

Buffy Laughingthrush

Ianthocincla berthemyi

hypothetical, unsubstantiated

The Buffy Laughingthrush is now considered one of three species that used to be lumped with the Gray-sided Laughingthrush (*I. caerulatus*), the latter a widespread resident from Nepal and Bhutan to s. China and n. Myanmar (Ali and Ripley 1996b, AOU 1998, Clements 2007); these laughingthrushes were formerly placed in genus *Garrulax*. Under "Unidentified...Oriental Thrush", Caum (1933) mentions the release and describes the appearance of five individuals of an unknown laughingthrush to *O'ahu* from a Japanese liner in 1928. He did not expect them to be seen again after "an introduction so small", but on 30 May 1947 H.P. Porter (*E* 8:5) observed a flock of 12+ (later revised to 20; *E* 11:66) laughingthrushes along the Poamoho Trail, about 1 km above the trailhead, that he tentatively identified as [White-throated Laughingthrushes](#), but that better fit Caum's description of the unidentified species. By 1949, however, Porter had obtained better views of the birds and had questioned this identity (*E* 9:59-60). It subsequently became known as the "mystery *Garrulax*", although suspected to be of the Gray-sided Laughingthrush complex as early as 1950 (*E* 10:70-71). Up to 15 of these laughingthrushes were observed off and on from 1 to 5 km from the Poamoho trailhead, within and up to the head of the Poamoho Valley, during 1949-1960 (Pyle 1954, HAS 1959, Shallenberger and Vaughn 1978; e.g., *E* 9:67, 10:47, 10:64, 11:66, 14:56, 18:83, 21:44) but not again until Taylor and Collins (1979) relocated 2 individuals 16 Feb 1978 and, through the assistance of S.L. Olson at USNM (*E* 39:19), reached a "positive identification" as Gray-sided Laughingthrush *sensu lato* (R. Pyle 1979). These appear to be the last substantiated observations of this laughingthrush (we consider two, heard only, during the Waipi'o [Christmas Bird Count](#) in 1986 [*E* 47:53] as unsubstantiated) and they appear to have become extirpated. Olson (*in* Taylor and Collins 1979) considered the subspecies "*G.c. berthemyi*" of the province of Fujian (formerly "Fukien"), se. China, to be the most likely subspecies based on the descriptions and that coastal Fujian was a common source for introduced caged birds to Hawaii.

Pyle (1979-2002) and Pyle and Pyle (2009) had accepted Gray-sided Laughingthrush as occurring in Hawaii based on the documentation of Olson, Taylor, and Collins, along with possible establishment of a population for at least 30-50 years. It was relegated to appendices of the AOU (1983, Appendix B), because identity was uncertain and of the AOU (1998) because it may no longer be established. Due to identification and taxonomic uncertainties, the lack of a specimen or photograph, and the lack of information regarding population establishment, the [HBRC](#) voted not to accept Buffy or Gray-sided Laughingthrush to the Hawaiian Island Checklist in Nov 2016.

[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/>