

GLAUCOUS GULL

Larus hyperboreus

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

L.h. barrovianus

Glaucous Gulls breed throughout Arctic regions of N America and Eurasia (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1983, AOU 1998, Howell and Dunn 2007). They winter primarily at n. latitudes, regularly to c. California and c. Siberia, and occur as a rare winter visitor to the Hawaiian Islands, representing the only records for the Pacific Basin (Pratt et al. 1987). Although there are several specimens and sight records of adults, there is no evidence that individuals return for consecutive winters.

Historically, there was considerable confusion between Glaucous and [Glaucous-winged](#) gulls, regarding both the nomenclature (e.g., Henshaw 1900a, 1903; Rothschild 1900; Perkins 1903), and the identification of individuals reaching Hawaii. Many older reports of Glaucous Gulls were later retracted, re-identified, or are accompanied by descriptions that favor the more expected Glaucous-winged Gull. These include specimens from Kaua'i in 1899 (BPBM 1099), Laysan in 1906 (BPBM 4540), and Lana'i in 1919 and 1921 (BPBM 7064-7065), which have long been cited as Glaucous Gulls but are first-year Glaucous-winged Gulls with bleached outer primaries (PP specimen examination). Other old reports from these islands, Maui, Hawai'i I, and Kaua'i (Rothschild 1900; Bryan 1901a, 1901b; Bryan and Seale 1901; Henshaw 1902a; McGregor 1902; Munro 1944, Bryan 1958; *E* 45:74), as well as 8 of 10 records on [DOFAW Waterbird Surveys](#), were also more likely or known to be of Glaucous-winged Gulls. For this reason we have only considered records of Glaucous Gull accompanied by confirmed specimen, photograph, or careful description eliminating Glaucous-winged Gull.

There are 10 substantiated records of single Glaucous Gulls from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*. At **Kure**, an individual present 17 Jan 1965 was collected (Clapp and Woodward 1968; USNM 494366) and one was photographed 15 Mar-1 Apr 1979 (*E* 41:48; [HRBP](#) 1462). Another specimen collected there 18 Apr 1923 (Clapp and Woodward 1968; USNM 489331) was preserved as a skeleton only and could not be confirmed to species (PP examination); it would represent the latest spring record for Hawaii and we consider it unsubstantiated due to possible confusion with a bleached Glaucous-winged Gull (see above). At **Midway**, three specimens have been collected (29 Jan 1965, USNM 567294; 31 Mar 1967, USNM 497294; and 21 Jan 1995, BPBM 183505), and other individuals were observed 8 Mar 1990, 14-28 Feb 1997, and 11 Mar 2009. Singles were also present at **Laysan** 8 Feb 2012 ([HRBP](#) 6637) and at **French Frigate** 11-18 Jan 1980. There are several other reports of tentatively identified or undescribed individuals from Kure (e.g., Sibley and McFarlane 1968, *E* 39:14) and Midway (e.g., *E* 4:42, 18:04) that we consider unsubstantiated.

There are nine substantiated records of single individuals from the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*. On **Kaua'i**, one commuted between Hanapepe and Waimea 1-17 Mar 1991 ([HRBP](#) 0928; photograph not diagnostic but well-described), one was at Waimea 31 Jan-6 Feb 1999 ([HRBP](#) 1221-1223, 1260), and one was at PRMF 6 Jan-21 Feb 2008 ([HRBP](#) 5407 published *NAB* 62:323). Despite numerous reports (e.g., *E* 4:41; 6:63-64, 82; 12:30; 23:38, 41; 31:75-76, 107; most of which likely pertain to Glaucous-winged

Gulls), there are only four substantiated records of Glaucous Gull from *O'ahu*. These are of individuals near the Honolulu Airport 22 Jan 1959 (King 1959a), at Ke'ehi Lagoon 19 Dec 1976-27 Feb 1977 (*E* 37:82-83, 38:4), at the Ki'i unit of JCNWR 8 Jan-23 Feb 1984, and at Halona Pt 13 Feb-11 Mar 2016 ([HRBP](#) 6638-6639). On *Hawai'i*, individuals were present in Hilo 5 Jan 1992 and 24 Jan-18 Mar 2005 ([HRBP](#) 5198, 5228, published *NAB* 59:347).

A hybrid Glaucous x Glaucous-winged Gull was photographed at Kure 14-25 Jan 2014 ([HRBP](#) 6634-6635) and well-described hybrids of this combination were at Barking Sands, Kaua'i 2 Dec 2002 and Ki'i, O'ahu, 15 Feb 2002, while a specimen collected on Midway 7 Mar 1957 (USNM 464843) appears to be a Herring X Glaucous or "Nelson's" gull (S.N.G. Howell and PP examination). See [Herring](#) and [Glaucous-winged](#) gulls for more information on gull hybrids in the Hawaiian Islands. All specimens of Glaucous Gull from the Hawaiian Islands have been identified as *L. h. barrovianus* (Banks 1986, PP examination), a smaller and darker (in first-winter) population that breeds in Alaska and winters along the Pacific N American coast. The larger and paler *pallidissimus*, which breeds in e. Siberia, might also be expected in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

[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/>