

RING-BILLED GULL

Larus delawarensis

non-breeding visitor, regular winterer

monotypic

The Ring-billed Gull breeds across Canada and the n. United States and winters S to Mexico and the W Indies (AOU 1998, Howell and Dunn 2007). They are one of the more-regular gull species to reach the Hawaiian Islands, being annual winter visitors in small numbers to the Southeastern Islands. Most records pertain to first-year birds and there is little evidence that individuals return for consecutive winters. The only record in the Pacific S of Hawaii is for Kiribati (King 1955), indicating little if any passage through the islands.

Ring-billed Gulls are rare in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, where the potential for misidentifications (*cf.* [Mew Gull](#)) necessitates a cautious approach to reports. The only substantiated records are from *Pearl and Hermes* 5 Mar 1963 (Clapp and Woodward 1968; USNM 493342) and *Laysan* 23 Jul 1983 ([HRBP](#) 0293-0296). Sight observations of Ring-billed Gulls that do not rule out Mew and other gull species have been reported from Kure (Mar-Apr 1978; *E* 39:14), Midway (18 Feb 1987), Pearl and Hermes (23 Mar 1967; Amerson et al. 1974), and French Frigate (13-14 Mar 1967, Amerson 1971; and 21 Nov 1999).

The majority of Ring-billed Gulls reaching the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* appear to exhibit site fidelity to a single wintering area, facilitating documentation and assessment of numbers reaching the state. The first records were of first-year birds collected in the late 1800s on Maui (Bryan 1901a, 1901b; BPBM 152367) and 12 Feb 1901 on Moloka'i (BPBM 1686; Munro 1944). Many others in the Southeastern Islands have been photographed (see [HRBP](#) page) or collected (BYUH 1807, 1931). A [minimum](#) of at least 180 individuals have been reported, from *Kaua'i* (19, 1977-20015), *O'ahu* (84, 1944-2013), *Moloka'i* (7, 1901-2010), *Lana'i* (1, 1989), *Maui* (43, late 1800s-2016), and *Hawai'i I* (26, 1957-2016). High counts have included 7 at the Ki'i unit of JCNWR, O'ahu 28 Jan-26 Feb 1995 and 6 each at Pearl Harbor, O'ahu 17 Dec 1944 (*E* 5:53) and Kealia Pond NWR, Maui 10 Feb 1976 (*E* 37:65). Two individuals over-summered at Ki'i, O'ahu in 1990 and other apparent over-summering birds were on Laysan in 1983 (see above) and Barking Sands, Kaua'i in 2000. Otherwise, the earliest fall arrival was of an adult recorded 26 Aug 1997 at Waimea, Kaua'i, and the latest spring observations were on 23 May 1998 at Ki'i and 25 May 1991 at Kealia Pond. One observed at Aimakapa Pond, Hawai'i I 5-19 Dec 1987 had been banded as a chick in Churchill County, Nevada, the previous summer (David 1988b).

[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/rfp-monograph/>