

NORTHERN SHOVELER

Anas clypeata

Other: *Koloa moha*, Spoonbill

monotypic

non-breeding visitor, regular winterer

Northern Shoveler is a familiar species found in most of North America and Eurasia (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, Cramp and Simmons 1977, AOU 1998). It is highly migratory, wintering south to central America and Malaysia, and reaching many Pacific islands S to Australia and New Zealand (Marchant and Higgins 1990), including most Micronesian groups, the Gilbert and Line Is, and Johnston and Wake atolls (Amerson and Shelton 1976, Pratt et al. 1987, Wiles 2005, Rauzon et al. 2008). Shovelers winter commonly in the Hawaiian Islands from October to early May, with small numbers regularly over-summering (*cf. E* 31:65-66). Native Hawaiians knew the shoveler as *koloa moha*, one of only two migratory visiting ducks to have been given a traditional Hawaiian name.

The first record of a Northern Shoveler in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* was of one shot on Ni'ihau 15 Mar 1792 (Menzius 1794), and they were subsequently recognized and collected by other ornithologists visiting in the 1800s (Peale 1848, Gray 1859, Finsch and Hartlaub 1867, Dole 1869), with large numbers noted wintering on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Hawai'i (Dole 1879, Henshaw 1902a). "Scores and hundreds" arrived in the Hilo region in mid-Oct 1900, including a flock of 50 that followed a cargo vessel from 300 miles offshore (Henshaw 1900a). In the 1940-1950s, among the several thousand waterfowl wintering in the Southeastern Islands, [Northern Pintails](#) far outnumbered Northern Shovelers, which in turn outnumbered all other species combined (Schwartz and Schwartz 1949, Medeiros 1958). Continuing loss of natural wetland habitat over the years, particularly the draining of Kaelepulu Pond on O'ahu in 1954, has contributed to declining numbers of shovelers and pintails in recent decades (*cf. Graph*). At least 11 specimens of Northern Shoveler from the Hawaiian Islands are known (Engilis et al. 2004).

[DOFAW Waterbird Surveys](#) indicate a generally declining state-wide trend between 1986 and 2007, with a high count of 670 in 1986 and a low count of < 20 in 2002 (rebounding to 150-300 in 2005-2007). Highest counts of shovelers have been on *Mau*i, where 1065 were counted at Kealia Pond 5 Nov 1976 (*E* 38:6), followed by frequent fall and winter counts of up to 900 through 1987. Semi-monthly counts by Kealia NWR staff in the 1990s peaked each winter at 200-419 birds but declined during the 2000s to 111-294. At Kanaha Pond counts frequently reached 200-425 in 1960-1986 then dropped mostly below 100 through the 1990s, and < 50 in the mid-2010s. Shoveler numbers on *O'ahu* showed the same trend: at Pearl Harbor counts of 350-411 in 1975-1978 were followed by < 200 in 1980-1984 and < 100 after 1985 ([HRBP](#) 5172); and at Kahuku numbers dropped after the peak count of 200 in Nov 1983. During DOFAW surveys in 1986-2007, island-wide counts on O'ahu peaked at 275 in 1988. Island-wide high counts during [DOFAW surveys](#) on other islands during this period include 400 on *Ni'ihau* 20 Jan 1979, 37 on *Kaua'i* 19 Jan 1994, 65 on *Moloka'i* 15 Jan 1986, 6 on *Lana'i* 17 Jan 2001, and 182 on *Hawai'i I* 27 Jan 1989. Additional individual high counts or larger flocks on these islands include 30 at Hanalei NWR, Kaua'i, in Jan 1998, 381 on

Ni'ihau 14 Jan 1981, 103 on Moloka'i 14 Jan 1967, and 125 at Aimakapa Pond, Hawai'i in Dec 1983. On Lana'i, two were collected (including BPBM 7076) from Ko'ele reservoir in Dec 1916 (Munro 1944) and the high count, a flock of 75 at the Lana'i City STP 2 Apr 1994 (gone by 4 Apr), was probably enroute from Maui or Hawai'i. One was reported in flight at Smugglers Cove, *Kaho'olawe* 17 Oct 2002, the only record for that island. The regular presence of over-summering birds prevents the determination of early fall and late spring dates; generally the earliest migrants arrive in Aug and the latest spring departures are in late Apr-early May.

In the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands* Northern Shovelers are not as common as [Northern Pintails](#). Reports on Sand I., *Midway* include a pair collected 30 Apr 1964 (USNM 493584, 493585) and one in Jan 1966 (Clapp and Woodward 1968). From 1979 through the mid-2010s, 1-5 birds per year have been recorded with increased observer presence (e.g., [HRBP](#) 1342-1344, 5999, 6006), including males found dead in Jan 1982 (USNM 599506) and Oct 1997 (specimen to LSU), and a larger group of 10 spring transients in May 1988. At *Laysan*, shovelers were reported to be a winter visitor by Schauinsland (1899) and at least one specimen was collected during 1896-1897 (Rothschild 1900). Shovelers have reached Laysan in at least 12 winters since 1913, involving groups of up to 21 birds on the lake in Oct 1998. Elsewhere in the Northwestern Islands, dried remains of one were found at *Kure* 10 Nov 1977 (*E* 39:13) and singles appeared on Tern I., *French Frigate* 4-17 Sep 1992 and 9-10 Oct 1997.

[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/>