

RED FOOTED BOOBY

Sula sula

Hawaiian name: 'A

Physical Traits

Size: 66-77 cm (26-30 in), wingspan 91-101 cm (36-40 in)

Life Span: 22 years

Habitat: This species breeds on islands and coasts in tropical oceans. It winters at sea, and is rarely seen away from breeding colonies.

Status: Least concern



There are 3 types of Booby birds that are found in and around Hawaii: the Brown Booby, the Masked Booby, and the Red-footed Booby. The Red-footed Booby is the smallest of all three species. Few other sea birds display the same variety of color phases that the Red-footed Booby experiences. The Red-footed Booby has red legs, with pink and blue bills and throat patch. This species has both a white and a brown plumage form, and both forms may occur together in a breeding colony. The males and females are similar, but can be most easily distinguished by the sound of their calls.

Red-footed Boobies are monogamous and perform elaborate mating rituals that include harsh squawks and the male's display of its blue throat. They begin breeding at 4 years old and the female lays a single egg. Nests are built of twigs and sticks and are found only on the tops of shrubs. Sometimes these birds nest in the same shrubs as the Great Frigatebirds. The eggs are incubated with the parent's feet, and both the male and female share incubation duties. After the chick has fledged, care and feeding can continue for one to four months.

These birds feed by vertically diving into the water, far offshore. The bird may dive up to 30 meters to pursue prey, which include flying fish and squid. Although they are powerful and agile fliers, they are clumsy at take off and landing.