

BLACK TERN

Chlidonias niger

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

C.n. surinamensis

Black Terns of the subspecies *C.n. surinamensis* breed throughout Canada and the n. United States and winter from s. Mexico to n. S America (AOU 1998). The distinct nominate subspecies breeds in Iceland, Europe, and w. Asia and winters primarily in Africa (Cramp and Simmons 1985). In the Pacific, vagrant Black Terns have been recorded on Clipperton I (Howell et al. 1993), in Australia (Higgins and Davies 1996), and in the Hawaiian Islands, where most records are from fall but also include one spring, two over-summering, and four wintering individuals.

Four Black Terns have been recorded in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, on *Kure* 20 Jun 1967 (Woodward 1972), *Midway* 23 Sep-8 Oct 1982 (adult; Pyle 1984), and *Laysan* 21 Dec 1994-15 Apr 1995 (first-year bird; [HRBP](#) 1073) and 12-13 Dec 2011 (first-year bird; [HRBP](#) 6666-6667). Twenty additional individuals have been recorded from the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*. On *Kaua'i* one was photographed at PRMF 1-4 Sep 1998 ([HRBP](#) 1261, 5812) and one was at Kawa'iele Wetlands 1 Nov 2010. On *O'ahu*, a first-fall bird at Waipi'o 17-19 Sep 1967 was collected on the latter date (Clapp and Pyle 1968; USNM 543065; [HRBP](#) 5372 of specimen), adults were observed at Waipi'o 14 Nov 1965 (*E* 26:73) and 12 Oct-6 Nov 1983 ([HRBP](#) 0618, 1420-1421) and at Nu'upia Ponds on Mokapu Peninsula 3-9 Oct 1994, first-winter individuals were at various places along the N and E coasts 19 Dec 2008-25 Mar 2009 ([HRBP](#) 5375-5376, 5744, 5813-5814, published *NAB* 63:523) and at the Ki'i Unit of JCNWR 23 Nov-7 Dec 2015 ([HRBP](#) 6671). A second-hand report of a first-cycle bird at Nu'upia Ponds in Feb 1975 (*E* 35:146) is unsubstantiated. The first substantiated record for *Moloka'i* was of a first-fall bird at Ohiapilo Wetlands 31 Oct-5 Dec 2015 ([HRBP](#) 6669-6670). Two adults observed at Kanaha Ponds, *Maui* 18 Nov 1965 (*E* 26:88-89) may have included the one observed on O'ahu four days earlier. Also on Maui, individuals were observed at Kealia Pond NWR 24 Aug-24 Sep 1978 (*E* 40:29), 1 Nov 1993, 5 Sep 1994, and 14 Sep 2011. A first-winter bird found at Aimakapa Pond, *Hawai'i* 10 Feb 1982 remained there for over 14 months, being last seen on 14 Apr 1983 (*E* 45:75; [HRBP](#) 0326-0327). Other records from Hawai'i I include a first-fall bird at Waiakea Pond, Hilo, 6 Sep 1979 (*E* 41:76; [HRBP](#) 0087-0089), an adult at Aimakapa 6-21 Nov 1999, and a first-year bird at Kona (Kalahehe) WTP 16 Dec 2015-11 Mar 2016 and (probably the same then second-year bird) returning there 29 Aug-6 Dec 2016 ([HRBP](#) 6668).

The specimen from O'ahu has been identified as the expected *C.n. surinamensis* (Clapp & Pyle 1968, PP examination) and it is probable that all records from the Pacific, including Australia, refer to this subspecies (Higgins and Davies 1996).

[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/>