

Red-tailed Tropicbird (Phaethon rubricauda)

Current Status: No recent records, formerly common.

Prior Records: The U.S. Exploring Expedition visited Sydney on August 26, 1839 and found Red-tailed Tropicbirds "more abundant than usual" (Cassin 1852) ^{When}

Correia visited the island in March 1924 he made no mention of this species ~~although~~
~~this may have been an oversight~~ and none were seen from 1963 - 1964 by ^{although}

POBSP personnel

Several were seen offshore by Lister (1891) in the summer of 1889 ^{was} but he ~~did~~ not
^{albe to} land on the island.

1889

White-tailed Tropicbird

Current Status: Uncommon visitor.

Population: ~~This species has been~~ White-tailed Tropicbirds have been seen flying over the island on both TCS visits but have never been seen to land. On November 1, 1963 one was seen and on October 24, 1964 four were seen. It is most abundant on high islands 500-600 miles South of the Phoenix Islands with a possibility of occurring on smaller islands. ~~and~~ is frequently seen at sea far from land. It is not surprising to find it regularly over islands of the Phoenix Group. ~~The vegetation is probably suitable for breeding and these~~ islands it breeds on.

Blue-faced Booby (Sula dactylatra)

Current Status: Uncommon visitor offshore.

Prior Records: Lister (1891) saw two species of "gannets" offshore of Sydney in the summer of 1889 and lists the ~~and in a list at the end of his paper indicates that one of these was a Blue-~~ Blue-faced Booby at the end of this paper as occurring on Sydney. ~~Blue-faced Booby, as occurring on the-~~

Population: ^{The} Blue-faced Booby ^{is} a common breeding species on the dry uninhabited island of the Phoenix group and ranges widely from their nesting- these islands. ^{This species} ~~They have never been seen at~~ Sydney ^{islands} except offshore, ~~and would not be~~ expected because of the ^{recent} ~~past~~ occupancy of the island. Suitable habitat ^{for nesting,} although limited, does exist on the islands in the central lagoon and a few pairs may eventually establish themselves here.

Two were seen offshore in November 1963 and ^{October} 1964,

Brown Booby (Sula leucogaster)

Current Status: Infrequent visitor.

Prior Records: The Brown Booby is listed as occurring on Sydney by Lister (1891) and is evidently one of the two species of "gannets" which he saw offshore in the summer of 1889.

Population: In November 1963 two adults were seen flying over the lagoon and one immature was found roosting on one of the small islets in the lagoon. There was no evidence of ~~nesting~~ active breeding or ~~of~~ old nests but the ~~islands~~ islets would provide ~~available~~ similar habitat to that utilized on other Central Pacific islands.

Red-footed Booby (Sula sula)

Current Status: No recent records, formerly common.

Prior Records: Pickering, a member of the U.S. Exploring Expedition, recorded ~~that~~ the species ⁹⁵ ~~was~~ abundant on Sydney in August 1839 (Cassin 1858). Correia collected nine specimens in March 1924 when the Whitney expedition visited the island.

Other Specimens: ~~AMNH-205452, M, Correia, March-~~ All collected on March 21, 1924 by J.G. Correia; ^{80-6:} ~~AMNH~~ MM; AMNH 205452, 205448, 205458, 205449, 205453, 205451. ₉₉₋₃₋ FF; AMNH 205455, 205454, 205456.

Great Frigatebird (Fregata minor)

Current Status: Hypothetical, no positive records.

Prior Records: Great Frigatebirds and Lesser Frigatebirds were not distinguished by any ~~of the~~ prior visitors to Sydney island so all prior records are open to

question. Cassin (1858) states that Dr. Pickering found ^{frigatebirds} ~~them~~ present in great numbers on Sydney Island in August 1839 and Lister (1891) saw ~~"great columns"~~ "a great column" of frigates over one end of the island in the summer of 1889. Correia (~~1924~~ MS 1924) states that they were present but gives no indication of their abundance.

Lesser Frigatebird (Fregata ariel)

Current Status: Uncommon visitor.

Prior Records: See Great Frigatebird.

Frigatebird

Population: Five frigates were seen in November, 1963 one of which was definitely four this species, The others being ~~subadults or~~ were either subadults, which can not be distinguished ~~from~~ identified to species, or at too great a distance to

identify. Some of these four frigatebird may have been Great Frigatebirds ~~but this~~ which have ~~not~~ recorded ~~on~~ from Sydney. ~~species has~~ not been definitely identified ~~from the island.~~

Five adults were seen in October, 1964 and two of the males were chasing the Gray-backed Terns ^{over the lagoon.} The chase appeared to be unsuccessful due to the whole colony of Gray-backed Terns joining in to mob the frigatebirds.

