

BUFFLEHEAD

Bucephala albeola

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

monotypic

Buffleheads occur in N America, breeding throughout Alaska and Canada and wintering S to n. Mexico (AOU 1998); vagrants have been recorded in Europe (Cramp and Simmons 1977) and, in the Pacific Basin, it has occurred only in the Hawaiian Islands, in small numbers during late fall and winter. Perhaps because it is easier to identify than other diving ducks it was noted and collected by earlier ornithologists (Rothschild 1900, Bryan 1901b, Perkins 1903); Henshaw (1902a) referred to it as "one of the commonest of the continental ducks". Compared to other ducks it shows little propensity to return to Hawaii, the majority of records involving first-year individuals in female-like plumage. Only 10 adult male Buffleheads have been noted, and most of these occurred on islands lacking records the previous winter.

Assuming few or no individuals return to winter, 35 individuals have been recorded in the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, from *Kure* (1, Nov 1968; Woodward 1972), *Midway* (16, 1965-2006; e.g., Grant and Petit 1981; USNM 599951, BPBM 184382; [HRBP](#) 0115, 0344-0345, 1348 published *E* 41:83), and *Laysan* (17, 1897-2009; e.g., Shaunisland 1899, Bailey 1956; USNM 240989). The high count was of 6 birds on Laysan 14-19 Nov 1990. The earliest fall record was for 2 Nov (1994, Laysan), and the latest spring record was for 3 Apr (1997, Midway).

Again counting each arrival as separate, at least 147 Buffleheads have been recorded in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, from *Kaua'i* (14, 1974-2003), *O'ahu* (77, <1903-2009; [HRBP](#) 0401-0402, 5218-5219, 5308), *Moloka'i* (6, 1980-2008; *E* 59:83, 61:77), *Lana'i* (1, Lana'i Oxidation Ponds, 23 Jan 1996), *Maui* (27, 1894-2008), and *Hawai'i* (25, 1966-2008). A specimen from 1894 at BPBM (2223) was collected on Maui (Bryan 1901b) rather than O'ahu (Engilis et al. 2004), although Perkins (1903) lists the species for both islands. The high count was of 12, including two adult males, observed near Kailua, O'ahu in Jan 1938 (Northwood 1940a). The next highest count was of 5 near Kahuku, O'ahu, 20 January 1999 and Kealia Pond, Maui, 17 Jan 2008. A statewide winter total of 11 in 2003-2004 was notable (*AB* 57:104). The earliest record of a fall arrival was from 2 Nov (1995, Kealia Pond NWR, Maui), and the latest spring record was from 3 Apr (2008, Kealia Pond). There are no records of Buffleheads from the Hawaiian Islands during mid-Apr through Oct.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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