

GREATER SCAUP

Aythya marila

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

A.m. marila
A.m. nearctica?

Greater Scaup breeds throughout the Holarctic and winters in temperate latitudes of Eurasia and North America, where rare S of the United States (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, Cramp and Simmons 1977, AOU 1998). In the Pacific they have been recorded only in w. Micronesia (Wiles 2005) and the Hawaiian Islands. Being a shorter-distance migrant they are not as common in the Hawaiian Islands as [Lesser Scaup](#); nevertheless, they appear to be regular winterers in small numbers (Engilis et al. 2004). The difficulty of separating the scaup species from each other and from other *Aythya* ducks has obscured the occurrence pattern of this species in Hawaii, especially historically (see [Lesser Scaup](#)). Perkins (1903) and Henshaw (1903) refer to early records of Greater Scaup in Hawaii but it is unclear if they considered [Lesser Scaup](#).

There are records for nine confirmed Greater Scaup from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, all of which are supported by specimen or photograph. A first-fall male was present on *Kure* 13-15 Nov 1977 ([HRBP](#) 0010-0011, 1445). On *Midway*, one of 7 scaup present in Nov 1990 included a specimen of a Greater salvaged 15 Dec 1991 (BPBM 157344; [HRBP](#) 5650-5651 of specimen; see [Lesser Scaup](#)). Also on Midway, a Greater Scaup was photographed 2 Dec 1987 ([HRBP](#) 0736-0737), additional specimens were salvaged 4 Dec 1991 (BPBM 178507) and 10 Feb 1992 (BPBM 178506), two were present 21 Nov-6 Dec 2011 (one found dead on latter date), and singles were photographed 29 Oct 2015 ([HRBP](#) 6016-6017) and 3-7 Nov 2016. On *Laysan*, Greater Scaup were present 16 Nov 1980 ([HRBP](#) 0340) and 6 Nov 1990-12 Feb 1991 (died 12 Feb; [HRBP](#) 0960). The report of this species from French Frigate (Engilis et al. 2004) was based on an error.

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* the two scaup often occur together; thus, most Greater Scaup have been critically identified in direct comparison with [Lesser Scaup](#). Many adult individuals have been recorded in consecutive years at the same location, indicating successful round-trip migrations to breeding grounds. Long-returning individuals or small groups have been noted at Aimakapa, Loko Waka, and Waiakea ponds, Hawai'i I, from 1986 to 1999, and at the Punamano Unit of JCNWR, O'ahu, from 1985 to 1998. A [minimum](#) of 102 well-documented Greater Scaup have been recorded, on *Kaua'i* (7, 1960-2016; e.g., *E* 22:3, 38:91), *O'ahu* (25, 1946-2016; e.g., *E* 6:64, 29:52, 39:16; [HRBP](#) 0044-0048, 6015), *Moloka'i* (7, 2005-2014), *Maui* (23, 1977-2015; e.g., *E* 38:102), and *Hawai'i* (40, 1976-2016; e.g., *E* 38:07, 39:16, 45:72, 59:83; [HRBP](#) 6317). The high count of 5 was recorded twice on Hawai'i I, at Aimakapa Pond 9 Dec 2014 and at Loko Waka Pond 15 Nov 2016 (cf. [HRBP](#) 6317). Other counts of 4 have been recorded several times on O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i I, whereas occasional reports of 6-7 or more are unsubstantiated. The earliest fall arrival was of an adult male recorded 19 Oct 1980 at Kuilima, O'ahu, the latest spring record was for 5 Apr 1989 at Kealia Pond NWR, Maui, and there are no records of over-summering individuals.

The Eurasian and American populations of Greater Scaup are divided into two weakly diagnosed subspecies. Henshaw (1903) identified two photographed hunter kills from Puna, Hawai'i, as "the American Scaup Duck (*Aythya marila nearctica*)" but it is

unclear how carefully other *Aythya* taxa were considered. The pattern of occurrence in the Southeastern Islands (increased records to the SE) suggest that *nearctica* is undoubtedly involved, and indeed the photographs show larger looking birds as would be expected of this subspecies (Pyle 2008), but confirmation is required. On the other hand, the two specimens and images of two males ([HRBP 0010-0011, 0960](#)) from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands show plumage (extent of white in the wing and back) and smaller measurements consistent with the nominate Eurasian subspecies *A.m. marila*.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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