

## BLACK FRANCOLIN

## *Francolinus francolinus*

**naturalized resident, recently established**

*F.f. asiae?*

*F.f. melanonotus?*

Black Francolins occur in central Asia from Turkey and s. Russia to Burma (AOU 1998, Islam 1999). They have been introduced to India, Italy, Guam, and the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* (Long 1981, Lever 1987). Attempted introductions throughout N America, primarily, in 1956-1974 (*cf.* Bump & Bump 1964, Bohl & Bump 1970, Banks 1981), resulted in briefly established populations in sw. Louisiana and n. Florida in the 1970-1980s, which since have become extirpated (AOU 1983, 1998). See Islam (1999) for information on the natural history and biology of Black Francolin in Hawaii.

As part of extensive game-bird propagation efforts by DoFAW (Walker 1967), Black Francolins were introduced in 1959-1962 to Kaua'i (> 135 birds), Moloka'i (> 250), Maui (>160), and Hawai'i (>310) (Bump & Bump 1964a, Bohl & Bump 1970, Swedberg 1967a, Walker 1967); more recent introductions have been attempted on O'ahu in at least 1994 (Islam 1999). Populations have become established on all of these islands as well as Ni'ihau (probably) and Lana'i, where they likely dispersed on their own from nearby islands. They are less conspicuous than the other francolins, and are found throughout dry and open habitats in established areas.

A visitor reported at least one Black Francolin on *Ni'ihau* 18 Mar 2002, suggesting that they are established on this seldom-visited island. On *Kaua'i*, after introductions in 1960-1962, few observations were made until 1979, when they were noted near Kipu. By 1988 they were observed at Hanalei and by 1989 they were noted increasing at the w. end of the island, upslope to >1000 m elevation in Kokee SP by 1998 (Denny 1999). Through the early 2010s they were commonly reported in low numbers throughout the island. Following introductions to w. *O'ahu* in 1994, Black Francolins were noted throughout the Wai'anae Range and W to Ka'ena Point in small numbers through the 1990s and moderate numbers through the early 2010s. On *Moloka'i*, Black Francolins spread relatively quickly after introductions in 1960-1962, being noted from near Pu'u Nana to near Pakaikai as early as 1964 (Pekelo 1964) and found commonly in 1966 (*E* 27:28). They have since spread to the w. end of the island (by at least 1981), appeared to be common in appropriate habitats during the early 1980s (Scott *et al.* 1986), and were reported as abundant through the early 2010s. There are no historic records of Black Francolins being introduced to *Lana'i* and they are not mentioned as occurring there (*cf.* Scott *et al.* 1986, AOU 1998, Islam 1999). However, singing males were noted at the Airport near Lana'i City beginning in 1988 and small numbers were reported on the island through the early 2010s. On *Maui*, few birds were noted after introductions in the 1960s until 1982, when they were simultaneously recorded at several locations in the central isthmus and up the w. slope of Haleakala Mt as high as Hosmer Grove (> 2000 m). Through the early 2010s they were found From Ma'alaea to Kahalui, and along the S coast as far E as Kaupo Gap. On *Hawai'i I*, introductions of over 300 individuals, at Kipuka Ainahou (along Chain of Craters road in Hawaii Volcanoes NP), Pu'u Wa'awa'a Ranch, and Kahua Ranch in the Kohala Mts in 1959-1962, resulted in rapid dispersal away from release sites, one bird turning up at Honomolino, at least 40 miles from the

nearest site, shortly after release (Lewin 1971). These introductions, especially at Kahua, eventually led to successful population establishment and slow dispersal, primarily throughout the 1980s. Through the early 2010s Black Francolins were found fairly commonly throughout the entire W coast of Hawai'i, up to 2300 m elevation (Scott *et al.* 1986) and as far E as Honoka'a and Hakalau NWR.

Black Francolins released in Hawaii (and elsewhere in N America) have been reported to be of the subspecies *F.f. asiae* of n. India and Nepal (Bump & Bump 1964, Swedberg 1967a, Islam 1999); however, specimen examination (PP, USNM and BPBM) indicates birds from Hawaii show blacker suffusion to the upperparts than is shown by typical *asiae*, perhaps indicating some intergradation with the easternmost and darkest subspecies, *melanonotus* of E India, Sikkim, and Bangladesh.

#### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

#### [Literature cited](#)

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