

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE

FACT SHEET - KURE ATOLL

Kure Atoll is under the jurisdiction of the State of Hawaii and administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Green Island and the Sand Islands within the Atoll are managed as part of the statewide wildlife sanctuary system by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. Under the terms of the license from the State issued in 1959, the Coast Guard is obliged to protect all species of turtles, the Hawaiian Monk Seal, and all other animals (except rodents), bird and plant life on the islands.

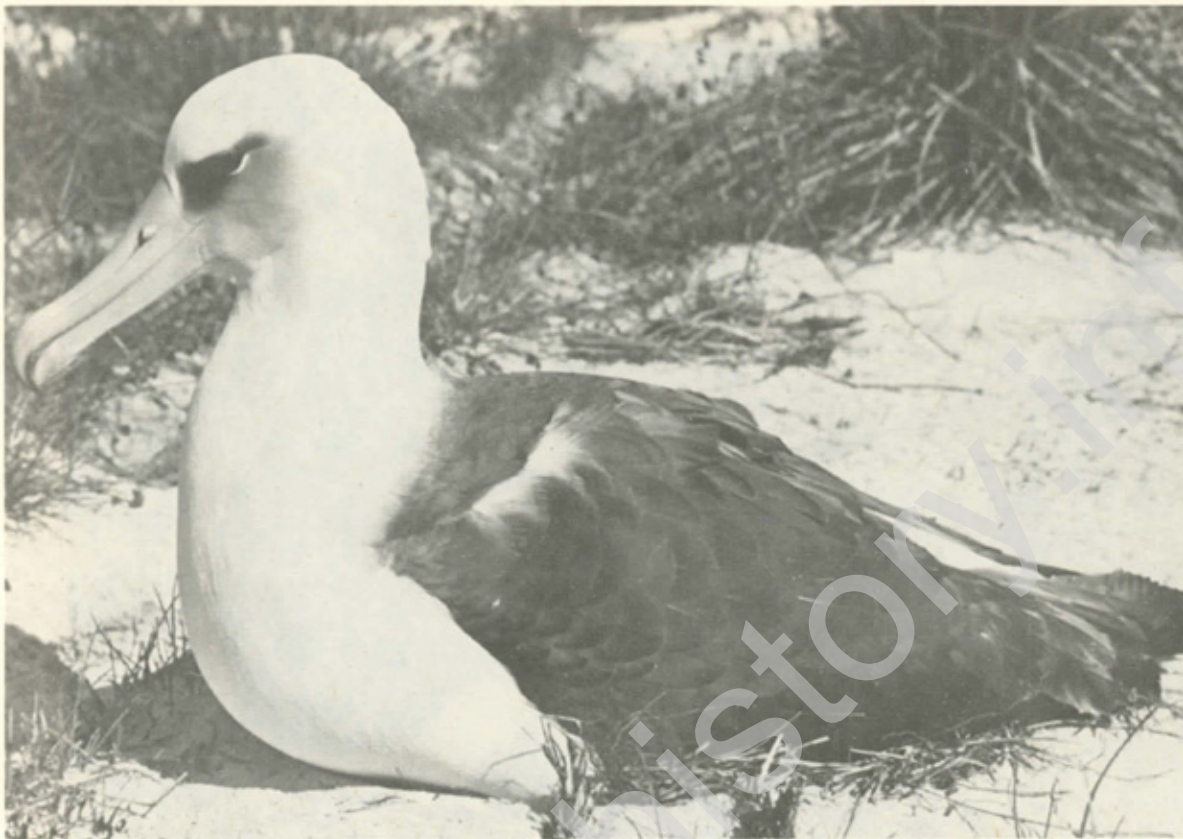
Human activities on the islands are regulated by the department's administrative rule, Title 13, Chapter 125, Rules Regulating Wildlife Sanctuaries. The following activities are prohibited except for agents of the board and except as authorized by the board or its authorized representative:

- (1) To remove, disturb, injure, kill, or possess any form of plant or wildlife;
- (2) To possess or use any firearm, bow and arrow, or any other weapon, trap, snare, poison, or any device designed to take, capture, or kill wildlife;
- (3) To discharge any weapon on or into the wildlife sanctuary;
- (4) To possess any explosives or fireworks;
- (5) To introduce any form of plant or animal life;
- (6) To start or maintain a fire;
- (7) To camp or erect any structure;
- (8) To enter into any area posted "No Trespassing Area";
- (9) To remove, damage, or disturb any notice, sign, marker, fence, or structure;
- (10) To dump, drain, or leave any litter, toxic material, or other waste material except in trash receptacles or areas designated for the deposit of refuse;
- (11) To enter or remain upon any surface water area;
- (12) To park, land, or operate any air, water, or land vehicle except on roads and in areas designated for such use.

Green Island and the Sand Islands are categorized as "Prohibited Entry" areas except as authorized by the Board of Land and Natural Resources through an entry permit; however, officials and employees of the U. S. Navy and Coast Guard may enter these islands to conduct official government duties without a permit. Due to the atoll's sensitive nature, entry priorities are first given to people involved with ongoing research. In many instances a scientific collecting permit is also required of the researcher. Entry permits and scientific collecting permits for terrestrial plants and animals are administered through the Division of Forestry and Wildlife while scientific collecting permits for the aquatic life are administered through the Division of Aquatic Resources.

