

Seabirds

Blue-gray Noddy

Procelsterna cerulea

SPECIES STATUS:

State recognized as indigenous
High Concern – NAWCP

Hawai'i Natural Heritage Ranking G4-Apparently Secure

SPECIES INFORMATION:

The Blue-gray Noddy is a small seabird widely distributed across the Pacific. Five subspecies are recognized, of which one, *P. c. saxatilis*, is found in the Hawaiian Archipelago. Little is known about the breeding behavior of the Blue-gray Noddy. It lays a single egg, nesting in cavities within ancient lava flows. The Blue-gray Noddy feeds nearshore by hover-dipping and surface-dipping, capturing small prey such as larval lizardfishes, flounders, goatfishes, and flyingfish and insects.

DISTRIBUTION:

Breeds in the Hawaiian Archipelago, primarily in the NWHI, with the largest colonies on Necker and Nihoa. The Blue-gray Noddy remains at the breeding colony year-round and is rarely found far at sea, but it may move between islands. Worldwide, the Black Noddy breeds throughout the Pacific.

ABUNDANCE:

An estimate of the worldwide population is around 100,000 breeding pairs. Accurate estimates are difficult due to this species' nesting habits. There are approximately 3,500 breeding pairs on Necker and Nihoa (combined), with very small colonies also found on French Frigate Shoals, La Perouse Pinnacle, and Gardner Pinnacles. There is evidence of past breeding on Kaula in the Main Hawaiian Islands.

LOCATION and CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT:

Terrestrial: The Blue-gray Noddy nests in inaccessible sea cliffs, and in Hawaii is known to nest in crevices within ancient lava flows.

Marine: Nearshore waters

THREATS:

- Introduced predators (primarily rats and cats)
- Native predators (Laysan and Nihoa Finches)

CONSERVATION ACTIONS:

- Eradication and control of introduced predators at current and potential nesting sites
- Continued protection of existing wildlife sanctuaries and refuges

MONITORING:

- Monitor the recovery of the species post-predator eradication

RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

- Surveys to determine population size and status

References:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2005. Regional Seabird Conservation Plan, Pacific Region. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Birds and Habitat Programs, Pacific Region, Portland, Oregon.

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