

LESSER SCAUP

Aythya affinis

non-breeding visitor, regular winterer

monotypic

The Lesser Scaup breeds throughout w. N America (primarily c. Alaska and British Columbia to n. Ontario and Minnesota) and winters S of the breeding range as far as n. S America (AOU 1998). Vagrants have been recorded in Europe, e. Asia, and the Mariana Is (Cramp and Simmons 1977, Wiles et al. 2004, Wiles 2005). It has proven to be a regular winter visitor to the Hawaiian Islands. Although the only record prior to 1946 (*E* 6:64) was of three specimens (from a group of 4) collected by Munro (1944) at Koele, Lana'i 11 Nov 1914 (BPBM 7073-7075), we suspect that the lack of older records reflect a combination of the difficulty in identifying this species and it's habit of remaining in deeper water, where more difficult to observe and collect.

There are few substantiated records of Lesser Scaup from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, where it can be confused with the equally likely [Greater Scaup](#) and [Tufted Duck](#). Up to 7 scaup were present on *Midway* 6 Nov 1990-13 Mar 1991. Although initially identified as Lesser Scaup (Grant and Petit 1981), two salvaged specimens turned out to be of a Lesser (BPBM 157346; [HRBP](#) 5649-5650 of specimen) and a Greater (BPBM 157344; [HRBP](#) 5650-5651 of specimen) scaup (Engilis et al. 2004). Additional records from Midway include fully described birds present 21 Dec 1991-17 Jan 1992 (2 birds), 2-15 Dec 1993, 11 Nov 1998-21 Feb 1999, and in Dec 2003-Jan 2004 (3). Elsewhere in the Northwestern Islands, documented individuals have occurred only on *Laysan*, where one was present 10-13 Nov 1988 ([HRBP](#) 0819-0822), and over-wintering individuals were recorded in 1990-1991 (5, along with a Greater Scaup), in 2000-2001 (4) and (possibly the same birds) 2002-2003 (4), and in 2008-2009 (1). One was also observed flying about 185 km SSW of Nihoa 31 Oct 2002 (Rowlett 2002). Reports of approximately 25 other Lesser Scaup from Midway and Laysan (1987-2007) are unsubstantiated, and descriptions of one reported from French Frigate 4-6 Nov 1995 fit Tufted Duck better than Lesser Scaup.

Since the 1950s the Lesser Scaup has proven an annual winter resident in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* in moderate but irregular and apparently increasing numbers. A count of 320 on Ni'ihau during an aerial [DOFAW Waterbird Survey](#) on 22 Jan 1993 appears to be a transcription error; otherwise, statewide counts on this survey have shown a general increase between 1986 and 2007, from a state-wide low count of one in 1987 to a high of 135 in 2006. High counts for each island have been: *Ni'ihau* (25 on 8 Feb 1996); *Kaua'i* (16 at Hanalei NWR 8 Mar 1994 and an island-wide count of 35 on 25 Jan 1995; see also [HRBP](#) 5884), *O'ahu* (55 at the Ki'i Unit of JCNWR 4 Dec 2004; see also [HRBP](#) 0521-0525), *Moloka'i* (32 at Kualapua Reservoir 16 Jan 2008), *Lana'i* (4 in 1914; see above), *Maui* (63 island-wide 18 Jan 2006 including 29 on a reservoir near Pu'unene), and *Hawai'i I* (37 at Loko Waka Pond 22 Jan 2006; see also [HRBP](#) 0400, 5767). The earliest fall arrival was 13 Oct (1997, Koloa, Kaua'i) and the latest spring departure was 23 Apr (2007, 14 birds at Kualapua, Moloka'i). Individuals observed at Wailoa State Park, Hawai'i 9 Aug 1980 (partially entangled in fishing line), Punamano, O'ahu 3 Aug 1982 and Jun-Sep 1992, and Kealia Pond NWR, Maui 18 Jun 2005 represent the only substantiated records of over-summering individuals.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)