The Hawaiian Monk Seal, because it is an endangered marine mammal, falls under the jurisdiction of the U. S. National Marine Fisheries Service as well as the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

In general, rules regulating fishing around the main Hawaiian islands also apply to the waters of Kure.



HAWAII DIVISION OF FISH & GAME PHOTO

By Ronald L. Walker

Common Name: Laysan Albatross

Scientific Name: Diomedea immutabilis

Other Names: Gooney Bird

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands.

Not found on any of the larger, inhabited islands but abundant on Midway and Kure, and on Laysan, Lisianski, and most of the other islands of the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge).

Description: 32-34 inches long, wingspan approximately 6 1/2 feet. A very large, white bird with black wings, back and tail, and a black patch in front of the eye. The bill and legs are a pale, fleshy grey.

Remarks: Voice a whistle or a groan. Clacks its bill. Nests in colonies, generally in level, sandy areas. The nest is a slight depression in the ground. In November, lays one white egg which measures 3 1/2 x 3 inches. The incubation period is about 63 days. Both adults incubate the egg and care for the young. Adults replace each other on the nest at about 24-day intervals. Adults leave the nesting grounds in June or July. By September the young birds also leave. These birds breed for the first time at the age of 7 or 8 years and may live to be 30 years old or more.



U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By David B. Marshall

Common Name: Brown Booby

Scientific Name: Sula leucogaster

Other Names: 'A (Hawaiian name) or Brown Gannet

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Resident Near Oahu on Moku Manu island. May nest on the cliff face of Ulupau Head at MCAS Kaneohe Bay. Found also in small numbers on other islands in the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge) and in warmer parts of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Description: 30-32 inches long; sexes similar; a dark brown bird with a white belly. The sharp separation of color is very noticable. The bill legs and webbed feet are yellowish gray. Nestlings are covered with white and in first year plumage are light brown all over.

Remarks: Voice a variety of harsh, hoarse, grunts and screams. Breeding season begins in February. Nest is built on the ground out of twigs and driftwood. Lays two eggs, chalky bluish-white. Strong, easy flight; when returning to the breeding colony it flies low over the water, catching fish or squid. Boobies are continually harassed by the Great Frigate birds which force them to disgorge their catch before they return to the colony.



U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By David B. Marshall

Common Name: Red Footed Booby

Scientific Name: Sula sula

Other Names: Red Footed Booby, 'A (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. There is a breeding colony on Kauai at Kilauea Lighthouse, and on Oahu at MCAS Kaneohe Bay in Ulupau Head. It is also found on Moku Manu and on most of the small islands in the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge) and in warmer part of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Description: 26-30 inches long; sexes similar; white with black wing tips; white tail. Red legs and feet (webbed), base of bill bluish. Young birds are dull brownish, black bill and dark legs. Nestlings are covered with white down. Do not confuse this bird with the "Masked" or Blue-faced Booby.

Remarks: Voice a variety of sharp, hoarse, grunts and growls. Breeding begins in February and young are found in the nest as late as November.

Nests in bushes or trees. Not known to nest on the bare ground. One egg, chalky, bluish-white. Food is caught by diving into the water, and consists mainly of fish and squid. When returning to the colony flies low over the water. Boobies are continually harassed by the Great Frigate birds which force them to disgorge their catch before they return to the colony.



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO
By David B. Marshall



Common Name: Great Frigate Bird

Scientific Name: Fregata minor palmerstoni

Other Names: Storm Bird, IWA (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Resident near Oahu on Moku Manu, though is not known to breed there; and on other islets off the windward coast. Found on the islands of the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge), especially on Laysan, Lisianski, French Frigates Shoal; and on Midway. Also found in warmer parts of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Description: 40 inches long; wing span of 7 feet. A dark sea bird with slender wings, slim body and deeply forked tail. Legs and webbed feet are small; bill is long and hooked. Sexes generally similar except that the male has a red throat pouch which it inflates like a large balloon during the breeding season, and the female has a white throat and chest patch with a red eye ring. The juvenile has a white head, throat and chest with a slight rusty coloring.

Remarks: At the nest, the voice is a variety of grunts and gurgling noises. Nests in bushes or occasionally on piles of sticks. Lays one white egg, male does most of the incubating. Extremely graceful in flight; soars for hours, rarely flapping its wings. (At first glance, in the air looks like a buzzard.) Often seen in large number over Oahu and other islands during periods of weather changes. Obtains most of its food by robbing Boobies. It forces them to throw-up in flight and then catches the food. The Hawaiian name "IWA" means thief.



