



National Audubon Society 113th Christmas Bird Count Summary for Hawai'i/Pacific Islands

By Thane K. Pratt

The main Hawaiian Islands were blessed with the highest number of count circles ever, thanks to the continuation the Lāna'i circle initiated last year and the addition of the new Kaho'olawe circle this year. Kaho'olawe is a sizable uninhabited island south of Maui, and the count there tallied 14 species, including non-native Gambel's Quail (61 birds), virtually a Kaho'olawe specialty within the Islands.

In contrast to this year's expanded coverage on the main islands, the three NW Hawaiian circles—the source of astounding seabird counts and numerous vagrants in previous years—were completely missed owing to a series of unrelated mishaps, the most serious being the destruction of the field station on French Frigate Shoals by a marine cyclone that also killed many seabirds. Johnston Atoll was the only remote island counted. Winter weather conditions in the islands were relatively wet for Kaua'i and O'ahu, but dry from Moloka'i eastwards owing to continuing drought. As a result, counts of waterfowl and shorebirds were generally down except at managed wetlands.

Due to the missed atoll counts, there is little to report on seabirds. Of note however, is the marked decrease in tern numbers on Johnston Atoll, especially White Terns (only 5 counted), attributed to predation by the Short-eared Owls (4 counted) that have recently become established. Also worrying for the seabirds breeding on Johnston is the high count of 18 Cattle Egrets, a species that preys upon chicks. The only vagrant seabirds reported for the region were 3 Least Terns that overwintered at the wastewater treatment plant on the N Kona circle, Hawai'i Is.

Nene geese continue to deliver high counts on the Kapa'a circle (308 birds this year), despite deportations of nuisance birds near the Līhu'e airport. A highlight among the migratory waterfowl was a family of 4 Tundra Swans on the Kualapu'u Reservoir, Moloka'i. Readers may remember Tundra Swans reported on the Moloka'i CBC in 2006, but those birds were of the Bewick's race, whereas this year's birds appeared to be of the Whistling Swan subspecies. Two vagrant Cackling Geese were also reported, one on the Kapa'a circle and another in N Kona during the count week. At the Kealia



Figure 1. A family of Tundra Swans on the Kualapu'u Reservoir, Moloka'i. Photo by Arleone Dibben-Young.

NWR ('Īao, Maui circle), a water management regime favorable to shorebirds probably explains the extraordinary count of 199 overwintering Sanderlings. Lone Peregrine Falcons were reported for 'Īao, Maui and Johnston Atoll circles. The last vagrant of note was a Great-tailed Grackle on the Honolulu circle, possibly ship assisted.

An 'I'iwi, the iconic scarlet Hawaiian honeycreeper, was not just counted but brilliantly photographed in the Waianae Mts on the Waipio, O'ahu circle—a rare find indeed. The species has all but vanished from this island, far from its strongholds on Maui and Hawai'i Islands.

Introduced species new to individual Hawaiian count circles included Kalij Pheasant (1 bird) in the Waianae Mts on the Waipio circle, Common Peafowl (2) on Molokai, Chukar (21) on Lanai, and Red Avadavat (or Strawberry Finch, 2) on the Kapa'a, Kauai circle.

All five Pacific Region count circles were covered this



Figure 2. An ‘I‘iwi in the Waianae Mts, Waipio Circle, Oahu. Photo by Nick Hajdukovich.

(Continued from page 1) year. Records continue to be set for migratory herons: 16 Intermediate Egrets on Rota, 4 Great Egrets on Saipan, and 2 Grey Herons, also on Saipan. Some exceptional shorebirds were a Bristle-thighed Curlew on the Dededo, Guam circle during the count week; a high count of 9 Black-winged Stilts also at Dededo; a Black-tailed Godwit new for Saipan; and 2 Common Redshanks on Saipan. Black-naped Terns appear to be increasing on Guam, with 16 birds reported from Dededo. Four Micronesian Scrubfowl was a high count for a rare native species on Saipan.