Frigatebirds have never been found roosting on the island although a few probably do so since this is an abundant species on Phoenix Island only 60 some miles to the North.

Pintail Duck (Anas acuta)

Current Status: Rare migrant, no recent records.

one male and two females

Prior Records: Arundel-- In the 1880's Arundel collected three ducks and send them to Tristram who described them as a new species, Dafila modesta. Tristram (1886) states that there were no ducks on the island when Arundel arrived but that "afterwards they appeared and were tolerably numerous for a time." Tristram believed that the duck was a resident species of the equatorial islands which "migrated" from one island to another.

Part of his of male is follows: "He describes the bird as a plain-coloured Pintail of diminutive size. The male specimen is just discarding the young or summer dress, and assuming the delicately vermiculated and pencilled plumage of the flanks and back which characterize our own Pintail in breeding dress. On the flanks only two or three young feathers remain.

These birds were actually ~~comparable with~~

~~This was evidently~~ Anas acuta which is a sporadic migrant in large numbers to the equatorial islands (Medeiros, 1958) and which has been recorded from most of the Line Islands.

Bryan (1942) states that ducks "used to be seen on the ponds but now both are gone." His statement may refer to Arundel's original observations as do all other mentions of ducks on Sydney. The ponds, despite Bryan's statement, are still there and are probably still visited by ducks during certain years.

Golden Plover (~~Pul~~ Pluvialis dominica)

Current Status: Abundant migrant.

Prior Records: Arundel sent a specimen to Tristram (1886) in the 1880's and Lister (1891) saw several on the shore in the summer of 1889.

1, 1963

Population: On November¹ there were an estimated 100 birds around the lagoon

and ²⁴ on October²⁴ there ^{were} 109 birds around the lagoon and an additional 118

on the perimeter of the island. ~~These counts are considerably higher than any~~

~~made on Enderbury or Phoenix Island and this may be due to the higher~~

wt. 120 gms.

POBSP Specimens: USNM 494041, F, ovary 5 mm., [^] Oct. 24, 1964; USNM 494042, F,

ovary 10 mm., ♂- Wt. 106 gms., Oct. 24, 1964.

Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres)

Current Status: Abundant migrant.

Turnstone

Prior Records: Ruddy Turnstones were first recorded by Lister (1891) who saw a few in the summer of 1889. Correia collected three in March 1924 when the Whitney Expedition visited the island.

Population: On November ^{1,} 1963 there were ~~4-500~~ an estimated 4-500 ♀ turnstones around the lagoon and on October 24, 1964 119 birds were counted here and an additional 35 ^{were found} on the outer beach.

Turnstone

POBSP Specimens: USNM 493198, M, testes 2 mm., wt. 99 gms., Nov. 2, 1963; USNM 493199, F, ovary 4 mm., wt. 84 gms., Nov. 2, 1963.

Other Specimens: Collected March 21, 1924 by J.G. Correia; MM; AMNH 205654, 205653; F; AMNH 205924.

Wandering Tattler (Heteroscelus incanum)

Current Status: Common migrant.

Wandering Tattler

Prior Records: Tristram (1886) states that he received a specimen from Arundel and Correia collected two specimens in March 1924.

Population: On November 1, 1963 there were an estimated 100 birds around the lagoon and on October 24, 1964 there were 20 birds around the lagoon and 32 on the beach.

~~**~~ The three ^{common} species of shorebirds were all found in greater numbers on the ^{of Enderbury and Phoenix} Sydney than on ^{drier islands} ⁶⁰⁻⁸⁰ miles to the North. Sydney may be a better feeding area than the drier islands although reasons for this are not apparent.

All but the Golden Plover were present in greater numbers in November 1963 than in October 1964 and this may ~~reflect~~ indicate that the migration peak occurs after October. *for Turnstones and Tattlers.*

Golden Plover

POBSP Specimens: USNM 494061, F, ovary 10 mm., wt. 99.2 gms., Oct. 24, 1964;
USNM 494062, F, ovary 5 mm., wt. 97.5 gms., Oct. 24, 1964.

Wandering Tattler

Other Specimens: Collected March 21, 1924 by J.G. Correia; MM; AMNH 205222, 205623.

Bristle-thighed Curlew (Numenius tahitiensis)

Current Status: Uncommon migrant.

Bristle-thighed Curlew

Prior Records: Lister (1891) saw several in ~~1889~~ the summer of 1889 on the beach.

~~and-~~

Population: Only five were seen in November 1963 and ~~6~~ six in October 1964

All the curlews were found around the lagoon ~~and none have been seen on the~~
~~beach~~ and the small numbers would indicate that the island is generally unfavorable
for this species.

Sanderling (Crocethia alba)

Current Status: infrequent migrant.

Sanderling

Population: A flock of five was observed on the east (windward) beach on November 2, 1963 and one was collected.

