

Fulvous Whistling-Duck

Dendrocygna bicolor

hypothetical, unassisted occurrence questionable

The distinctive Fulvous Whistling-Duck occurs primarily as a resident in s. N America through S. America, and in e. Africa, India, and Burma (AOU 1998, Hohman and Lee 2001). From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s the species had expanded and was breeding commonly north to San Francisco Bay, California, but thereafter populations in w. N America declined sharply, becoming almost extirpated in California by the 1990s. In the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands, a small population of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks appeared and bred during the 1980-1990s (HAS 1989-2005) but failed to become established.

On Kaua'i, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks observed at Hanalei NWR and on the Wailua River in Nov 1983 through summer 1984 (Leischman 1986) were likely dispersals from a flock of this species imported to Paradise Pacifica Botanical Garden several years earlier. Three recorded on a [DoFAW Waterbird Survey](#) at Pia Mill and Grove Farm 30 Jan 1992, as well as a group of 6 free-flying birds in a hotel pond near Wailua 26 Feb 1998, were also likely of captive origin. On O'ahu, a group 6 were first reported on an aquafarm near Kahuku 6 Jan 1982 and were observed through 1983 ([HRBP](#) 217-219, published *E* 46:76). Up to 9 birds were observed in April 1984, and breeding was first documented 3 months later when a flotilla of 16 young ducklings with 2-4 adults were observed in and near the Ki'i Unit of JCNWR 25 July-1 Aug 1984 (Leischman 1986; [HRBP](#) 482 and 509-510 published *E* 46:75). Breeding continued and counts increased to highs of 22-27 birds during Aug 1990 at the aquafarm (at least 9 additional photos in [HRBP](#)). Thereafter, they declined to <10 birds after May 1993 (*AB* 48:251) and to a single bird (known as "lonesome George,") that remained at Ki'i until last sighted 1 Dec 2001. An adult male was found dead on the highway near the aquafarm 16 Apr 1998 (BYUH 3016). Cessation of nesting may have resulted from reduction of nesting habitat (Hohman and Lee 2001). One observed at Kealia Pond, Maui, Jul-Dec 1985 and one that remained at Kakahaia Pond, Moloka'i, Jan 1986-Oct 1990 (Baskett *et al.* 1986) may have represented the same individual, possibly dispersed from the O'ahu population.

That all of these records were from the early-to-mid 1980s, after known importation of birds to Kaua'i (at least), and following the period of withdrawal of this species along the w. North American coast (rather than during the expansion period as would be expected), suggests that all Hawaiian Island records to date are best assumed to be escapes or progeny of escapes rather than naturally occurring vagrants, as presumed by Pyle (1983-2002) and the AOU (1998).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

Citation: Pyle, R.L., and P. Pyle. 2017. The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status. B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, U.S.A. Version 2 (1 January 2017) <http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/>