

## WHISKERED TERN

*Chlidonias hybrida*

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

subspecies?

The Whiskered Tern breeds locally throughout the Old World, from s. Europe and s. Africa through s. Russia and Australia, and winters primarily in n. Africa and India through Australia (Cramp and Simmons 1985, Higgins and Davies 1996). Vagrants have been recorded in e. N America and in w. Micronesia E to Kosrae (Clapp & Laybourne 1983, AOU 1998, Wiles 2005, VanderWerf et al. 2006a, Pratt et al. 2010, Hayes et al. 2015), where they appear to be increasing (Wiles et al. 2000, Pratt et al. 2010). The first substantiated record for Whiskered Tern in the Hawaiian Islands is from the w. end of the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, a first-year bird photographed on *Midway* 29 Oct 2013 ([HRBP](#) 6680-6684) and the same bird (based on comparison of photographs) on *Kure* 9-26 Nov 2013 ([HRBP](#) 6685-6686). Whiskered Tern was added to the Hawaiian Islands Checklist by the [HBRC](#) in Oct 2015 based on these records. Three subspecies of Whiskered Tern are recognized (Cramp and Simmons 1985). Nominate *C. h. hybrida* breeds through central Eurasia to Russia, is the most migratory of the subspecies, and the most expected in the Hawaiian Islands, while *C. h. javanicus* breeds in Australia, winters as far N as the Philippine Is, and could also occur in Hawaii. As first-fall birds are difficult to separate (Cramp and Simmons 1985) we prefer to regard the subspecies of the Northwestern Hawaiian Island bird as unidentified.

A first-fall *Chlidonias* tern at Aimakapa Pond 15 Sep-10 Nov 1995 was felt to be either a Whiskered or a [White-winged](#) (*C. leucopterus*) tern (*AB* 50:120), and a tern present at Kona STP 31 Mar-5 May 2000 was first considered a Whiskered Tern but may have been a disheveled first-spring [Common Tern](#) videotaped there at the same time (*AB* 54:331; [HRBP](#) 1381, 5967-5968). Neither of these sight records is supported by photographs. Because of the difficulty in separating Whiskered Tern from other *Chlidonias* and first-year *Sterna* terns (Clapp and Laybourne 1983), we consider these records unsubstantiated, although the [HBRC](#) may consider them for acceptance in the future; based on these records, Whiskered Tern was included as a vagrant by Pyle (1997-2002) but not mentioned for Hawaii by the AOU (1997, 1998).

### [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/>