

CASPIAN TERN

Hydroprogne caspia

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

monotypic

Caspian Terns breed locally throughout N America, Eurasia, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, withdrawing primarily to warmer subtropical and tropical latitudes during winter months (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1985, Higgins and Davies 1996, AOU 1998). They were combined along with other terns in the genus *Sterna* until afforded their own genus by the AOU (2006). Vagrants have been recorded in Bermuda, and the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, where individuals and groups of up to 3 have been noted sporadically since 1979; otherwise there are no other records of vagrants from the Pacific Basin.

It is difficult to determine how many birds have reached Hawaii due to wandering tendencies of long-staying individuals. As with [Great Blue Heron](#), there are several series of observations suggesting movement of birds between islands (e.g., Ashman et al. 1982b). Careful examination of records suggests that a minimum of 17 birds have been recorded on *Kaua'i*, *O'ahu*, *Maui*, and *Hawai'i*. The first record was of one initially found at Salt Lake, O'ahu, 3 Jan 1979 and subsequently observed at various O'ahu locations (but primarily at Nu'upia Ponds on Mokapu Peninsula) through 10 May 1980 (*E* 40:29, 41:75-76; [HRBP](#) 0421-0426, 1437-1438, published *E* 40:29 and by R. Pyle 1979). One observed at Kealia Pond NWR, Maui, 6-30 Oct 1979 and 25 Jan 1980 could have been the same individual (*E* 41:76). Subsequent series of observations were of 1-3 birds 5 Dec 1981-28 Jun 1983 on Hawai'i, Maui, and O'ahu (*E* 42:98, 45:75; Ashman et al. 1982b; [HRBP](#) 0180-0181, 0427-0428 published *E* 43:12); 1-2 on O'ahu and Maui 10 Dec 1984-31 Jan 1986 (*E* 46:135; [HRBP](#) 0545-0546); 1-3 on Maui and O'ahu 19 Dec 1988 - 24 Nov 1990 ([HRBP](#) 0902-0904); one on Maui Jan-Feb 1997; one on Kaua'i and O'ahu 26 Nov 2000-15 Apr 2002; 1-3 on Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i 19 Nov 2002-28 Apr 2004; one on O'ahu and Maui 23 Sep 2004-16 Dec 2006 ([HRBP](#) 5816); and adults on O'ahu 16 Jan 2007-16 Jan 2008, and at Nu'upia Ponds, KMCAS, each winter (observations from 12 Dec-11 Mar) from 2009-2010 to Dec 2016 ([HRBP](#) 6665). Based on age determinations in the field (of some but not all birds), the six long-staying individuals (arriving in 1979, 1981, 1984, 1988, 2000, and 2002) appear to have been first-winter birds that spent the ensuing 1-2 years in the islands, whereas arriving adults have been recorded for a single winter, except for the Nu'upia Pond bird, which indicates a returning adult after successful migration outside of the Hawaiian Islands, perhaps to continental breeding grounds. The high counts were of 3 together at Kealia Pond, Maui, 18 Jan 1983 and 10 Jan-6 Apr 1990.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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