

KALIJ PHEASANT

Lophura leucomelanos

naturalized resident, recently established

L.l. hamiltoni and/or *leucomelanos*

The Kalij Pheasant ([HRBP](#) 5697-5698) is another game bird introduced to Hawaii that is native to central Asia, from Pakistan through the Himalayan region to Thailand (Lewin and Lewin 1984, AOU 1998). Introductions into several United States in 1969-1976 failed to establish populations (Banks 1981). Introductions to Hawai'i I, however, resulted in it since becoming widespread and common on this island (Long 1981, Lever 1987). They have been implicated in the spread of banana poka (*Passiflora*) and other noxious weeds on Hawai'i (Kishinami 2001), although seeds may not survive their digestive tracts (Foster 2009).

A total of 67 Kalij Pheasants were released in 1962 at Pu'u wa'awa'a Ranch, *Hawai'i I*, from which the entire population is believed to have originated (Swedberg 1967a, Lewin 1971, Lewin and Lewin 1984). They were not considered established by Walker (1967) or Berger (1972) but beginning in the late 1960s they appeared to expand rapidly (Pratt 1975, Berger 1981, Paton 1981b, HAS 1984, Scott *et al.* 1986; *E* 38:74-75, 38:112, 39:17, 60:91), at an estimated rate of 8 km/yr (Lewin and Lewin 1984). By 1972 they were found throughout leeward slopes of Hawai'i, by 1975 they were observed on the Hamakua coast along the e. slopes of Mauna Kea, by 1976 they were observed in the Ka'u Forest on the se. slopes of Mauna Loa, by 1977 they had reached Hawaii Volcanoes NP ([Graph](#)), by 1979 they were found in the Kohala Mts (see map in Lewin 1984), and by 1987 in the dry forests of n. Mauna Kea (*E* 47:41). Population sizes also expanded rapidly throughout the 1980s ([Graph](#)) such that they became one of the most common forest birds in the 1990s (high count of >75 on McCandless Ranch, sw. slopes of Mauna Loa, 1 Nov 1996); however, counts during the Volcano Christmas Count indicate a decline in abundance after initial expansion ([Graph](#)). Two specimens at Alberta University Museum of Zoology (UAMZ B6897-898) and two at BPBM (159486-487) were collected in 1981 and one at USNM (556787) was collected in 1982. Although occasionally seen at or near sea level (e.g., Paton 1981b, one in Hilo suburb 27 Mar 2007), they are found most commonly in forested areas between 300 and 2500 m elevation (Lewin and Lewin 1984, Scott *et al.* 1986).

Pratt (1975) discusses the subspecies of Kalij Pheasant released in Hawaii, concluding based on field observations that birds were of the w. Himalayan subspecies, *L. l. hamiltoni* and/or *leucomelanos*. The three specimens at BPBM and USNM noted above show characters of these subspecies (PP examination). Bump and Bohl (1961) suggested that *L.l. melanota* of e. Nepal and n. India were liberated in the e. United States. Six other subspecies of Kalij Pheasant have been recognized (Clements 2007).

On O'ahu, a Kalij Pheasant observed in upper Manoa Valley 9 May 1987 probably had escaped from a nearby park that keeps exotic birds, but increasing reports for the Waianae Range at 450-650 m elevation above Schofield Barracks, beginning in 2002, suggest that an incipient population may be becoming established in this area.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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