Note: Full data for the 113th Christmas Bird Count for Hawai‘i and the Pacific can be accessed online at the following URL: <http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>

The First Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count at Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve

December 20, 2012

By Lance Tanino and James Bruch

Last year we conducted the first-ever Audubon Christmas Bird Count on Kaho‘olawe in the 114-year history of the count, with permission from the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC). The Island of Ni‘ihau is now the remaining main Hawaiian Island without one.

For 12 hours, James Bruch, Forest Starr, Kim Starr, Kurt Pohlman, and Lance Tanino traveled on foot (3.75 miles) and by Polaris (32.5 miles) All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) throughout Kaho‘olawe's harsh environment. We tallied 193 birds from 14 species within the 15-mile diameter count circle.

We experienced very windy conditions for most of the day. The lowest wind speeds were quite strong at 14 miles per hour, however gusts of 49 miles per hour or more were challenging especially at Lua Makika and Kanapou. Temperatures ranged from 68 to 76 degrees Fahrenheit.

The first bird detected was a Northern Mockingbird. The morning chorus followed with Northern Cardinals, African Silverbills, House Sparrows, and Japanese White-Eyes. We walked the coastline at Honokanai‘a Beach towards the helicopter landing zone on the southern end of the beach before returning to Base Camp. Habitat consist of mostly non-native lowland scrub dominated by ‘kiawe (*Prosopis pallida*) and Bufflegrass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*). Native coastal plants include ‘aki‘aki (*Sporobolus virginicus*), ‘ilima (*Sida fallax*), ‘akulikuli (*Sesuvium*



Figure 1. Polaris vehicle on Kaho‘olawe at first annual CBC.

portulacastrum) and some sparse out-plantings of ‘aweoweo (*Chenopodium oahuense*) and ‘iliahi (*Santalum ellipticum*). A small flock of Brown Boobies was seen flying south to north over the bay.

Our team's next location was another two miles out to the western beaches of Kaho‘olawe in the ‘ili (subdivision of an ‘ahupua‘a) of Kealaikahiki. The ‘aki‘aki (*Sporobolus virginicus*) coastal dry grassland habitat is similar to Honokanai‘a but also contains Cressa (*Cressa truxillensis*) herbs and ‘ma‘o (*Gossypium tomentosum*) shrubs. Native birds

(Continued from page 2) included Wandering Tattler and Brown Booby. A Diamondback Squid (*Thysanoteuthis rhombus*) was found on Keanakeiki Beach. A large squid washed up on the beaches of Hawai'i is a rare occurrence and the one-meter long cephalopod was brought back to Base Camp for identification and then handed off to the cultural director in accordance with KIRC Hawaiian protocol.

On the south side of base camp, a Brown Booby was seen along the rocky coast. The compost pile near Base Camp yielded an endemic subspecies of Short-eared Owl, 'pueo, frequently encountered hunting mice in the area. The winds picked up in the afternoon while the mauka areas were surveyed. The highest gust registered at 49 miles per hour made surveying birds difficult. The mauka habitat is dominated by bafflegrass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) and kiawe (*Prosopis pallida*) woodland but is also windswept and barren hardpan in many places. Sylarks and other non-native songbirds inhabit the interior of the island. Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*) were seen throughout the day in all habitats.

At the summit of the island, restoration projects revealed a mixture of native and non-native vegetation. Native trees include wiliwili (*Erythrina sandwicensis*) and the dominant shrub, 'a'ali'i (*Dodonaea viscosa*) with pili grass (*Heteropogon contortus*) for ground cover. Non-natives include the Ironwood Tree (*Casurina equisetifolia*) and Tamarisk (*Tamarisk aphylla*) planted by the U.S. Navy for windbreaks. Alien shrubland of koa haole (*Leucaena leucocephala*) and Sourbush (*Pluchea carolinensis*) dominated the summit while Sourgrass (*Digitaria insularis*), Guinea Grass (*Panicum maximum*) and Australian Saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*) were the major ground cover. The only native birds detected were Pacific Golden-Plovers, kōlea.

Table 1. Results of Kaho'olawe Island Reserve's first annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count on December 12, 2012.

