

YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT

Tiaris olivaceus

Other: (Cuban) Olive Finch

T.o. pusillus

naturalized (non-native) resident, recently established

Yellow-faced Grassquits are native to e. Mexico and the Caribbean through n. S America, with a few records for s. Florida and Texas (Ridgley and Tudor 1989, Howell and Webb 2005, AOU 1998). They were introduced to *O'ahu* sometime before 1974 and have become established throughout the central portion of the island.

Small numbers of Yellow-faced Grassquits, presumably originating from escaped cage birds, were first discovered above Pacific Palisades in the center of O'ahu in Aug-Oct 1974 (Roselle and Wilson 1974). No further substantiated reports of grassquits occurred until 1977 (we consider two reported from Kailua in Dec 1974, *E* 35:92-93, as unsubstantiated), when two were observed near the summit of the Halawa Trail in Aug (Shallenberger 1977c), at least 40 were seen along the Manana Ridge Trail above Pearl City in Oct (*E* 38:106), and up to 35 were recorded in the central Ko'olau Range at 370-450 m elevation between Kipapa Trail above Mililani and the Halawa Valley, including two collected along Halawa Trail 8 Nov 1977 (Shallenberger and Vaughn 1978; *E* 39:20; BPBM 178784-5, [HRBP](#) 5942-5944 of specimens). Through the 1980s most observations were made along the Manana Ridge Trail (e.g., *E* 39:20, 33, 75; 42:21-22; 44:18), with a high count of at least 50 observed there 24 Jan 1982. By 1986-1988 they appeared to be slowly expanding their range, being noted W to the Poamoho Trail above Waihiawa (*E* 47:42) and E to the slopes above Kalihi, Kaimuki, Palolo, and Aina Haina (e.g., *E* 47:95, 48:57). They were considered questionably established on O'ahu by R. Pyle (1979) and Long (1981), probably established by the AOU (1983), and established and added to the Hawaii Checklist by Pyle (1983). Reports from the S Ko'olau Range tapered off after the late 1980s, by 1993 being found primarily throughout the N Ko'olau as far N as Pu'u Hina, not far from the n. end of the range (*E* 53:79). Although HAS (1989-2005) indicates populations were still spreading, they appeared to have declined during 1990-2014 on the Waipi'o [Christmas Bird Count \(Graph\)](#), with most observations being in the core area of the central Ko'olau range, and observations during 2010-2016 being very infrequent. This may relate to their specific grassy habitats being ephemeral and not always accessible. The first confirmed record for the Waianae Range were of a pair along the Palehua Road above Palikea 4-15 May 2007 ([HRBP](#) 5537, 5945) and reports in this area increased in 2008-2015, including a count of 10 there on 12 Jan 2014.

Five subspecies of Yellow-faced Grassquits have been recognized (Clements et al. 2016) with *T.o. pusillus* being the most widespread, found throughout continental Mexico and C and S America, and the subspecies most often included in the cage-bird trade (Smith et al. 1991); the population established on O'ahu has been identified as this subspecies (Smith et al. 1991; P. Donaldson and PP examination, BPBM).

[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/>