HAWAII DIVISION OF FISH & GAME PHOTO

Common Name: Pacific Golden Plover

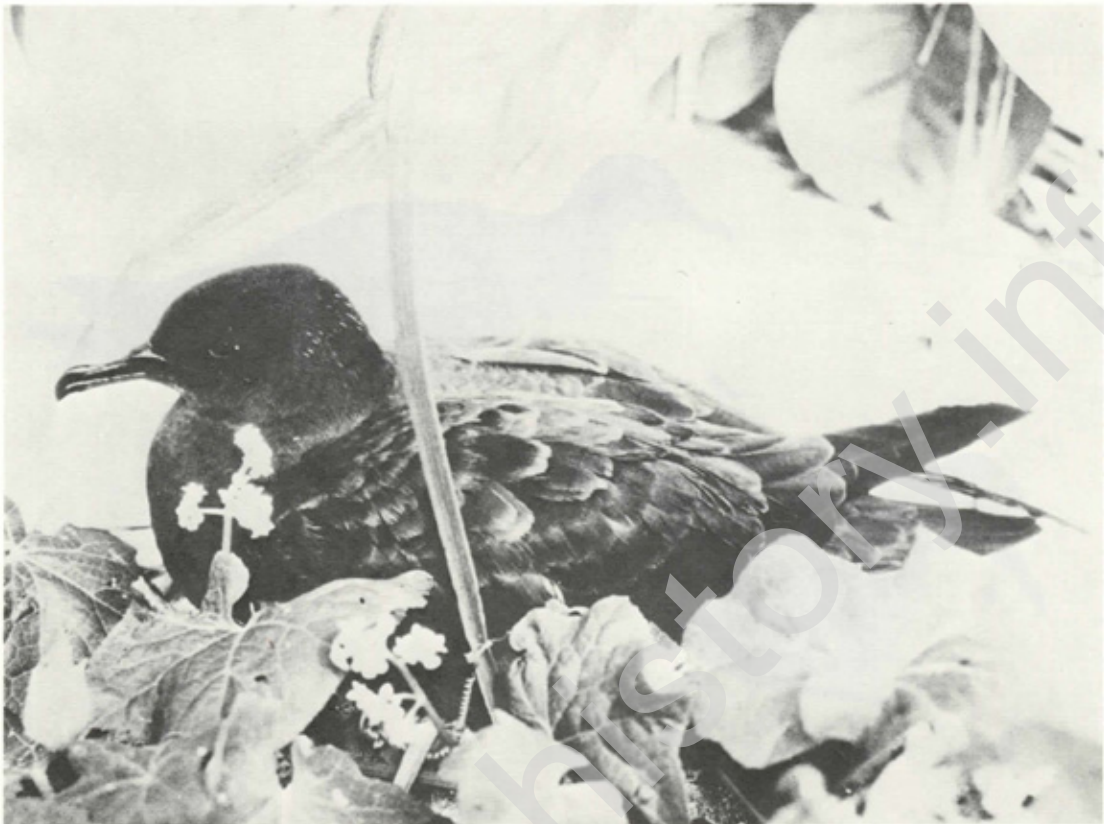
Scientific Name: Pluvialis dominica

Other Names: KOLEA (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Migratory to the Hawaiian Islands. Arrives in late August, remaining until April. Found on all islands on mudflats, lawns, fields, beaches and grassy mountain slopes.

Description: 11 inches long; dark brown, spotted with gold above, paler below. Sexes similar. A rather chunky bird with fairly long legs. Prior to leaving the Hawaiian Islands in April, the plover molts into breeding plumage. This consists of a white band over the forehead and down the sides of the neck; with the cheek, throat, breast and abdomen black.

Remarks: Voice a clear melodious whistle. Nests in Alaska and the arctic. Generally arrives in the Hawaiian Islands in flocks, but soon disperse. Each plover usually establishes its own territory which it defends from other plover while ignoring different species of birds. The plover can usually be seen running for a few steps and then stopping. Listens and peers at the ground in search of food. The plover is the most abundant of the migratory shorebirds. A few plover may remain in the Hawaiian Islands over the summer months, but these never attain the full breeding plumage.



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By David L. Olsen

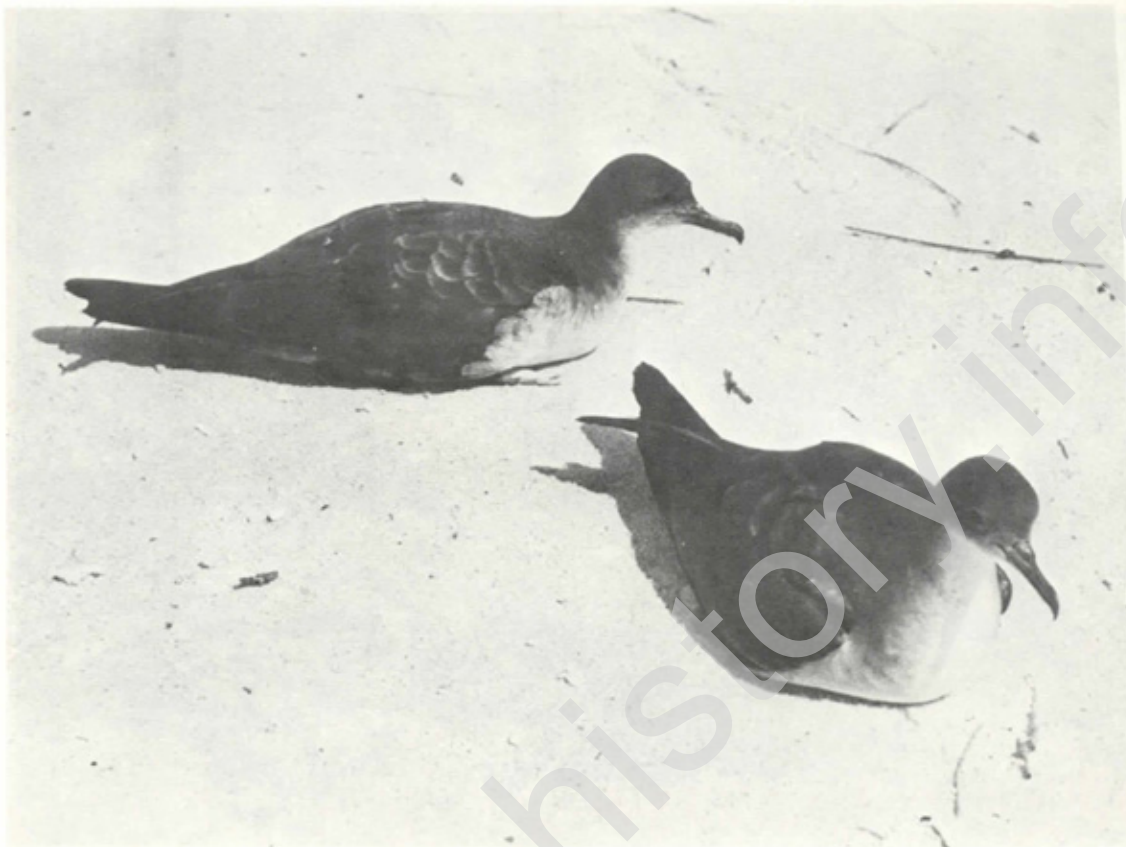
Common Name: Christmas Island Shearwater

