

GREEN HERON

Butorides virescens

Other: Green-backed Heron (<1997)

subspecies?

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

Green Herons inhabit temperate North and Central America south to Panama, withdrawing in winter from most of its n. range. It was considered conspecific with Striated Heron (*Butorides striatus*) prior to 1993 (AOU 1993). Vagrants have reached Europe (Cramp and Simmons 1977) and the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* but none have been recorded in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands or elsewhere in the N Pacific (AOU 1998). Two specimens of Green Heron, reportedly collected in the Hawaiian Islands by Baillieu in the later 1800s, were accessioned by the Paris Museum and documented in its catalog; the specimens were later destroyed during World War II (Storrs Olson, pers. comm.); we consider these unsubstantiated, and possibly of first-cycle [Black-crowned Night-Herons](#).

Records of 8-9 Green Herons in Hawaii have been reported: from *Kaua'i* at Pacific Missile Range 12 Mar 1996 and Waimea 26 Mar 1997; *O'ahu* from Waimanalo 2 Oct 1987 (*E* 48:22); *Maui* from Kihei 24 Sep 1974 (*E* 35:140); and *Hawai'i* from Kailua-Kona 11 Nov 1974 (*E* 35:80), Whittington Beach Park 29 Nov-13 Dec 1992, and Lokoaka Pond near Hilo 18 Dec 1980-8 Apr 1982 (Paton and MacIvor 1983; [HRBP](#) 0147 published *AB* 37:233), 11 Nov 1982 (possibly the same bird), and 10 Feb 1997. The bird observed in 1974 in Kailua-Kona was a first-cycle individual, and that observed at Lokoaka Pond was an adult when first seen in 1980.

Four subspecies of Green Heron have been recognized (Pyle 2008), the most likely of which to reach the Hawaiian Islands perhaps being *B.v. anthonyi* of w. N America. The nominate subspecies from e. N America plausibly could reach Hawaii, however, and the one photograph from the state ([HRBP](#) 0147) does not provide enough detail to assess subspecific identity.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

Citation: Pyle, R.L., and P. Pyle. 2009. The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status. B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, U.S.A. Version 1 (31 December 2009) <http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/>