

## BRANT

## *Branta bernicla*

**non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer**

*B. b. nigricans*

Brant breed throughout arctic regions of the Northern Hemisphere, with Asian and w. N American populations wintering on the Pacific coasts S to Manchuria and Korea and from British Columbia to w. Mexico, respectively (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, AOU 1998). Brant occasionally winter in the Hawaiian Islands and it has occurred at least once on Johnston Atoll (Dec 1991; BPBM 178594). Three distinct subspecies have been described; the subspecies that occurs along the Pacific rim, to which all critically examined Hawaiian records pertain, is *B. b. nigricans*, the “Black Brant”.

Brant are rare visitors to the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*. Single birds observed at *Pearl and Hermes* 14 Mar 1973 ([HRBP](#) 1441) and at *Laysan* Nov-Dec 1996 and Dec 1998 were likely wintering. At *French Frigate* an emaciated adult female captured 3 Dec 1970 was transported to the Honolulu Zoo where it died the next day. The specimen went to the USFWS office in Kailua, O'ahu as “HINWR-1” (*E* 31:97) but its present whereabouts is unknown. Single individuals have also been recorded at French Frigate 5-8 Dec 1986 (BPBM 175791, 1<sup>st</sup>-cycle male), 17 Nov 1990, Nov 1990-20 Mar 1991 ([HRBP](#) 1018), 4 Nov 1995-12 Apr 1996, and 25-28 Dec 2004 ([HRBP](#) 5332).

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* Brant appear fairly regularly in winter. The earliest record is for a female at Kahului, Maui, that warned accompanying ducks of the approach of chagrined hunters, until it was finally collected, in 1891 (Bryan 1901b; specimen whereabouts unknown; see also *PoP* 14[7]:16). Subsequently, a [minimum](#) of 86 individuals have occurred in the Southeastern Islands, on *Kaua'i* (21 recorded 1979-2009; e.g., [HRBP](#) 1187, 1188, 5014, 5384, 5722), *O'ahu* (31, 1945-2008; e.g., *E* 5:75, 10:48, 31:80, 37:6; [HRBP](#) 1101-1102, 1331-1332, 5385, 5709; BPBM 158625), *Moloka'i* (17, 1938-2009; e.g., Munro 1944, *E* 21:60; [HRBP](#) 5256, 5919), *Maui* (23, 1891-2008; e.g., Rothschild 1900, *E* 21:60, 27:32, 34:28; [HRBP](#) 0970, 0978, 1084; BPBM 184265), and *Hawai'i* (22, 1961-2009; e.g., *E* 22:2, 7, 11-12; 45:71; [HRBP](#) 0989-0990, 5706). Brant have not yet been reported on Ni'ihau, Lana'i, or Kaho'olawe.

Brant usually occur as single birds or pairs but multiples have occurred at the Barking Sands PRMF, Kaua'i (3 birds 25 Dec 1998) and along the N coast of Moloka'i (3 birds 23 Feb 1938, Munro 1944; and up to 5 during Feb-Mar 1986). The winter of 2007-2008 saw a record 17 Brant recorded throughout the Southeastern Islands, including 6 together on Moloka'i and 5 on Kaua'i (*cf.* [HRBP](#) 5384 published *NAB* 62:322). Most arrive in Nov-Dec, the earliest being 6 Oct (1967, Kahului, Maui; *E* 28:54), and many remain through winter into April-May, with the latest spring departure date being for 14 May (1980; 2 birds at Ki'i unit of JCNWR, O'ahu; *E* 41:73). The two specimens at BPBM and many other sight and photographed records pertain to first-cycle birds. There are five records of over-summering birds: at Kawaele, Kaua'i (1998), Kealia Pond NWR, Maui (1992 and 2001), Hilo, Hawai'i (1961; *E* 22:63), and Aimakapa Pond, Hawai'i (an emaciated first-spring female found dead 8 Jul 1984; BPBM 161231). Brant have been reported more often since the late 1970s and at more localities. Most are found on the larger islands at favored coastal sites with suitable ponds and shoreline habitat.

### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

### [Literature cited](#)

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