Scientific Name: Puffinus nativitatus

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Found in small numbers on Moku Manu from March through October. More abundant on the islands of the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge), and on Midway.

Description: 15 inches long; sexes similar. An all black shearwater with blackish feet. Slightly smaller than the more common Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

Remarks: Voice a series of moans and groans similar to the Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Lays one white egg in a shallow scrape between rocks and bushes. These birds can generally be seen from Ulupau Head at MCAS, Kaneohe Bay in the evening as they return to nests on Moku Manu. These birds have a graceful flight, low over the water as they search for food. Like all shearwaters, these birds cannot stand upright on their legs and have great difficulty moving about on land.



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By David B. Marshall

Common Name: Wedgetailed Shearwater

Scientific Name: Puffinus pacificus

Other Names: 'UA'AU KANI (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian islands. Resident near Oahu on Moku Manu, Manana, Popoia, and many other islets off the windward coast. On Kauai, found in the cliffs near Kilauea Lighthouse. Abundant on the islands of the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge) and in warmer parts of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Description: 16-18 inches long; sexes similar; dark gray above, whitish below, narrow wings. Tail wedge-shaped, bill long and slender, hooked at the tip. Short, pale, flesh-colored legs and webbed feet. Nestlings covered with pale gray down.

Remarks: On the nesting grounds adult birds emit weird moans, groans and wails, beginning at dusk and continuing into the early morning. Nests in colonies, arriving in April; in June lays one white egg, usually in a burrow, or in natural crevices. Incubation is shared by both adults. Young are fed by regurgitation and are abandoned by the parents in November when they are fully fledged. Young birds leave the breeding grounds approximately two weeks after the adults have left for the open ocean. Like all shearwaters, these birds cannot stand upright on their legs and have great difficulty moving about on land. YOUNG BIRDS CAN FREQUENTLY BE FOUND ALONG ROADSIDES, WHERE THEY HAVE FALLEN ON THEIR FIRST FLIGHT. The exact cause is unknown. The flight of adults is graceful and low over the water. Gathers food, mainly squid, from the ocean surface.



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By Eugene Kridler

Common Name: Gray-backed Tern

Scientific Name: *Sterna lunata*

Other Names: PAKALAKALA (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Not generally found on the larger, inhabited Hawaiian Islands. A small colony breeds on the eastern slope of Moku Manu near MCAS, Kaneohe Bay. Found on Midway and on many of the other islands of the north-west chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge).

Description: 15 inches long; sexes similar. Head and the nape of the neck are black; back and upper wings gray. A white stripe extends beyond the eye, making a definite white "V" on the forehead. Bill and feet are black.

Remarks: Voice similar to the call of the Sooty Tern. Nests in colonies. One egg is laid in late March or April. The chick is soft gray, heavily barred with black and white. Young chicks are preyed on by the Great Frigate birds. By September, the breeding season is over and the birds leave the nesting area until the following year. A rather nervous and shy bird. Though graceful in flight, on the ground the wings appear to be too large for the bird.



