

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

Rissa tridactyla

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

The Black-legged Kittiwake breeds in Arctic and Subarctic regions throughout the N Hemisphere and winters in the open ocean, irregularly S to Japan, California, and occasionally farther S (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1983, AOU 1998, Howell and Dunn 2007). Vagrants have been reported from S Africa and Peru. Many individuals that have reached the Hawaiian Islands have been oiled and/or sick, and have occurred during winters in which food appeared to be scarce for this species, resulting in southward irruptions elsewhere in the Pacific.

Of 33 records from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, 20 have involved birds that died or were found dead (10 specimens at USNM, 5 at BPBM, and 2 at MVZ; e.g., Clapp and Woodward 1968, Clapp et al. 1980; [HRBP](#) 1458, 5070-5071, 5736-5737) and several of the others were observed to be weak or oiled ([HRBP](#) 0179, 0875-0876, 0879, 1072). These records are from *Kure* (8, 1964-2014; e.g., [HRBP](#) 6581), *Midway* (16, 1965-2016; e.g., *E* 43:2; [HRBP](#) 0179, 5736-5737, 6582), *Pearl and Hermes* (3 corpses found 15-19 Mar 1965), *Laysan* (3, 1906-2009; e.g., Bailey 1956, *E* 70:27; [HRBP](#) 1072), and *French Frigate* (3, 1977-1993; e.g., *E* 48:48; [HRBP](#) 0875-0876, 0879, 1458, 5070-5071). Three at Kure 24-26 Dec 1964 (Sibley and MacFarlane 1968, Woodward 1972) is the only record of multiple live birds together. Most records are from Jan and Feb, with the earliest being 20 Dec (2008, Midway) and the latest of a live individual being 28 Mar (1967, Kure).

There are 8 records of 9 birds in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*. These include two birds at Hapuna Beach, *Hawai'i I* during winter 1965-1966 (exact date not known) and six records from *O'ahu*, one that landed on a boat in Kaneohe and died 5 Mar 1982 (BPBM 158928); one partially entangled in fishing line (but volant) observed in the Honolulu Harbor 11-19 Dec 1982 (*E* 43:72; [HRBP](#) 0202-0209, 0232, published *AB* 37:341); three weak or emaciated birds turned into SLP 8 Feb 1992 (found in Kailua, rehabilitated and released 4 Mar; [HRBP](#) 0964-0965), 2 Feb 1998 (from Laie; BPBM 184105), and 3 Feb 2002 (from Kaneohe; [HRBP](#) 1371, 5008; BPBM 184500); and one at Kaena Pt 11 Feb 2012. One at Kanaha Pond, *Maui*, 7 Feb 2012 may have been the same bird later observed at Kaena Pt, O'ahu, or may have indicated an occurrence of this irruptive species that month.

Perhaps surprisingly, the majority of records have involved adults. Several of the specimens from the Northwestern Islands have been identified as the expected Pacific subspecies, *R.t. pollicaris* (*cf.* Clapp et al. 1980), with which all undoubtedly refer.

[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/>