. The brine fly population in Laysan's central lagoon likely provides an abundant and consistent food source for these individuals. Other records from the Northwestern Islands are from *Kure* (5, 1964-2014; e.g., Clapp and Woodward 1968, Woodward 1972; BPBM 156946; [HRBP](#) 6547); *Midway* (4, 1951-2008; e.g., *E* 11:71; BPBM 179792; USNM 553683); and *Pearl and Hermes* (1, 22 Mar 1967; Amerson et al. 1974). The high count was of "several" recorded by Bailey (1956) on Laysan 10 Jan 1913, two of which were collected, and five recorded there on the 2003 [Christmas Count](#) (*AB* 58:103). Seven phalaropes on Laysan 4 Apr-30 May 2009, reported as [Red-necked Phalaropes](#), may have included one or more Red Phalaropes.

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* the Red Phalarope's status is dominated by an influx of birds to surrounding waters during 27 Feb- 24 Apr 2015, culminated by the observation of dozens of birds per day by [CRC](#) off Kona, Hawai'i I during 16-24 Apr, including a high count of 65 birds tallied on 18 Apr 2015 ([CRC data](#); [HRBP](#) 6551-6552), and including over 10 individuals observed during other one-day pelagic trips off O'ahu, Maui, and Hawaii from 27 Feb-26 Apr ([HRBP](#) 6548-6550). Apart from this influx, the occurrence of Red Phalarope in the Hawaiian Islands was well documented in the historic literature based on specimens collected in the 1800s-1900 on Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i I (Henshaw 1900a, 1902a; Rothschild 1900, Bryan 1901b, Perkins 1903, Munro 1944; [HRBP](#) 6544-6545). Excluding the spring of 2015 and including these there historic records, approximately 86 individuals have been documented from on-shore or near-shore *Kaua'i* (18, 1894-2016; e.g., [HRBP](#) 1320, 5748; including 5 turned into the [SOS](#) program on Kaua'i during 2013-2015, [SOS data](#), BPBM 185748, 185953); *O'ahu* (21,

1941-2016; e.g., [HRBP](#) 6546, 6548; 6 specimens at BPBM and 1 at BYUH); *Maui* (11, 1894-2008; e.g., BPBM 185089; [HRBP](#) 1326, 5170, 5235, 5474 published *NAB* 59:171); *Kaho'olawe* (1, 26 Mar 1995); and *Hawai'i I* (35, 1900-2016; e.g., [HRBP](#) 5460-5461, 6549-6553; published *NAB* 62:495). The only record of a phalarope from Moloka'i, observed on the Pala'au Flats 15 Nov 1988, was not confirmed to species. The high counts (other than in spring 2015) were of 7 observed off Keahole Pt, Hawai'i I 21 Mar 2016 and "several" at Kanaha Ponds during the winter of 1894; 17 unidentified phalaropes observed flying by off Kilauea Point, Kaua'i, 14 Mar 2005 were likely Red Phalaropes.

Analysis of observation dates from all islands shows an increase in records during migratory periods, especially in spring, indicating a transient population. Excluding spring 2015 (see above), initial observations of Red Phalaropes in the Southeastern Islands by month are Oct (4), Nov (15), Dec (12), Jan (8), Feb (6), Mar (42), Apr (22), and May (3). King (1970) also recorded peak numbers from Mar during monthly surveys S and E of the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands Mar 1964-Jun 1965. Many of the fall and winter birds occurring on the islands were weak or sick whereas many of the spring birds appeared healthy. We question the date of collection for BPBM 175763 from Kaua'i (10 Sep 1985), a bird in adult basic plumage. Otherwise, the earliest fall arrival was of one observed on Kealia Pond NWR, Maui 8 Oct 2004 ([HRBP](#) 5170), and the latest spring records were of two in 1961, an adult male in alternate plumage that landed on a ship between Moloka'i and O'ahu 21 May 1961, that subsequently died (BPBM 153379), and one banded by DOFAW at Paiko Lagoon, O'ahu 23 May.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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