U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By Eugene Kridler

Common Name: Hawaiian Noddy Tern

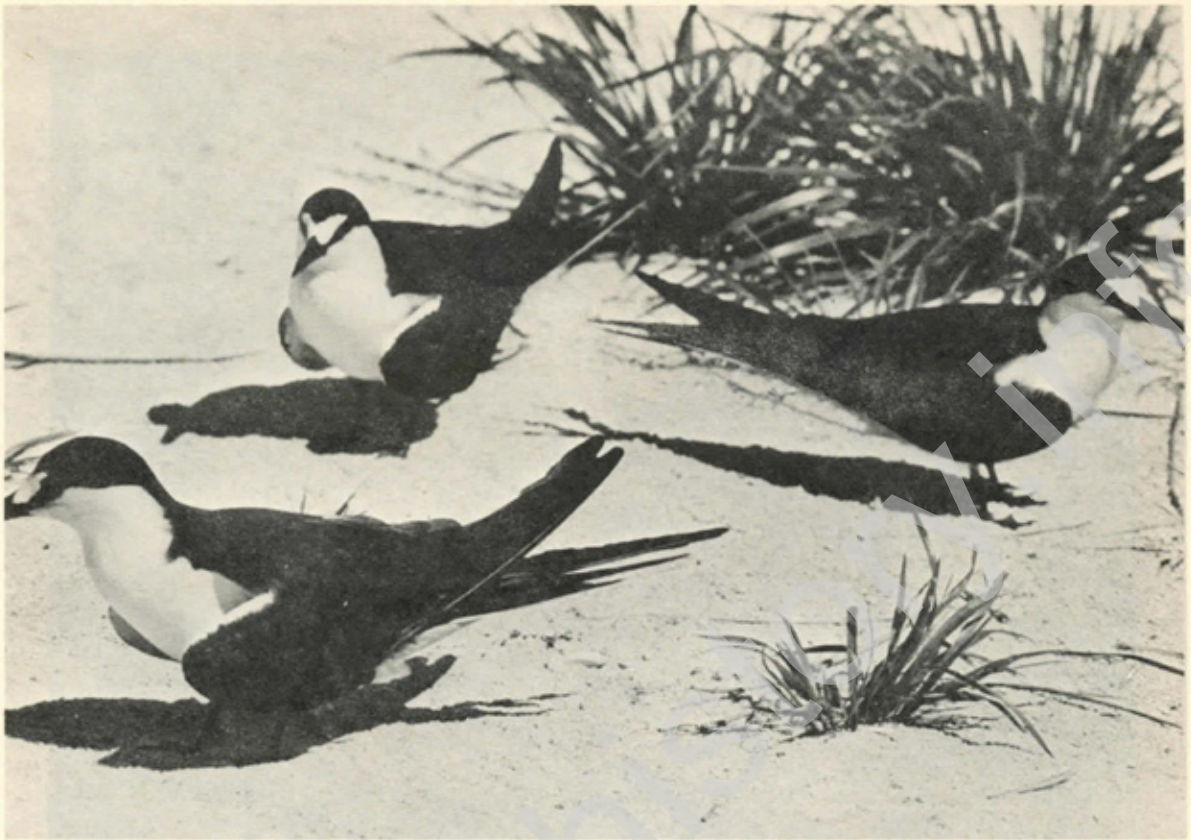
Scientific Name: Anous minutus melanogenys

Other Names: White Capped Noddy, NOIO (Hawaiian Name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Resident on the larger, inhabited Hawaiian Islands, on Moku Manu, and many islets off the windward coast of Oahu. Found also on Midway and on most of the other islands of the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge) and in warmer parts of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Description: 14 inches long; sexes similar. Closely resembles the Common Noddy Tern, though slightly smaller; showing a gray tail and more gray on the cap. The body is darker and the legs are black, with orange webbed feet.

Remarks: Voice is similar to the Common Noddy Tern though not as piercing. The nest is usually made in a crevice of a cliff, or on a ledge in a cave, though on Midway and Lisianski Islands the birds nest in ironwood trees. One egg is generally laid though there does not seem to be any set breeding cycle. Moku Manu has a large colony which breed in the cave on the western side of the island. Often seen over the Nuupia Ponds at Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneohe Bay.



