

INDIAN PEAFOWL

Pavo cristatus

Other: Common Peafowl (1983-2011)

monotypic

naturalized (non-native) resident, long established

The Indian Peafowl is native to India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, with small and/or semi-domestic introduced populations occurring in various places around the world (Long 1981, Marchant and Higgins 1993, AOU 1998, Kannan and James 1998). It has been introduced rather unsuccessfully to California and Florida, and with more success to Hawaii, where small populations were first brought at least as early as 1860 and possibly earlier (Lever 1987). They were introduced to all *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* except Kaho'olawe, and became established on 3-4 of these islands (Long 1981, Lever 1987) through the mid-2010s. Unlike other upland game birds that were specifically propagated and released by government agencies for hunting, Indian Peafowls were introduced in Hawaii primarily for aesthetic reasons by private individuals, and their history of introduction is thus harder to trace. Current populations are localized to a few areas of appropriate dry habitat on leeward slopes with banana poka (*Passeflora mollissima*) fruit. Schwartz and Schwartz (1949) estimated 530 birds for the Southeastern Islands (excluding Ni'ihau) in 1946-1947.

Initial introductions of Indian Peafowls likely included *Ni'ihau* (Swedberg 1967a), where they were reported as fairly common by Caum (1933), abundant by Schwartz and Schwartz (1949), and widespread ('by the 100s') throughout the lowlands by Fisher (1951). They were still present on Ni'ihau during a one-day trip in March 2002. Introductions on *Kaua'i* were initiated at least as early as 1860 (Locey 1937, Munro 1944) and scattered small populations continued to persist through 2016, primarily along the drier s. and sw. slopes of the island but also along the Kipu Kai coast S of Lihue, Koke'e SP, near Kapa'a, and in Hanalei NWR (Denny 1999). Introductions to *O'ahu* also occurred at least as early as the 1860s, when King Kamehameha V gave a flock to a rancher in Makaha Valley as a gift. Semi-domesticated birds have been observed throughout O'ahu (*E* 42:100, 69:55-57) but the only established wild populations have occurred in the vicinity of Mt. Kaala, in particular "Peacock Flats" in Makaha Valley (e.g., *E* 16:11) but also to Kaena Point, Haleiwa, and the slopes above Kunia and Nanakuli; during the 1980-2010s, small flocks also persisted in Koko Crater and at the Waimea Valley Audubon Center along the N shore. In 2003 the USDA, responding to complaints of excessive noise and droppings, planned to cull the Makaha Valley population (estimated at 60-70 birds at the time) but this decision was shelved following an outcry from the public (*E* 69:55-57). Peafowls were reported to persist in small numbers on *Moloka'i* by Caum (1933) and Schwartz and Schwartz (1949), but there have only been a few reports of possibly semi-domesticated birds from the 1950s through the early 2010s. Likewise, populations introduced to *Lana'i* in the late 1800s thrived for a number of years but were apparently extirpated with the building of Lana'i City in the 1930s (Munro 1944, 2007). Rothschild (1900) singled out *Maui* as the island having "large numbers" in the late 1800s; by the 2010s a viable population persisted on the remote sw. slopes of Mt Haleakala (Scott et al. 1986) and small numbers were recorded at wide localities elsewhere on the island. Indian Peafowls were first introduced to

Hawai'i I at Pu'uwa'awa'a Ranch in 1909 and quickly became established there in forests at 600-1250 m elevation (*E* 19:4; 21:13, 67; Lewin 1971). By the 1970s this population had spread N to Hualalai and S along the slopes of Mauna Kea as far as Ka'u (Scott et al. 1986). Other observations of peafowl near the Kohala Mts. and along Saddle Road during the 1970-2000s may have involved semi-domesticated individuals.

During 2010-2016, single-location high counts included 29 at a theme park near Wailua, Kaua'i 6 Aug 2014; 32 near Waianae, O'ahu 15 Dec 2015; 8 near Wailuku, Maui 14 Mar 2013; and 55 at the Makalei Golf Course above the Kona Airport, Hawai'i I 30 Dec 2013.

[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/>