

## ERCKEL'S FRANCOLIN

## *Francolinus erckelii*

**naturalized (non-native) resident, recently established**

monotypic

Erckel's Francolins occur naturally in n. Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea) and have been introduced to Italy and the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands* (Long 1981, Lever 1987, AOU 1998, Islam 1999). Of the game birds introduced into xeric habitats of Hawaii during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Walker 1967), the Erckel's Francolin has been one of the more successful, although its establishment and dispersal were protracted. After introductions in 1957-1966 (>200 on Kaua'i, >100 on O'ahu, >140 on Moloka'i, >210 on Lana'i, >175 on Maui, and >470 on Hawai'i; Swedberg 1968), Dunmire (1961) and Walker (1967) did not consider it established in Hawaii, unlike the other two francolin species released at the same time. Erckel's Francolins are now established in dry open habitats of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Lana'i, and Hawai'i, with small and possibly established populations on Moloka'i and Maui. See Islam (1999) for information on the natural history and biology of Erckel's Francolin in Hawaii.

On *Kaua'i*, populations became established in Kokee SP and Waimea Canyon, where they were frequently observed, usually along the entrance road, beginning at least in 1977 (*E* 38:102, Denny 1999). Unlike the other two francolins and [Chukar](#), they can be found in forested areas (e.g., in the Alakai Swamp) as well as dry and open habitats. In the late 1980s through the early 2010s they were recorded elsewhere in Kaua'i, including Hanapepe, Kilauea Point NWR, and Hanalei, and were considered common (Denny 1999). On *O'ahu*, Erckel's Francolins were released at the Kuaokala GMA in the n. Waianae range where they were actively hunted through at least the 1970s (*E* 41:16-17). Through the mid-2010s they were noted regularly throughout w. O'ahu, primarily at Ka'ena Point, Ewa Beach, and upland areas above Nankuli and Schofield Barracks, appearing to increase slowly through the 1990s followed by a decrease through 2007 and an increase through the early 2010s ([Graph](#)). A few reports from elsewhere on O'ahu during the 1990-early 2010s may have been misidentifications or based on locally escaped birds. On *Moloka'i*, there were no reports after release in 1957-1966 (*cf.* Pekelo 1964) until 1980-1992 when they were detected in Kamalo and Kawela gulches in the ec. portion of the island (Scott et al. 1986, *E* 48:114). There have been no reports from Moloka'i since these observations, but they may persist in these remote areas. Reports of this species on *Lana'i* from the 1970s through the early 2010s indicate that they have become established there in small numbers, as are the other francolins (*E* 27:28, Scott et al. 1986, Islam 1999). Reports on *Maui* existed from the road to Haleakala NP shortly after release and near the release site (*E* 22:52), but since this time there have only been two records, from the remote s. slopes of Haleakala in the early 1980s (Scott et al. 1986). It may persist in low numbers in these remote and seldom-visited areas, as on Moloka'i. Because of its relative conspicuousness, dispersal patterns of Erckel's Francolin on *Hawai'i I* have been easier to track than those of the other two francolin species. After release in 1957-1959 at Puako, Pu'u Wa'awa'a Ranch (Lewin 1971, *E* 25:8), and Pohakuloa (*E* 21:67), this species spread slowly, reaching Hapuna Beach by 1963 (Lewin 1971); Hualalai Mt. by 1965; Ainahou Ranch along Chain of Craters Road (where they may also have been released), along Saddle Road and to >3000 m upslope on Mauna Kea by 1979 (Conant 1980b, Scott et al. 1986); Honokohau north of Kona by 1981; Kohala

Ranch by 1986; and Hakalau NWR by 1988. Erckel's Francolin populations continued to fill out these areas through the mid-2010s and remained a popularly hunted species on this island.

Swedberg (1967a) and Berger (1981) attribute introductions in Hawaii to the nominate subspecies of Erckel Francolin from Ethiopia; however, one other recognized subspecies has since been synonymized and the species is now considered monotypic (Islam 1999).

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

#### [Literature cited](#)

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