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By David B. Marshall

Common Name: Sooty Tern

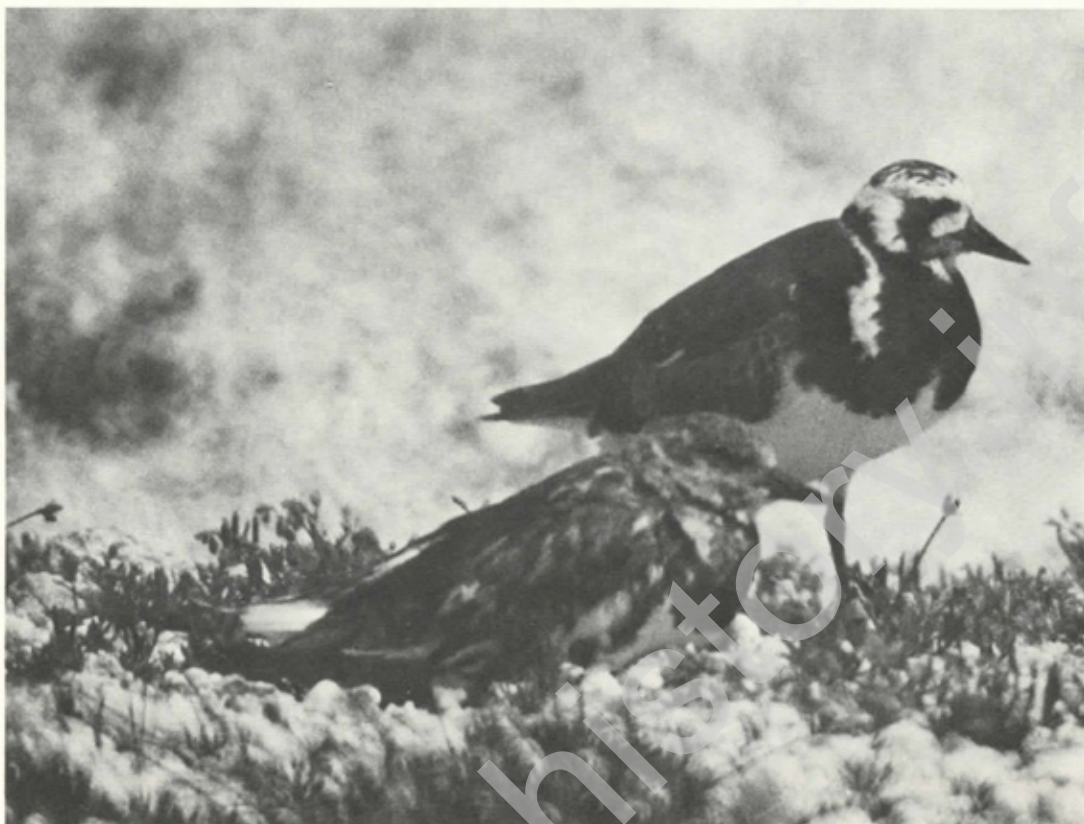
Scientific Name: Sterna fuscata

Other Names: 'EWA 'EWA (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Resident near Oahu on Moku Manu, Manana, and other islets off the windward coast, as well as other of the larger, inhabited, Hawaiian Islands. Abundant on the islands of the northwest chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge) and in warmer parts of the Pacific and Indian Oceans

Description: 17 inches long; sexes similar; upper parts, head, bill, and legs black; under parts and patch above the eye white. Long narrow wings, and deeply forked tail, webbed feet. Young birds are dusky brown with upper parts flecked with white.

Remarks: Voice a shrill, incessant scream. Nests in colonies. Nests on sandy flat areas or occasionally on rocky ledges. Lays one egg, sometimes two, in March or April. Young birds are ready to leave the nest by August. All birds leave for the open ocean by September, returning the following February or March. Strong, graceful flight; seems to enjoy spiraling on air currents. Food is gathered by catching fish swimming on the surface; rarely enters the water. This is the most abundant species of tern in Hawaii.



HAWAII DIVISION OF FISH & GAME PHOTO

By Ronald L. Walker

Common Name: Ruddy Turnstone

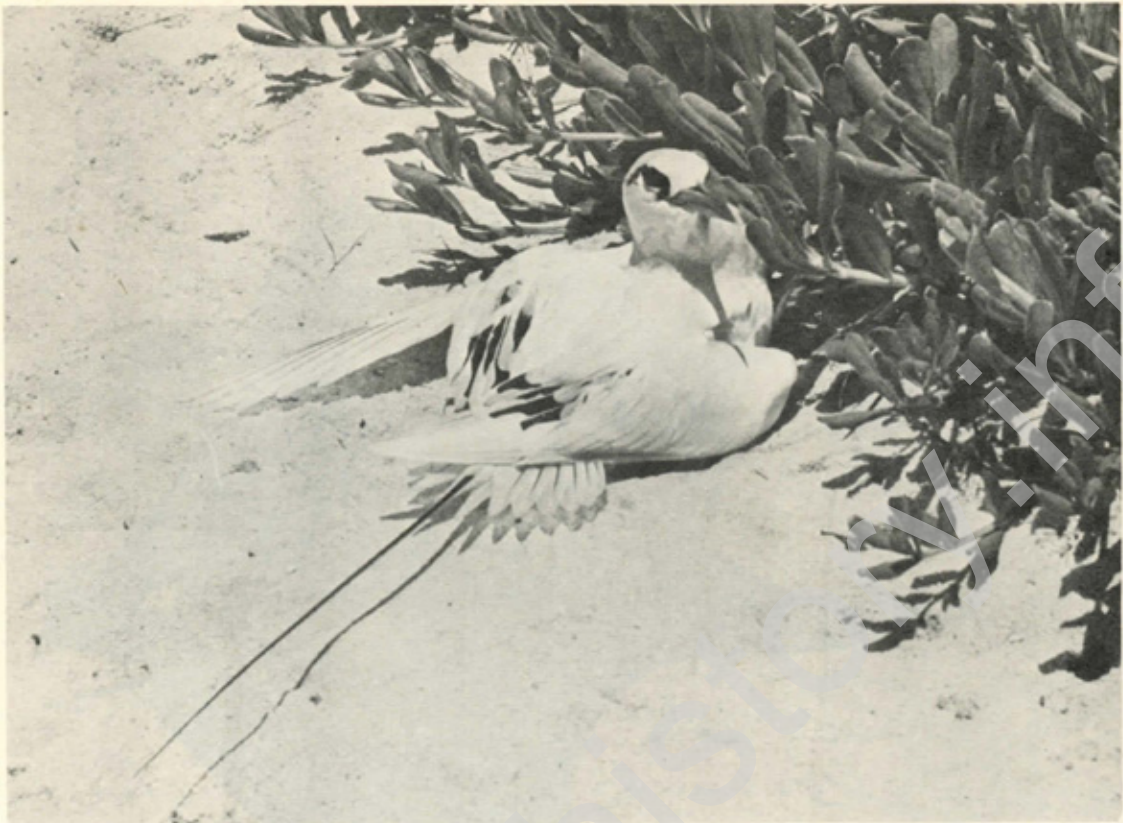
Scientific Name: Arenaria interpres

Other Names: 'AKEKEKE (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Migratory to the Hawaiian Islands. Arrives in August and leaves for the arctic in April or May. Found on all islands on beaches, mudflats, lawns, fields and grassy mountain slopes.

