

## ERCKEL FRANCOLIN

## *Francolinus erckelii*

**naturalized (non-native) resident, recently established**

monotypic

Erckel Francolins occur naturally in n. Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea) and have been introduced to Italy and the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* (Long 1981, Lever 1987, AOU 1998, Islam 1999). Of the game birds introduced into xeric habitats of Hawaii during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Walker 1967), the Erckel Francolin has been one of the more successful, although its establishment and dispersal were protracted. After introductions in 1957-1966 (>200 on Kaua'i, >100 on O'ahu, >140 on Moloka'i, >210 on Lana'i, >175 on Maui, and >470 on Hawai'i; Swedberg 1968), Dunmire (1961) and Walker (1967) did not consider it established in Hawaii, unlike the other two francolin species released at the same time. Erckel Francolins are now established in dry open habitats of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Lana'i, and Hawai'i, with small and possibly established populations on Moloka'i and Maui. See Islam (1999) for information on the natural history and biology of Black Francolin in Hawaii.

On *Kaua'i*, populations became established in Kokee SP and Waimea Canyon, where they were frequently observed, usually along the entrance road, beginning at least in 1977 (*E* 38:102, Denny 1999). Unlike the other two francolins and Chukar, they can be found in forested areas (e.g., in the Alakai Swamp) as well as dry and open habitats. In the late 1980-2000s they were recorded elsewhere in Kaua'i, including Hanapepe, Kilauea Point NWR, and Hanalei, and were considered common (Denny 1999). On *O'ahu* Erckel Francolins were released at the Kuaokala GMA where they were actively hunted through at least the 1970s (*E* 41:16-17). Through the 2000s they were noted regularly in w. O'ahu, primarily at Ka'ena Point, Ewa Beach, and upland areas above Nankuli and Schofield Barracks, perhaps showing a slow increase through the 1990s followed by a decline in the 2000s ([Graph](#)). During the late 1990s and 2000s there were also reports from near Punaluu along the nw. coast of O'ahu and above Aina Haina e. of Honolulu. On *Moloka'i* there were no reports after release (*cf.* Pekelo 1964) until 1980-1992 when they were detected in Kamalo and Kawela gulches in the ec. portion of the island (Scott *et al.* 1986, *E* 48:114). There are few reports of this species on *Lana'i*, although it appears to be established there, as are the other francolins (*E* 27:28, Scott *et al.* 1986, Islam 1999). Reports on *Maui* existed for the road to Haleakala NP, shortly after release and near the release site (*E* 22:52), but since this time there have only been two records from the remote s. slopes of Haleakala in the early 1980s (Scott *et al.* 1986), along with several tentative reports in the 1990-2000s. It may persist in low numbers in these seldom-visited areas, as on Moloka'i. Because of its relative conspicuousness, dispersal patterns of Erckel Francolin on *Hawai'i I* have been easier to track than those of the other two francolin species. After release at Puako, Pu'u Wa'awa'a Ranch (Lewin 1971, *E* 25:8), and Pohakuloa (*E* 21:67) in 1957-1959 this species spread slowly, reaching Hapuna Beach by 1963 (Lewin 1971), Hualalai Mt. by 1965, Ainahou Ranch along Chain of Craters Road (where they may also have been released), along Saddle Road, and to >3000 m upslope on Mauna Kea by 1979 (Conant 1980b, Scott *et al.* 1986), at Honokohau north of Kona by 1981, Kohala Ranch by 1986, and Hakalau NWR by 1988. Erckel Francolin populations continued to fill out these areas through the 2000s, although they remained a popularly hunted species on this island.

Swedberg (1967a) and Berger (1981) attribute introductions in Hawaii to the nominate subspecies of Erckel Francolin from Ethiopia; however, one other recognized subspecies has since been synonymized and the species is now considered monotypic (Islam 1999).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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