SPECIES	NO. OF INDIVIDUALS
Gambel's Quail (<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>)	61
Brown Booby (<i>Sula leucogaster</i>)	8
Pacific Golden-Plover (<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>)	4
Wandering Tattler (<i>Tringa incana</i>)	2
Black (Hawaiian) Noddy (<i>Anous minutus melanogenys</i>)	CW (Count Weak)
Zebra Dove (<i>Geopelia striata</i>)	3
Short-eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)	3
Sky Lark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>)	10
Japanese White-Eye (<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>)	18
Northern Mockingbird (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	15
Red-crested Cardinal (<i>Paroaria coronata</i>)	5
Northern Cardinal (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	18
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	31
African Silverbill (<i>Lonchura cantans</i>)	15
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	193
TOTAL SPECIES	14

We returned to Honokanai'a via the eastern portion of the island made up of greater than 90 percent hardpan. A small covey of Gambel's Quail were seen along with a Pacific Golden-Plover in addition to the sparse number of introduced passerines. At dusk a pair of Short-eared Owls were reported at Kealaikahiki by Kauai Quinones of the Protect Kaho'olawe Ohana. The compost pile was also visited again after dark to look for owls. A Short-eared Owl was flushed from the area.

The overall species count was 14, which was similar to surveys in the past. The overall numbers were low considering the area covered but the high winds contributed to this along with a continued drought on the island. Kaho'olawe received less than five inches of rain in the 12 months prior to the count.



Figure 2. Participants searching during the first annual Kaho'olawe Christmas Bird Count.

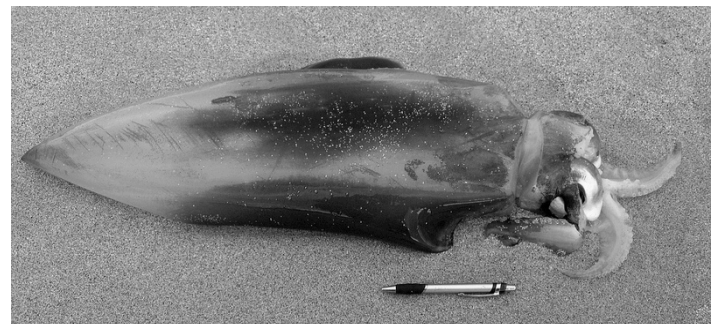


Figure 3. Diamond back squid found on Keanakeiki Beach.

114th Annual Christmas Bird Count Citizen Science Opportunity!

December 14th, 2013 – January 5th, 2014
Across the Hawaiian Islands

Spend the day with other birders and volunteers at your local bird count. The results are used as a guide to create conservation strategies to protect the birds and their habitat, and to understand the long-term health of bird populations. Contact your local bird count coordinator to find out how you can join in the fun and make a difference!

Honolulu Circle, O'ahu – Dec 15th

Contact: Pete Donaldson, pdnldsn.bird@mac.com or (808) 456-5662

Kaho'olawe Count – Dec 18th (space is very limited)

Contact: James Bruch, jbruch@kirc.kahoolawe.gov

Moloka'i Count – Dec 19th

Contact: Arleone Dibben-Young, researchbirds@yahoo.com

Kapa'a Circle, Kaua'i – Dec 21st

Contact: Jillian Cosgrove, cbckauai@gmail.com or (808) 635-0923

Lana'i Count – Dec 23rd

Beginning 8 am at Hotel Lana'i

Contact: Sonny Gamponia, sgamponia@yahoo.com or (808) 244-0727

'Īao Circle, Maui – Dec 27th

Beginning 7:30 am at Kealia Pond NWR

Contact: Sonny Gamponia, sgamponia@yahoo.com or (808) 244-0727

Haleakala National Park Circle, Maui – Jan 3rd

Beginning 7:30 am at Hosmer's Grove

Contact: Sonny Gamponia, sgamponia@yahoo.com or (808) 244-0727

Waipio Circle, O'ahu – Jan 4th

Contact: David Bremer, bremer808@gmail.com or (808) 623-7613

North Kona Circle, Big Island – Jan 4th

Beginning 8 am at the southern entrance to Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park