Description: 9 inches long; sexes similar. Head and breast are patterned in black and white, back and wings are a chestnut reddish-brown; abdomen white. The bill is short and dark and the legs are reddish-orange. In flight, this species can be recognized by the fancy white markings on the back, wings and tail. In winter plumage this species lacks the color brilliance but retains much of the markings.

Remarks: Voice a rapidly repeated trill. Nests in Alaska and the arctic. In late August and early September, arrives in the Hawaiian Islands in large flocks of several hundred or more. These flocks quickly break up into smaller groups, but this species is seldom seen as single birds. Feeds on insects and crustaceans by turning stones over with its bill. Usually found in flocks with or near plover and other shorebirds. Flight is rapid, flock rises and turns in unison.



U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By David B. Marshall

Common Name: Red-tailed Tropicbird

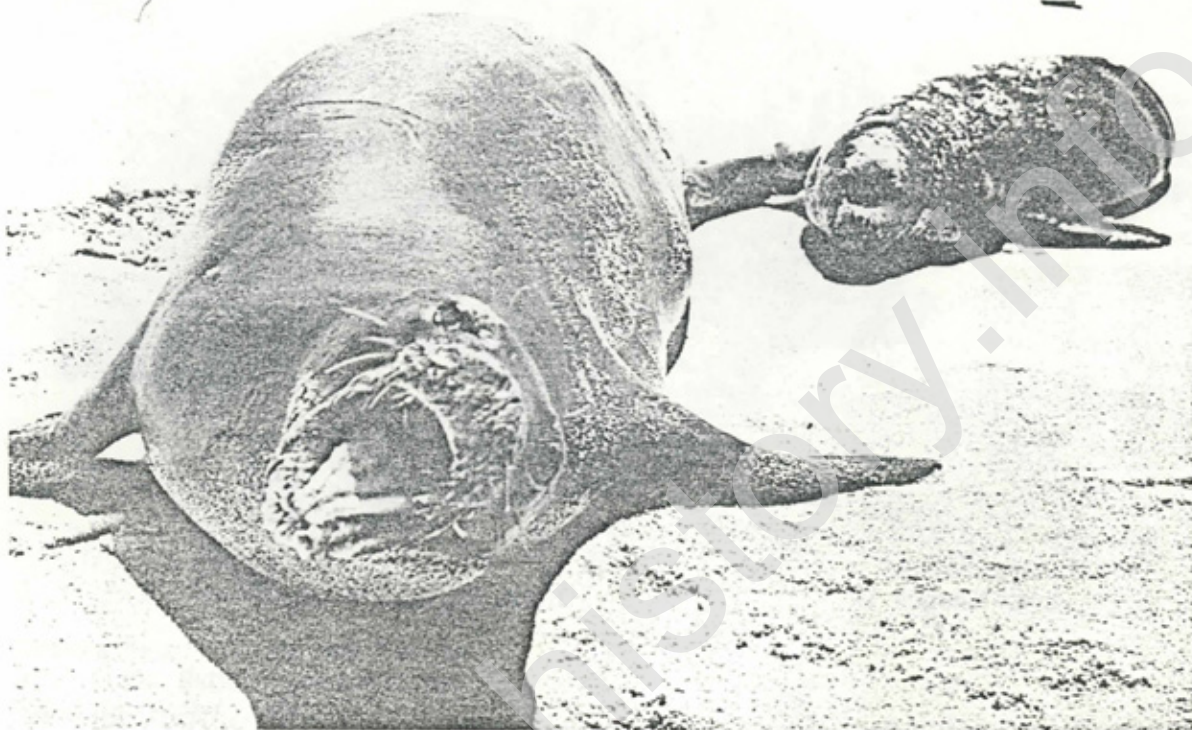
Scientific Name: *Phaethon rubricauda*

Other Names: KOA'E 'ULA (Hawaiian name)

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands. Not generally found on the main, inhabited islands but observed off the windward coast of Oahu, especially near Moku Manu. Not known to nest in the main Hawaiian Islands but may breed on one of the offshore islets. Found on Midway and on most of the other islands of the northeast chain (Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge).

Description: 32 inches long (including 16 inch tail feathers); sexes similar. Mostly white except for black feathers around the eye and the long, narrow, red tail feathers. Bill is bright red. Plumage often seems to have a pinkish tint. Young birds are barred on the back with black spotting; bill black.

Remarks: Voice a sharp hoarse call, also a tern-like scream. The display dance is very spectacular as the bird often drifts backward in the wind which gives it the appearance of flying in reverse. Graceful, soaring flight.



