

HORNED PUFFIN

Fratercula corniculata

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

monotypic

Horned Puffins breed on rocky seacoasts and islands in ne. Siberia, Kamchatka, the n. Kuril Is, islands of the Bering Sea, the Aleutian Is., and coastal Alaska and British Columbia, and they winter southward primarily offshore as far as Japan and rarely California (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951a, AOU 1998, Gaston and Jones 1998, CBRC 2007). Alcids were unknown in the Hawaiian Islands until late Jan-early Feb 1963 when numbers of freshly dead Horned Puffins (and a few Parakeet Auklets) washed ashore in the *Northwest Hawaiian Islands* (see [Parakeet Auklet](#) account for discussion of freshly dead wash-ups vs. dried remains).

The first Horned Puffins were of one banded and released at *Midway* 26 Jan 1963 and one observed on *Kure* 27 Jan 1963 (later found dead and retrieved for a specimen). These along with at least 25 additional specimens from Kure (e.g., [HRBP](#) 5099), Midway, *Laysan*, and *Pearl and Hermes* (Clapp 1986; SDNHM 35991) suggest wide-scale arrival of starving individuals during this period. Most carcasses were collected in late Jan-10 Feb 1963 but dried remains continued to be found at these locations through 6 Mar 1963. Observers noted and sometimes tallied other dried remains that were not preserved. Considering numerous reports that may overlap or may include some later-collected specimens, we find documentation of at least 5 from Kure, 31 from Midway, 4 from Pearl & Hermes, and 1 from Laysan (Fisher 1965, Robbins 1966, Clapp & Woodward 1968, Woodward 1972, Amerson *et al.* 1974, Clapp & Giezantner 1980, Clapp 1986) for a total of 41 individuals during 1963, while others undoubtedly washed ashore unobserved or went unreported. Subsequently there have been 9 additional records: Midway 7 Feb 1983, 2 Mar 2004 (BPBM 184619; [HRBP](#) 5416 of specimen), 31 Jan-13 Feb 2014 (5 birds; [HRBP](#) 6575-6577), and 2-3 Mar 2016; and Pearl & Hermes 8 Mar 2003 (BPBM 184496). All of these were found dead except for the 2016 Midway bird, found alive on 2 Mar ([HRBP](#) 6578-6580) and dead on the 3 Mar.

On 2 Mar 1995 the long-dried head (with neck vertebrae attached) of a Horned Puffin (BPBM 183507) was found in the interior of Eastern I, Midway, 156 m from shoreline, and this was followed by the location of a long-dried head of a [Tufted Puffin](#), 1533 m distant from the Horned Puffin 15 April 1995. Both heads had been present an unknown time before their discovery and were found inside a large crowded colony of nesting [Laysan Albatrosses](#). It is possible that they were picked up somewhere in the N Pacific and brought to Midway by Laysan Albatrosses (see [Tufted Puffin](#)), and we consider the natural occurrence of these heads at Midway as questionable.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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