

MALLARD

Anas platyrhynchos

**non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer;
naturalized (non-native) resident, long established**

A.p. platyrhynchos

The Mallard is a widespread and well-known species that occurs throughout the Northern Hemisphere and has been introduced or domesticated in many areas of the world (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, Cramp and Simmons 1977, Marchant and Higgins 1990, AOU 1998). Northerly breeding populations are migratory, and records of what are almost certainly wild birds have occurred in the Pacific including the Gilbert Is. (Kiribati), w. Micronesia, and the Hawaiian Is (AOU 1998, Wiles et al. 2004, Wiles 2005). Poorly documented introductions began long ago in the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands (see below) from which feral populations have become well established, such that it is difficult to ascertain the status or origin of any particular Mallard record (*E* 40:14, Engilis *et al.* 2004). Feral Mallards dispersing to wetland areas interbreed freely with the closely related [Hawaiian Duck](#), widely producing hybrids (e.g., 22 specimens at BPBM and 20 specimens at MWFB, Davis, California) and severely threatening the integrity of the Koloa species, as discussed in the [Hawaiian Duck](#) account.

Mallards have reached at least four of the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* in fall and winter, consistent with a wild origin, particularly in earlier years, although later reports might conceivably involve winter wanderers from large feral stocks in the Southeastern Islands. On *Kure* 2 males and a female were observed 5 Dec 1977 (*E* 39:13). At *Midway* 1-2 Mallards have appeared in Oct-Nov 1940 (*E* 14:18, 19, 32), Dec 1946 (Fisher 1949), 10 Dec 1957 (USNM 466152; adult female), 3 Dec 1963 (Fisher 1965), and during 10 fall/winter seasons between 1979 and 2006. An adult male taken by Schauinsland on *Laysan* 7 Nov 1896 (presumably in Bremen Museum) is the earliest known record of Mallard in the Hawaiian Islands (Rothschild 1900, Henshaw 1902a). Other records on Laysan include five specimens (at MCZ) collected there by M. Schlemmer in 1907, an adult male and first-year female collected 9 Feb 1913 (Bailey 1956; USNM 240941-2), a male observed in Mar 1968 (Ely and Clapp 1973), and females observed in Feb 1992 (2), May 1993 ([HRBP](#) 1035-1036), Nov-Dec 1998, and 19 Nov 2008. At Tern I., *French Frigate*, Mallards were reported late Oct 1953 (6; *E* 14:62; we consider this record unsubstantiated), 21 Nov 1979 (1), and 10-12 Nov 1980 (a pair), and a male present 28 Nov 2001 died the following day. The three specimens from Midway and Laysan at USNM represent the Holarctic nominate subspecies (Engilis *et al.* 2004).

Mallards have been imported to the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* since at least the 1800s as domestic stock, primarily for food. Gray (1859) indicated that Mallards ("*A. boschas*") had been naturalized on all islands of the Hawaiian group (Cassin 1862 confused this name with [Hawaiian Duck](#)) and Dole (1869) noted that the native polynesian name for Mallard was (perhaps appropriately) "*kaka*". Although breeding populations had not become established in the wild before the 1930s (Caum 1933, Locey 1937), numbers of escapes from commercial Mallard farms in the Kahuku area of *O'ahu* increased during the 1930s and 1940s (Engilis and Pratt 1993). In the 1950-1960s the State of Hawaii introduced hundreds of Mallards with other gamebirds in attempts to establish hunting (Uyehara et al. 2007). By the 1980s to early 2000s feral Mallards were

abundant on O'ahu (e.g., [Graph](#)), common on *Maui* and *Hawai'i I*, uncommon on *Kaua'i*, and occasionally reported on *Moloka'i* and *Lana'i*. Biannual [DOFAW Waterbird Surveys](#) have recorded a substantial increase in numbers between 1986 and 2007, with statewide counts of <150 in 1986-1991 >300 in 2002-2007 (high count 445 in Jan 2002), but eradication efforts on Kaua'i and O'ahu may be contributing to a slight decline between 2002 and 2007. Island-wide high counts from these surveys include 33 on Kaua'i (Jan 1994 and Aug 1999), 275 on O'ahu (Jan 2003), 8 on Moloka'i (Aug 2006), 12 on Lana'i (Aug 1990), 125 on Maui (Jan 2006), and 138 on Hawai'i I (Aug 1998; including 110 at Waiakea Pond, which may be an error). Favored habitats include private ponds in parks and suburban areas, spreading to refuges and wetlands.

Prior to the establishment of feral populations there were a few observations of presumably wild birds on O'ahu and Moloka'i, including, on the latter island, one shot by Perkins (1903) and one presented by Munro in 1902 to the Auckland Museum (AV 1050.23; *E* 36:148). Otherwise, occasional wild migrant Mallards probably arrive to the Southeastern Islands in fall, but they cannot be safely distinguished from those of the naturalized population (*E* 40:14, Engilis et al. 2004).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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