U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By Eugene Kridler

Common Name: Hawaiian Monk Seal

Scientific Name: Monachus schauinslandi

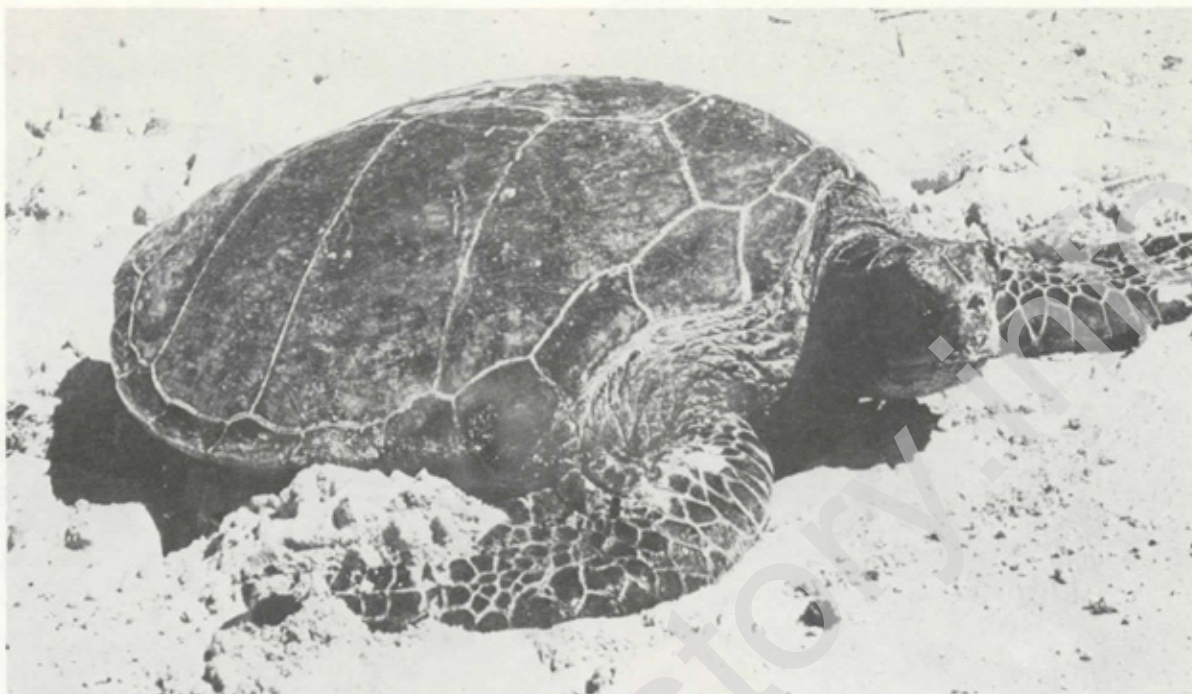
Other Names: ILIO-HOLO-I-KAUUA (Hawaiian name which means a dog running in the roughness)

Distribution: Native (endemic) to the Hawaiian Islands. Found in the northwest chain. Breeds, or once bred on Laysan, Lisianski, Midway, Kure (Ocean) Island and Pearl and Hermes Reef. Movement and/or migration patterns are not well known. Rarely seen near the larger, inhabited Hawaiian Islands.

Description: The adult male is blackish grey with paler areas on the head and neck. The belly is white or tinged with yellow in varying degrees, forming a contrast with the upper parts. Females and juveniles are very much paler grey above, and soiled yellow below. Young seals are jet black until they begin to shed their first coat at about 30 days old. Adult males weigh 380 pounds or more, adult females weigh 600 pounds or more, though they are apt to lose weight drastically when nursing young. Pups (young) weigh 35-38 pounds at birth.

Remarks: Voice a bellow or strange bubbling sound. Gestation (pregnancy) period probably about 330 days. 1 pup per litter. Pups are born during the period January through March, possibly also during other months. Food consists of eels, fish, squid, and octopus.

THIS SPECIES IS LISTED BY THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.



U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

By Eugene Kridler

Common Name: Green Sea Turtle

Scientific Name: Chelonia sp.

Hawaiian Name: HONU

Distribution: Native (indigenous) to the Hawaiian Islands, as well as other tropical and subtropical ocean areas. Movements are not well understood. They appear to be migratory and have been recovered more than 1,500 miles from where they were tagged. Important feeding areas exist around the larger, inhabited Hawaiian Islands. This species formerly nested on the larger Hawaiian islands, however, the smaller northwestern islands of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Naval Station, Midway, probably support the last significant nesting green sea turtle population in the U. S.

Description: Green Sea Turtles grow to 42 inches or more in shell length. At maturity they weigh about 250 pounds. The largest recorded weight is 850 pounds. Each flipper has only one claw. The edges of the shell are fairly smooth. The tail of the males extends to the end of the hind flippers, while the tail of the females rarely extends to the end of the upper shell. Adult females have a steep sided upper shell. Juveniles vary in both color and shell contour. The common name refers to the color of the internal body fat.

Reproduction: Individual adult turtles return to sand beaches to lay eggs once every two to four years. Females lay eggs three to seven times at 13-day intervals from July to November. Each clutch contains about 100 white, leathery eggs, about the size of golf balls. The peak of hatching is in September and October. Hatchlings weigh one ounce and have black upper surfaces with white borders around each flipper. Hatchlings go to sea by sight.

Remarks: The primary food is marine plants. Growth is thought to be very slow. No methods are known for determining age. Destruction of nesting habitat, as well as over-harvesting have apparently caused the population decline. The total breeding population in the Hawaiian Islands is thought to be less than 1,200. IN THE STATE OF HAWAII THIS SPECIES IS PROTECTED BY STATE REGULATIONS AND CAN ONLY BE TAKEN WITH A STATE PERMIT. AT NAVAL STATION, MIDWAY ISLANDS, THE TAKING OF THIS SPECIES IS REGULATED BY CO NAVSTA MIDWAY INSTRUCTION.