NORTHERN PINTAIL

*Anas acuta*

Other: Pintail (< 1983), *Koloa mapu* monotypic non-breeding visitor, regular winterer

Northern Pintail is a common and familiar species found throughout most of Eurasia and N. America, migrating south in winter to S. America, the Philippines, and Borneo (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, Cramp and Simmons 1977, AOU 1998). It winters regularly in the Hawaiian Islands and has reached practically every island group in Oceania (Udvardy and Engilis 2001) including Micronesia, Wake (Rauzon et al. 2008), Johnston (Amerson and Shelton 1976), Palmyra, and Jarvis, and S to the Tonga, Cook, Tahiti, and the Marquesas Is (Munro 1944; Pratt et al. 1987, 2010; Wiles 2005); there is at least one record for Australia (Marchant and Higgins 1990). It was familiar to pre-contact Hawaiians who knew the pintail as *koloa mapu*. Hunting of this species was active in Hawaii until banned in the 1940s.


In the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands most data on recent trends come from DOFAW surveys in 1980-2007. On Ni‘ihau Northern Pintails were recorded on 8 of 15 winter surveys between 1976 and 1997, with a high count of 252 on 20 Jan 1986. On Kaua‘i, high counts have included 150 at Hanalei NWR in Oct-Nov 1975 and in Nov 1995, and 370 on the Kapa‘a Christmas Count 18 Dec 1976, but DOFAW winter surveys have recorded no more than 58 in 1980-2007. In the 1960-1970s, peak winter counts on O‘ahu were of 100-350 at Pearl Harbor and Kahuku. Subsequent DOFAW winter surveys have shown a bimodal pattern, with an island-wide peak of 180 in 1988, dropping to lows of <25 in 1995-1998, and another peak of 175 in 2007 (HRBP 5382). On Moloka‘i, counts of over 100 occurred in the 1950-1960s, including a high count on an aerial survey of 342 on 7 Jan 1953 (Dibben-Young 2016), but subsequent annual high counts have been lower, including 30-50 during the 1990s-mid 2010s except for as many as 60-80 recorded during the winters of 2005-2007. On Maui, island-wide counts
(primarily at Kealia and Kanaha ponds) were of up to 100 in the 1960s-1970s. During DOFAW surveys cyclic patterns followed those recorded state-wide (see above) with high counts >140 in Jan 1986, 1999, and 2006; an off-survey high count of 268 was recorded at Kealia 4 Jan 2007 and 128 were there 26 Nov 2014. On Lāna`i, a flock of 15-30 pintails was near Lāna`i City in Nov 1978 and a single bird was near Keomuku in Oct 1977. On the DOFAW survey they were recorded in four of 18 winters in 1989-2007, with high counts of 35 in Jan 1995 and 36 in Jan 2006. On Hawai`i I, pintails were recorded on every winter DOFAW survey in 1986-2007, with high counts of 81 in 1989 and 74 in 2004, and low counts of < 5 in 1994, 1998, and 2002. There is as yet no report of Northern Pintail from Kaho'olawe.

Pintails arrive to the Southeastern Islands in Aug-Oct and depart in Mar-May. Surprisingly few over-summer in Hawaii, with only 10 individuals recorded in Jun-Jul (Kaua`i, O`ahu, Moloka`i, and Hawai`i) since 1978. These may represent sick or injured birds. DOFAW surveys in mid-Aug have tallied small numbers of returning individuals on about half the surveys, with a high count of >50 in 2004, 48 of which were at Opaekalua Pond, Hawai`i I, 18 Aug.

In the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, Northern Pintails are regular winter visitors to island groups having suitable habitat. At Midway, 1-8 individuals winter annually (e.g., HRBP 0120, 0571, 0592, 1342-1347, 6008, 6143) with a high count of >30 reported in Dec 1961 (Fisher 1965); at Laysan the earliest reports are from 1896 (Shaun Island 1899) and high counts have reached 63 (9 Sep 1969; Ely and Clapp 1973), 48 (Sep-Nov 1988), and 40 (winter 1996-97); see also HRBP 0759-0761. At French Frigate 1-5 are recorded annually, primarily in fall. At the other island groups they are observed less frequently, and mostly as migrants: on Kure singles occurred Oct 1959 and 3 Feb 1962, 6 specimens were collected in fall and spring 1963-1968 (Woodward 1972), and individuals were photographed 12 Oct 1983, Sep 1985, and 7 Nov 2012 (HRBP 0262-0263, 0468-0469, 6007), the last found dead 13 Dec 2012 (BPBM 185733); at Pearl and Hermes an immature male was observed 13-14 Sep 1969 (Amerson et al. 1974); at Lisianski there is a single undated report (Clapp et al. 1977); and at Nihoa a live female and decomposed male (USNM 567292) were found on 15 Sep 1971 and another was photographed in Oct 2006 (HRBP 5562). A male recorded at Laysan in Jul 1995 is the only summer record for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Literature cited

http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/