

BRANT

Branta bernicla

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

B. b. nigricans

Brant breed throughout arctic regions of the Northern Hemisphere, with Asian and w. N American populations wintering on the Pacific coasts S to Manchuria and Korea and from British Columbia to w. Mexico, respectively (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, AOU 1998). Brant are occasional to uncommon winter visitors to the Hawaiian Islands and the species has occurred at least once on Johnston Atoll (Dec 1991; BPBM 178594). Three distinct subspecies have been described; the subspecies that occurs along the Pacific rim, to which all critically examined Hawaiian records pertain, is *B. b. nigricans*, the “Black Brant”.

Brant are occasional visitors to the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, where there were 13 records through 2016. On *Midway*, individuals were reported 1 March 1990, Nov-Dec 2011, 26 Nov 2014-28 Mar 2015 ([HRBP](#) 5980), and 17-21 Nov 2016 ([HRBP](#) 6318; died on the last day). Single birds observed at *Pearl and Hermes* 14 Mar 1973 ([HRBP](#) 1441) and at *Laysan* Nov-Dec 1996 and Dec 1998 were also likely over-wintering. At *French Frigate* an emaciated adult female captured 3 Dec 1970 was transported to the Honolulu Zoo where it died the next day. The specimen went to the USFWS office in Kailua, O'ahu as “HINWR-1” (*E* 31:97) but its whereabouts thereafter is unknown. Single individuals have also been recorded at French Frigate 5-8 Dec 1986 (BPBM 175791, 1st-cycle male), 17 Nov 1990, Nov 1990-20 Mar 1991 ([HRBP](#) 1018), 4 Nov 1995-12 Apr 1996, 25-28 Dec 2004 ([HRBP](#) 5332), and in Dec 2005-Jan 2006.

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* Brant appear fairly regularly in winter. The earliest record is for a female at Kahului, Maui, that warned accompanying ducks of the approach of chagrined hunters, until it was finally collected, in 1891 (Bryan 1901b; specimen whereabouts unknown; see also *PoP* 14[7]:16). Subsequently, a minimum of 131 individuals have occurred in the Southeastern Islands, on *Kaua'i* (24 recorded 1979-2014; e.g., [HRBP](#) 1187, 1188, 5014, 5384, 5722), *O'ahu* (37, 1945-2015; e.g., *E* 5:75, 10:48, 31:80, 37:6; [HRBP](#) 1101-1102, 1331-1332, 5385, 5709; BPBM 158625), *Moloka'i* (19, 1938-2012; e.g., Munro 1944, *E* 21:60; [HRBP](#) 5256, 5919), *Maui* (25, 1891-2012; e.g., Rothschild 1900, *E* 21:60, 27:32, 34:28; [HRBP](#) 0970, 0978, 1084; BPBM 184265), and *Hawai'i* (26, 1961-2016; e.g., *E* 22:2, 7, 11-12; 45:71; [HRBP](#) 0989-0990, 5706, 5989). Brant have not yet been reported on Ni'ihau, Lana'i, or Kaho'olawe.

Brant usually occur as single birds or pairs, but multiples have occurred at the Barking Sands PRMF, Kaua'i (3 birds 25 Dec 1998) and along the N coast of Moloka'i (3 birds 23 Feb 1938, Munro 1944; and up to 5 during Feb-Mar 1986). The winter of 2007-2008 saw a record 17 Brant recorded throughout the Southeastern Islands, including 6 together on Moloka'i and 5 on Kaua'i (*cf.* [HRBP](#) 5384 published *NAB* 62:322). Most arrive in Nov-Dec, the earliest being 6 Oct (1967, Kahului, Maui; *E* 28:54), and many remain through winter into April-May, with the latest spring departure date being for 14 May (1980; 2 birds at Ki'i unit of JCNWR, O'ahu; *E* 41:73). The two specimens at BPBM and many other sight and photographed records pertain to first-cycle birds. There are six records of over-summering birds: at Kawaele, Kaua'i (1998); Kealia Pond NWR, Maui (1992 and 2001); Hilo, Hawai'i (1961; *E* 22:63); Aimakapa Pond, Hawai'i (an emaciated

fist-spring female found dead 8 Jul 1984; BPBM 161231); and near Puhili Point, Hawai'i I (2016). Brant have been reported more often since the late 1970s and at more localities. Most are found on the larger islands at favored coastal sites with suitable ponds and shoreline habitat.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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