

## WANDERING TATTLER

*Tringa incanus*

Hawaiian: Ulili

monotypic

### **non-breeding visitor, regular winterer**

Wandering Tattlers breed along the N Pacific Rim from ne. Siberia to Yukon and nw. British Columbia and winter throughout the Pacific as far S as Peru, the Galapagos Tuamotu and Samoan Is, and less commonly through the w. Pacific S to New Zealand and Australia (Stickney 1943, Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Higgins and Davies 1996, AOU 1998, Gill et al. 2002, Wiles 2005). They are regular transients and winter visitors to Wake and Johnston atolls (Amerson and Shelton 1976, Rauzon et al. 2008), as well as the Hawaiian Islands, where they are found regularly but usually not in large numbers. Gill et al. (2002) summarized movement patterns of Wandering Tattlers through the Pacific, indicating that the majority of fall transients pass through the Hawaiian area in pulses in mid-Jul through Aug (adults) and in Sep-Oct (first-year birds), and that wintering populations are lower, indicating stopover of birds that winter farther south. Likewise, a build-up of spring transients in Hawaii begins in March and peaks just before departure in early-mid May. Moderate numbers of birds, predominately one-year-olds that do not acquire full breeding plumage, remain on Hawaiian winter grounds through summer (*cf.* Henshaw 1902a). Two wintering birds observed on Hawai'i I in 1999 and 1999-2007 had been banded as adults on breeding territories near Anchorage, Alaska (AB 54:108). Bloxam (1827a) first noted Wandering Tattlers (as "*Scolopax Solitarius*") based on observations on O'ahu in 1825 whereas the first known specimen was collected in Hilo in 1875 (Sclater 1878, 1881). Peale (1848) and Cassin (1858) noted specimens collected elsewhere in the Pacific (referring to "*Totanus polynesia*" and "*T. oceanicus*", respectively) but not in the Hawaiian Islands. The AOU (2006) placed Wandering Tattler into the genus *Tringa* from *Heteroscelus*.

Tattlers have been observed on all *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* (Clapp and Woodward 1968). The largest concentrations by far, for the entire Hawaiian Islands, have been observed on *Laysan* (*cf.* [HRBP](#) 1418, 6419), where counts of over 100 individuals are routinely recorded in Aug-May, including high tallies of 200-500 during 6-11 Mar 1965 and 350 during 5-12 Aug 1965 (Ely and Clapp 1973), and 400-450 during 4-11 Nov 1984. High counts on the other islands, primarily as documented during the POBSP (see [Seabird Page](#)), include up to 15 each on *Kure* (see also [HRBP](#) 5514) and *Midway* (also "50" on Midway by Grant *in* Fisher 1949), 29 on *Pearl and Hermes*, 25 on *Lisianski*, 1-2 on *Gardner Pinnacles*, 15 at *French Frigate*, and up to 3 each on *Necker* and *Nihoa* (see also Conant 1983b). Oversummering birds numbered about 20 on Laysan for three consecutive POSBP years (Ely and Clapp 1973) and from 1-10 are usually found through summer at the other Northwestern Islands annually.

Wandering Tattlers have likewise been recorded on all *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*. Peak counts in Hawaii do not reflect population sizes since the species seldom flocks, typically being spread uniformly in ones and twos along shorelines, in ponds and marshes, and occasionally up mountain streams (up to 1000 m elevation at times; Bryan and Seale 1901, Perkins 1903). Peak island-wide fall-migration and winter counts during [DOFAW Waterbird](#) and other surveys are more representative, and include (during 1980-

2007): *Ni'ihau* (3 on several occasions; see also, Fisher 1951; undoubtedly low although noted as scarce on this island by Munro, *E* 1[2]:4); *Kaua'i* (50 in Aug 1998 and 18 in Jan 1992); *O'ahu* (72 in Aug 1988 and 58 in Jan 1988; see [HRBP 0773-0775](#)); *Moloka'i* (27 in Aug 1987 and 14 in Jan 1998); *Lana'i* (17 in Aug 1995 and 19 in Jan 1996); *Kaho'olawe* (2 on several occasions, undoubtedly low); *Maui* (36 in Aug of both 1997 and 1998, and 37 in Jan 1992); and *Hawai'i I* (53 in Aug 2006 and 23 in Jan 2006). Other notable single-location high counts include 30+ at Kealia NWR, Maui, 19 Aug 1988; 23-26 at the Nu'upia Ponds, O'ahu, 4 May 1988, 11 Sep 1994, and 21 Dec 1996; and 20+, at the Puna Sugar Mill settling ponds, Kea'au, Hawai'i I 5 Sep 1981 (*E* 45:73). High counts of overwintering birds have included up to 10-12 together: e.g., at Waipi'o 12 Jun 1981 and at Nu'upia Ponds in Jun-Jul 1994. [Christmas Bird Count](#) data indicate little trends, except in the Honolulu area where numbers declined from the 1940s through 1995, but may have been recovering from 1995 through the mid-2010s ([Graph](#)). The earlier decline was undoubtedly due to reductions in undisturbed wetland habitat in se. O'ahu during this period. [DOFAW Waterbird Surveys](#), by contrast, have indicated a steady increase of Wandering Tattlers statewide, from counts of 25-105 in the 1980s, to 40-130 in the 1990s, to 60-160 in the 2000s, with a peak count of 162 in Aug 2006. A tattler banded on Moloka'i in 2006 was observed at Kanaha Pond, Maui, in 2010.

The total over-wintering population of Wandering Tattlers in all of the Hawaiian Islands was estimated at 1,000 birds by Engilis and Naughton (2002).

#### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

#### [Literature cited](#)

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