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Black-footed Albatross *Phoebastria nigripes*

2005 IUCN Red List Category (as evaluated by BirdLife International - the official Red List Authority for birds for IUCN): **Endangered**

Justification This species is listed to Endangered on the basis of a projected future decline of more than 60% over the next three generations (56 years), taking account of present rates of incidental mortality in longline fisheries in the north Pacific Ocean.

Family/Sub-family DIOMEDEIDAE

Species name author Audubon, 1849

Taxonomic source(s) AOU checklist (1998 + supplements), Brooke (2004), Cramp and Simmons (1977-1994), Robertson and Nunn (1998), Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993), Stotz et al. (1996), Turbott (1990)

Synonyms *Diomedea nigripes* Stotz et al. (1996), *Diomedea nigripes* Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993), *Diomedea nigripes* Turbott (1990), *Diomedea nigripes* Cramp and Simmons (1977-1994)

Identification 81 cm. Small albatross with uniform dark brown plumage. Adult dusky brown, whiter around base of bill, over base of tail and undertail coverts. Juvenile dark brown with white band circling base of bill. All ages have blackish bill, legs and feet. **Similar spp.** Dark juvenile Short-tailed Albatross *P. albatrus* has pink bill and pale legs.

Population estimate	Population trend	Range estimate (breeding/resident)	Country endemic?
109,000	decreasing	28 km ²	No

Range & population
Phoebastria nigripes breeds on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (USA), the US Minor Outlying Islands and three outlying islands of Japan, colonies having been lost from other Pacific islands **3,14**. In 2000, the population was estimated at 109,000 breeding birds (278,000 total) at 12 localities, including c.23,000 and 20,500 pairs on

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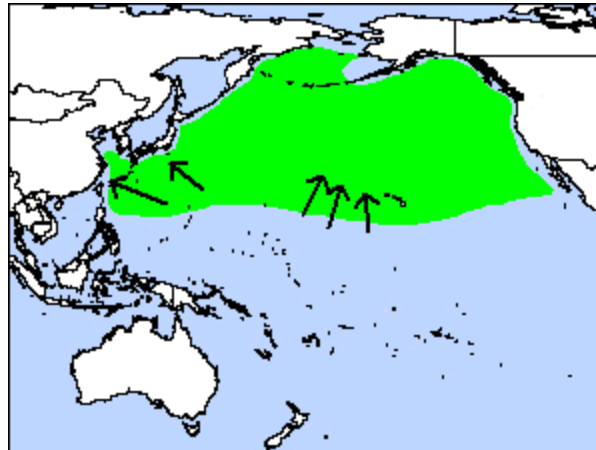
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Laysan and Midway Islands, respectively **4,13**. On Torishima, 20 chicks were reared in 1964, compared to 914 from 1,219 pairs in 1998**4**.

Monitoring data from three colonies in Hawaii, where over 75% of the world's population nests, suggests that numbers may have decreased by 9.6% from 1992 to 2001 **13,16**.

Population models predict that under a moderate bycatch scenario (assuming 8,000 birds are taken Pacific-wide) this species will experience a 60% decrease in numbers over the next three generations if bycatch mortality is not reduced through mitigation measures over this time period **15**. (With the uptake of mitigation measures in the North Pacific, the projected decline of this species requires on-going monitoring). The species disperses widely over the north Pacific Ocean, with occasional records in the Southern Hemisphere **2,19**.



Ecology It breeds on beaches and slopes with little or no vegetation, and on short turf. It feeds mainly on fish, squid, flying fish ova and crustaceans **9**, but also fish offal and human refuse **3**.

Threats From 1978-1992, it experienced mortality from interactions with high seas drift-nets in the north Pacific **11**. Bycatch estimates from driftnets put yearly bycatch (at least in 1990) at c.4,000 birds per year. Currently, it interacts with longline fisheries and mortality is thought to be at least 2,000 birds per year in US-based fisheries and a further 6,000 in Japanese/Taiwanese fleets **15**. This is supported by a pilot study showing that post-breeding birds disperse over large distances to the oceanographic 'transition zone' where they are susceptible to bycatch in the US and foreign pelagic longline fleets **18,19**. Other threats include loss of nests to waves **5**, pollution **1,12**, introduced predators **10**, oiling, plastic ingestion and volcanic eruption on Torishima **8**.

Conservation measures underway All Hawaiian breeding localities are part of the US National Wildlife Refuge system or State of Hawaii Seabird Sanctuaries. In 1991, a 50 Nautical Mile Protected Species Zone was established around the Northwestern Hawaiian (primarily to protect monk seals). No longline fishing is allowed in this zone¹⁷. Nearly 80% of the breeding population is counted directly or sampled every year. All sites except one have been surveyed since 1991⁵.

Conservation measures proposed Continue monitoring population trends and demographic parameters⁶. Continue satellite-tracking studies to assess temporal and spatial overlap with longline fisheries⁶. Adopt best-practice mitigating measures in all longline fisheries within the species's range.

References **1.** Auman *et al.* (1997). **2.** Carboneras (1992b). **3.** Cousins (1998). **4.** Cousins and Cooper (2000). **5.** Croxall and Gales (1998). **6.** R. Gales *in litt.* (1999). **7.** Gould and Hobbs (1993). **8.** Harrison, C. S. (1990). **9.** Harrison *et al.* (1983). **10.** Hasegawa (1984). **11.** Johnson *et al.* (1993). **12.** Jones *et al.* (1996). **13.** USFWS data *per* E. Flint (2003). **14.** Whittow (1993). **15.** Lewison and Crowders (2003). **16.** Gilman and Freifeld (2003). **17.** E. Gilman *in litt.* (2003). **18.** Hyrenbach and Dotson (2003). **19.** BirdLife International (2004).

Further web sources of information

Fully detailed species accounts from the *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book* (BirdLife International 2001), together with new information collated since the publication of the Red Data Book

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Recommended citation BirdLife International (2005) Species factsheet: *Phoebastria nigripes*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 9/6/2005

This information is based upon, and updates, the information published in BirdLife International (2000) *Threatened birds of the world*. Barcelona and Cambridge, UK: Lynx Edicions and BirdLife International, and BirdLife International (2004) *Threatened birds of the world 2004 CD-ROM*. These sources provide the information for species accounts for the birds on the IUCN Red List.

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