Contact: Maile Melrose, melloke@hawaii.rr.com

Volcano Circle, Big Island – Dates Vary

Dec 14th: Kulani Natural Area Reserve

Dec 21st: Keauhou Forest I

Dec 28th: Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Jan 4th: Pu'u O'o Trail, Kipuka 21

Jan 11th: Keauhou Forest II

Contact: Nick Shema, nps3900@gmail.com

Hawai'i Audubon Society Annual Meeting

Monday, December 9th
6:30 – 8:30 pm

at Le Jardin Academy, Kailua, Oahu

Featuring a **PRESENTATION ON KAWAINUI MARSH**

By speakers Ati Jeffers-Fabro and Jim Cogswell
from the Department of Land and Natural Resources



Join us for a wonderful evening of pupus, friends, and education. Free and open to the public. RSVP to hiaudsoc@pixi.com.

The Hawai'i Wildlife Center Celebrates One Year of Operations

By Rae Okawa, Development Coordinator, Hawai'i Wildlife Center

There are many facets of species conservation in our islands, and each plays its own unique role. Habitat restoration? Sure. Species research? Most definitely. Habitat protection? Of course. Education and outreach? Absolutely. Now that the Hawai'i Wildlife Center is operational, we can add professional wildlife rehabilitation to that list as well.

In September 2012, the Hawai'i Wildlife Center (HWC) officially launched wildlife care at its brand new, state-of-the-art wildlife rehabilitation facility in Kapa'au on the Big Island. Now, one year later, the HWC is celebrating its journey and looking forward to the future ahead.

The Hawai'i Wildlife Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Hawaiian species through hands-on treatment, rehabilitation, research, training and education. The HWC started out as a vision to bring Hawaii up to minimum standards for wildlife rehabilitation and has developed into a professional native wildlife response and rehabilitation organization. The HWC provides a critical source of science-based wildlife rehabilitation that is necessary for our sensitive and vulnerable native species. Sick and injured wildlife require the care of experienced and qualified wildlife rehabilitators as inexperienced rehabbers and inappropriate public intervention may cause additional harm and suffering.

The Hawai'i Wildlife Center accepts over 70 different species and subspecies of native birds and the Hawaiian hoary bat and cared for 15 of the 70 species this year, five of which were federally listed as threatened or endangered. With the help of a dedicated team of volunteer transporters – both drivers and pilots – wildlife patients in need of care were brought to the Center from all main Hawaiian Islands.

The patients received at the Center were extremely diverse, as were their injuries. Among them was a Nene from Maui with a broken leg, a Laysan Albatross from Kaua'i with animal attack wounds, an 'Auku'u from O'ahu with a broken wing and foot sores, and an 'Ua'u with impact injuries. The Center also received numerous seabirds from various locations that were downed as a result of light attraction. Each animal received an individualized treatment and care program to meet their recovery needs.

In addition to wildlife care, the HWC continued its Pacific region-wide wildlife response capacity building as well through programs that included a statewide avian botulism response course, a specialized wildlife rehabilitation training program with biologists from American Samoa, and extra rehabilitation assistance to Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. HWC also continued its education programs with local students.



Figure 1. Center Director Linda Elliott examines a fledgling 'Ua'u (Hawaiian Petrel)

Hawai'i is a state where professional wildlife rehabilitation is necessary and where professional wildlife rehabilitation has an effect on species populations and conservation. With the population numbers of our native wildlife continuing to decline – and with some species near extinction – any amount of sick, injured or downed native birds and bats that the HWC is able to return to the wild is valuable. In addition, the HWC provides an early warning system for wildlife mortality events, a critical resource for wildlife emergency response, and a valuable educational resource for the public. The HWC provides direct and immediate action to mitigate the effects that humans have on our vulnerable native wildlife and is determined to support population stability and growth through its programs.

Freeman Seabird Preserve 2014 Fieldwork Season

Seeking Volunteers for Habitat Restoration!

