

## CANADA GOOSE

## *Branta canadensis*

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

*B.c. parvipes* (vagrant)

*B.c. occidentalis* (vagrant)

*B.c. moffittii* (non-established escape)

The larger Canada Goose, split from the smaller [Cackling Goose](#) by the AOU (2004), breeds across N America at subarctic to temperate latitudes. It has occurred in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* as a rare winter vagrant, with only 2-4 records of presumed natural occurrence documented to species; however, many older reports exist, some of which suggest Canada over [Cackling Goose](#). Subfossil bones of a *Branta* found at Ulupalkua Head, O'ahu, are ca. 120,000 years old and most closely resemble a Canada Goose (James 1987, Hearty et al. 2005). Many populations of Canada Goose are resident while others are migratory, but usually for shorter distances than those of Cackling Geese (Paxinos et al. 2002, AOU 2004). In Hawaii, 1-2 records pertain to the most migratory subspecies of Canada Goose, *B.c. parvipes*, which breeds primarily from ne. Alaska to s. Nunavut and winters primarily in Texas, with a small population also breeding around Anchorage and wintering primarily in Oregon (Mlodinow et al. 2008). This subspecies can be difficult to separate from the [Cackling Goose](#) subspecies *B.h. taverneri* (Engilis et al. 2004, Mlodinow et al. 2008; see [Cackling Goose](#)) and there are 7-10 other sight records that could pertain to either *parvipes* or *taverneri*. There are also 1-2 records in Hawaii of birds identified as *B.c. occidentalis*, which breeds in se. Alaska and British Columbia and winters S to Oregon.

A flying goose shot with a rifle by a cowboy on the Pala'au Flats, **Moloka'i**, in Dec 1902 (Munro 1944; BPBM 7079; [HRBP](#) 5644-5646 of specimen), although considered at first a Black [Brant](#), then a "[Cackling Goose](#)" by Munro, has since been confirmed by measurements as a Canada Goose, either *parvipes* (J Aldrich, R.B. Clapp in litt.; Engilis et al. 2004) or possibly *occidentalis* (PP examination). Another specimen (BPBM 158930) identified as *parvipes* by Engilis et al. (2004) from O'ahu has been reidentified as a [Cackling Goose](#) of subspecies *minima* (see that account). A goose photographed at Mokapu Peninsula, **O'ahu** 1 Nov 1981 ([HRBP](#) 0392-0393) shows the characters of *parvipes* (Engilis et al. 2004). The only other records of Canada Geese in Hawaii were of individuals at the Ki'i unit of JCNWR, O'ahu 30 Nov 1988-4 Apr 1989, which has been identified based on photographs as *B.c. occidentalis* (Engilis et al. 2004), and one with a [Cackling Goose](#) at Honouliuli Unit of PHNWR 2 Nov 2005 that may also have been of *occidentalis* (we have not seen photographs of these birds).

A growing flock of Canada Geese have been observed intermittently at Waiakea Pond, Hilo, Hawai'i, beginning with two in 1998, peaking at 18 in 2012, and continuing with counts of >10 through 2016 ([HRBP](#) 5017, 5291, 5815). These birds are medium-large in size and could refer to the widespread subspecies *B.c. moffitti*, which is often domesticated and/or naturalized outside of its original range in w. North America (*cf.* Marchant and Higgins 1990, Pyle 2008). First-year individuals are seen in many spring/summers, suggesting local breeding, although where nesting occurs has not been documented. A similar group of 10-15 birds present at Hanalei NWR, Kaua'i in Aug-late Oct 1979 were also reported as possible escapees from a domesticated flock. A specimen

received from the Honolulu Zoo 17 Mar1969 (BPBM 145482) was identified as *moffitti* (J. Aldrich in litt., PP examination), but the origin of this specimen is unknown.

#### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

#### [Literature cited](#)

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