

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

Mergus serrator

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

monotypic

Red-breasted Mergansers breed in sub-arctic and n. temperate regions of Eurasia and N America, withdrawing S in winter along the Pacific coasts S to Japan and Baja California (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952, Cramp and Simmons 1977, AOU 1998). In the Pacific Basin, vagrants have occurred in the Mariana Is (Wiles 2005) and in the Hawaiian Islands in late fall and winter. Close to half of the records from the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands are from the 1800s-1913, suggesting that they were formerly more common than they have been since. All reports have been of females or first-cycle males.

In the *Northwest Hawaiian Islands* female-plumaged birds were photographed on *Kure* 27 Nov-14 Dec 2014 ([HRBP](#) 6027) and, possibly the same bird, on Spit I, *Midway* 2 Apr 2015 ([HRBP](#) 6028, published *NAB* 69:512); two mergansers reported from Sand I., Midway 25 Oct 1981 may have been Red-breasted Mergansers but are unsubstantiated. One on *Laysan* 17-18 Dec 1995 was found dead 21 Jan 1996. A total of 12 substantiated Red-breasted Mergansers have been recorded in the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, on *Kaua'i* (at Hanalei NWR 13 Feb 1995 and near Hanalei NWR 15 Nov 2016, [HRBP](#) 6320; an adult male reported there in 1998 is unsubstantiated; Engilis et al. 2004), *O'ahu* (one collected in 1901; Bryan 1901a, Henshaw 1902a, whereabouts of specimen unknown; 1 at Nu'upia Ponds, Mokapu Peninsula Dec 1976, *E* 37:137; 1 at Sandy Beach 8-29 Nov 2011, [HRBP](#) 6024-6025 published *NAB* 65:192; and 1, possibly 2, in the Enchanted Lakes area during the week of 28 Jan 2013), *Moloka'i* (Kakahaia NWR 23 Jan 1979; *E* 40:15), *Maui* (Kealia Pond NWR 9 Nov 1985-23 Feb 1986; Engilis et al. 2004), and *Hawai'i I* (two collected near Hilo 8 and 28 Nov 1898, one of which is USNM 169669, [HRBP](#) 5108-5109 of specimen; one near Pahala in Oct-Nov 1902, Henshaw 1900a, 1903; and one found in a weakened condition in Pololu Valley near Hawi 13 Nov 2013, which later died, [HRBP](#) 6026, BPBM 186013). Perkins (1903) mentioned them for "several islands" but we know of records before 1903 only for O'ahu and Hawai'i I.

[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/>