Held 9 am to Noon Every Saturday Morning from January through March 2014

In November and early December, Wedge-tailed Shearwater adult birds and chicks leave the Freeman Seabird Preserve at Black Point to forage at sea for several months before returning in the latter part of March to nest.

Volunteers are needed for fieldwork at the site on Saturday mornings from 9 am to noon beginning January 4th. Activities will include maintenance of native plants and man-made landscape features, along with removal of invasive plants, trash and debris. Other dates and times can be arranged for groups wishing to contribute their time in an effort to preserve rare Hawaiian coastal vegetation and seabird nesting habitat.



Please contact the Hawaii Audubon Society office by phone at (808) 528-1432 or e-mail at hiaudsoc@pixi.com in advance if you would like to participate. We will meet each Saturday at Triangle Park near Diamond Head at 8:45am to carpool to the site. Plan on bringing drinking water, sun and rain protection, gloves, weeding tools, clippers and loppers.

Hawai'i Audubon Society Membership Renewal/Donation Form

- ☐ \$25 Regular Member
- ☐ \$15 Student Member
- ☐ \$40 Family Membership
- ☐ \$100 Supporting Member

International Membership:

- ☐ \$28 Canada & Mexico
- ☐ \$33 Other

☐ \$_____ Donation

Donations are tax-deductable and greatly appreciated.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- ☐ E-mail me the 'Elepaio ☐ Mail me the 'Elepaio ☐ E-mail me volunteer opportunities, updates, & field trips.

Thank you for your concern and commitment to protecting Hawai'i's native wildlife and ecosystems.

Pay by credit/debit card at www.hawaii-audubon.org.

Please make checks payable to **Hawai'i Audubon Society**

Mail form and payment to 850 Richards St., Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813

Upcoming Field Trips, Volunteer Opportunities & Events

VOLUNTEER SERVICE TRIP MOKU'AUIA ISLAND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY Saturday, November 16th | 9am - 2pm

If interested, contact hiaudsoc@pixi.com.
Space is limited. Must be able to swim.



Moku'auia Island Habitat Restoration **Saturday, November 16th from 9 am – 2pm**

Seeking volunteers for this fun and unique service trip! Spend the day off the coast of Malaekahana Beach Park by walking to Goat Island during low tide and removing invasive species to restore habitat for nesting seabirds. All participants must be able to swim. Please wear reef safe shoes and clothing. Email hiaudsoc@pixi.com to RSVP and receive more details.

Birding ID Field Trip at Central Oahu Regional Park **Saturday, November 23rd from 9 – 10:30 am**

In preparation for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, join the Waipio circle compiler David Bremer for a field trip focusing on bird identification training. Meet at the gates of the tennis courts where there is plenty of parking available. RSVP to hiaudsoc@pixi.com.

Birding ID Field Trip at Kapiolani Park **Saturday, November 30th at 8:00 am**

In preparation for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, join the Honolulu circle compiler Pete Donaldson for a field trip focusing on bird identification training. Meet in the parking lot at the Diamond Head Tennis Center off of Paki Ave. RSVP to hiaudsoc@pixi.com.

Paiko Lagoon Night Reef Walk **Saturday, November 30th at 6:30 pm**

Meet at 6:30 pm on Kuli'ou'ou Road at the water's edge for a guided night tour of Paiko Lagoon. RSVP to Alice by leaving a message with your name, number of people attending, and phone number at 808-864-8122.

HAS Annual Meeting at Le Jardin Academy **Featuring a Presentation on Kawainui Marsh Restoration!** **Monday, December 9th from 6:30 – 8:30 pm**

Speakers: Ati Jeffers-Fabro, DLNR/DOFAW Wetland Coordinator and Jim Cogswell, DLNR/DOFAW Kawainui Wildlife Biologist

Join us for our annual meeting featuring an update on work being done to restore Kawainui Marsh. Free and open to the public. RSVP to hiaudsoc@pixi.com.

114th Annual Christmas Bird Count **December 14th, 2013 – January 5th, 2014**

Take advantage of this citizen science opportunity and participate in your local bird count! Counts will be held throughout the islands during this period. Please see full dates and details on page 4.

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Calendar of Events

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