

LEAST SANDPIPER

Calidris minutilla

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

monotypic

The Least Sandpiper is an American species which breeds across the Holarctic and winters S to c. S America (AOU 1998). In the Pacific Basin, they have been recorded on Clipperton I (Howell et al. 1993), New Zealand (unconfirmed; Higgins and Davies 1996), and the Hawaiian Islands, where they occur primarily as an occasional to semi-regular winter visitor. The lack of other reports from the tropical Pacific (Pratt et al. 1987) may relate to the difficulty in separating Least Sandpiper from other small species of *Calidris* (Pyle et al. 1988; see [Semipalmated Sandpiper](#)), although the paucity of substantiated reports for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and Kaua'i indicate that they are rare in (perhaps unable to withstand migration to) the w. Pacific Basin. Least Sandpipers have also been recorded in Europe and New Zealand (Cramp and Simmons 1983, Higgins and Davies 1996).

There are unsubstantiated reports for three Least Sandpipers from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* that could be correct but which fail to eliminate other small *Calidris* sandpipers (e.g., [Long-toed Stint](#)): 30 Nov 1996 and 14 Oct 2000-23 Mar 2001 at Midway, and 7 Mar 1992 at Laysan (see [Long-toed Stint](#); [HRBP](#) 5593-5592). In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* there are documented reports for a [minimum](#) of 64 individuals, 17 observed only in fall, 45 wintering birds, and 1 possible spring transient. These have occurred on *Kaua'i* (6 individuals, 2006-2016; [HRBP](#) 5316); *O'ahu* (25, 1967-2016; e.g., Clapp and Pyle 1968, Pyle et al. 1988; USNM 543064; [HRBP](#) 0361, 0658, 0675-0682, 5231, published *E* 48:74); *Moloka'i* (5, 2009-2015; e.g., [HRBP](#) 5687-5689); *Mau'i* (21, 1963-2016; e.g., USNM 582893; Pyle et al. 1988; [HRBP](#) 5427, 6493-6496; published *NAB* 63:523); and *Hawai'i* (7, 1981-2016; e.g., Pyle et al. 1988). There are several records of 2-3 Least Sandpipers together, with a high count of 6 together at Kealia NWR, Maui, 22 Feb 2013 (cf. [HRBP](#) 6496). Several Least Sandpipers have apparently returned for consecutive winters; e.g., 2 at Waipi'o in 1983-1987 and 2-4 at Kealia Pond NWR, Maui 1987-1993 and 2004-2011. The earliest fall arrival was for 8 Aug (1990, Ki'i unit of JCNWR, O'ahu), the only possible spring transient occurred 14 Apr 1987 at Kealia Pond, and the latest spring record was for 3 individuals 25 Apr (1977 at Waipi'o; *E* 38:58). There are no records for over-summering birds. There are also many additional older records of unsubstantiated Least Sandpipers from the Southeast Islands (e.g., *E* 24:38; 31:103; 37:65; 38:7, 103; 40:16), most or all of which are likely correct, including five together at Waipi'o, O'ahu, 27 Nov 1976 (*E* 38:3).

[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/>