POBSP Specimens: USNM 493258, F, ovary 6 mm., wt. 42 gms., Nov. 2, 1963.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (Erolia acuminata)

Current Status: Uncommon migrant.

Population: ~~Seven~~ Seven were seen on November 1, 1963 and one was found on October 24, 1964. All of these birds were either around the lagoon or ~~the shallow ponds~~ lagoon at the southeast corner of the ~~island~~ around the isolated shallow ponds.

POBSP Specimens: USNM 494073, M, testes 3 mm., wt. 66 gms., Oct. 24, 1964.

Sooty Tern (Sterna fuscata)

Current Status: Infrequent visitor.

Population: Five flew over the island On October 24, 1964 and were the only one s
observed during the two visits to the island. This species ^{was} ~~is~~ abundant on Phoenix,
at this time
and Enderbury Island and it is suprising that more birds did not pass over
Sydney ~~at this period.~~ Island.

Gray-backed Tern (Sterna lunata)

Current Status: Common resident and nesting species.

Prior Records: Three specimens were collected in March 1924 by the Whitney Expedition and constitute the first record for the island. Child (1960) states that ~~the~~ Gray-backed Tern eggs are sometimes eaten on Sydney island "especially during ~~the~~ times of drought when food is scarce." This statement implies that Sooty Terns ~~do not~~ ^{did} nest on the island and that the Gray-backed Terns ~~are~~ ^{was} one of the most abundant nesting species.

Population: This is one of the three nesting species on the island ~~and~~ ^{and} the population was estimated as 100 in both November 1964 and October 1963.

~~The estimated 41 nests~~

The estimated ^{sof} 41 nests present in November 1963 and the 8 in October 1964 are based on partial counts ^{of} ~~of~~ the islands in the lagoon and an estimate based on the number of birds seen over the other islands not visited. A total of 27 nests were counted in November 1963 in the southeast half of the lagoon and 4 were found in the northwest half in October 1964. All islands ~~have been~~ ^{were} visited once but none were visited on both trips.

The adult birds stay quite close to the nesting islands and only a small number are ever seen over the shores of the lagoon. ~~In the case of the islands-~~

POBSP Specimens: USNM 493975, M, testes 8 mm., wt. 109 gms., Oct. 24, 1964.

Other Specimens: Collected March 21, 1924 by J.G. Correia; FF; AMNH 205703, 205704, 205705.

Noddy Tern (Anous stolidus)

Current Status: Common resident and nesting species.

Prior Records: Lister (1891) found them present in the summer of 1889 and Correia (MS 1924) recorded their presence in March 1924.

Population: An estimated 250 adults were present in November 1963 and 150 were estimated in October 1964. This is the most abundant species on the island and one of only three breeding species.

→ In November 1963 a total of 66 nests were found on islands in the southeast half of the lagoon and it was estimated that an additional 33 nests were present in the other half of the lagoon. In October 1964 a total of 23 nests were found in the northwest half of the lagoon and it was estimated that another 23 nests were located in the other half of the lagoon. [On both trips the breeding population comprised over 60 percent of the total population.

All nests have were located on the small islands in the lagoon and although birds are frequently seen flying over, large numbers are ^{found only on} ~~not found until one~~ ~~except on~~ ~~geese to~~ the islands in the lagoon.

Noddy Tern

POBSP Specimens: USNM 493967, M, testes 2 mm., wt. 173 gms., Oct. 24, 1964.

Blue-gray Noddy Tern (Procelsterna caerulea)

Current Status: Infrequent visitor.

Blue-gray Noddy

Prior Records: Blue-gray Noddies were seen in the summer of 1889 by Lister (1891) and one specimen was collected in March 1924 by the Whitney Expedition.

Population: One individual was seen at the east end of the lagoon in November 1963 and this is the only one which has been seen. It was very tame and landed on the ground within a few yards of the observer.

Blue-gray

Other Specimens: AMNH 205721, M, J.G. Correia, March 21, 1924.

Fairy Tern (Gygis alba)

Current Status: Uncommon resident and nesting species.

Prior Records: Pickering (Cassin, 1858) states that ~~this species was common~~ Fairy Terns were common on August 26, 1839. Lister (1891) in the summer of 1889 and Correia (MS 1924) in March 1924 recorded this species as present but made no estimate of the number present.

Population: ~~This~~ One bird* was observed carrying food in October, 1964 ~~and this~~ indicating that the species breeds on the island although we have never found a nest. In ~~late~~ November 1963 there were an estimated 10 birds on the island and in October 1964 a fairly accurate count of the whole island revealed only 23 birds.

POBSP Specimens: USNM 493987, F, ovary 10x5 mm., wt. 105.7 gms., Oct. 24, 1964.