

BIRDS OF HAWAII
and
Adventures in Bird Study
The Noddy in Hawaii
By George C. Munro

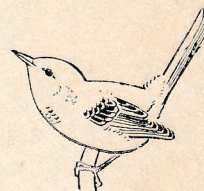
After checking over with Mr. Francis Gay the names of some Hawaiian birds he had furnished to me on April 28, 1891, I wrote in my journal, "Mr. Gay has another tern very similar to but much larger than the noio called "Noio Koha". Koha is here probably an abbreviation of Kohaha which in Hawaiian means large, or it may be koha, a sudden squeak, after the sharp cry of the bird. I think it was the former that was meant as the two species are so similar in color but much different in size and many birds make sudden squeaks. There were at that time two specimens (without labels) of the noddy in the Gay and Robinson collection at Kekapua, Kauai. This collection was my first introduction to its presence on the main islands of Hawaii. My next was mention of it as being present on Oahu in Perkins' "Aves" of "Fauna Hawaiiensis", 1903. This is the only reference to its presence in the main group that I can find in any of the books on Hawaiian birds. Nor is the name Noio koha anywhere recorded. Wilson in 1899, Rothschild in 1900 did not mention it as being in the main group and Henshaw in 1902 said that one might expect to find it there as Palmer had seen it on the French Frigate Shoals in 1891.

My next contact with the noddy in the main group was while making the 1935-37 survey of the Hawaiian birds. I then found it incubating its eggs in large numbers on Manana, Moku Manu and Mokulea. I had heard of birds being on the islands off the east coast of Oahu but as no systematic examination had been made of the bird life on these islands I did not know what species of birds were represented there or when they resorted to those islands. Mr. E. H. Bryan Jnr. had in 1934 reported the noddy breeding in large numbers on Manana. Mr. Alona, a

The Elepaio

Official Organ of THE HONOLULU AUDUBON SOCIETY
Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.

For the Better Protection of Wild Life in Hawaii



"Elepaio"

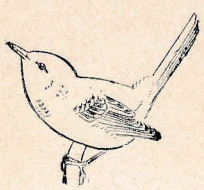
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BIRDS OF HAWAII The Elepaio

By George C. Munro



The Elepaio belongs to the Flycatcher family and comprises the Hawaiian genus *Chasiempis*. There are but three species, one each on Hawaii, Oahu and Kauai. The nearest relations of the Elepaio are the fantails of New Zealand and Australia from which side it likely came to Hawaii. Its immigration has not been at a very distant date compared to the Drepanids. This is shown in the limited number of species and their slight difference in size and color. They are all about 5½ inches in length. In color they are generally brownish above with white and black markings on other parts. The immature birds are of a rusty color and take some time to attain full adult plumage as pairs can be seen nesting, one with adult and the other in immature plumage.

The Elepaio is the most familiar bird of the native forest species as it frequents all parts of the forest from the wet mountain tops to its edges, and from the highest tree tops to the ground. It is inquisitive and fearless and can be induced to come close to the observer by imitation of its call.

Though a flycatcher darting out from its perch to snap up insects on the wing, it also hunts them in all sorts of situations. It has several calls: one a kind of scolding note; its call before daybreak has a different sound, so that persons familiar with the bird and its calls have not recognized it as being made by the Elepaio. I once made a special investigation of this and found that as daylight grew the call gradually changed to the usual daytime note.

More is known of the nest of the Elepaio than of any other native forest bird. It is sometimes built of silky pulu from young fern fronds and bound together with spider's web, sometimes with a layer of flat lichens between the pulu and the strands of the web. In 1937 at the foot of Hualalai I watched an Elepaio building at close range. It manipulated the spider web in its bill, evidently covering it with saliva to make it stick. This cleared up to me what had been something of a mystery as to how it held the pulu in place while it bound round the outside of this light material a half to three quarters of an inch thick. It evidently glues the pulu together with saliva to hold it in place till such time as it gets it securely bound round the outside with spider web. The saliva glue is temporary but the spider web is lasting when securely in place. If kept from the weather these nests last indefinitely. I know of one of the New Zealand fantail that has been in a collection for over 50 years.

66 years old Hawaiian who since a youth frequented the waters of the coast near Manana or Rabbit Island, off Makapuu Head, states that there were no noddies on this island when he was a youth. That they had gradually come there in larger numbers or had increased by breeding till they reached the many thousands that are now there in the breeding season. He does not know of any Hawaiian name for the species.

The Gay and Robinson specimens were evidently taken on Niihau or on either of the small islands off its coast, Kaula and Lehua, in the eighteen eighties. But there is no record to show whether this species bred there then or since. It will probably remain a mystery as to when the noddy came to the islands off Oahu or whether the species has been present on Moku Manu at all times. It might seem probable that the easily accessible islands were denuded of birds and survivors left only on Moku Manu which is almost inaccessible. There were scarcely any noddies on that island in October of this year and it would seem as if the sooty terns had so monopolized the ground that the noddies left and joined their comrades on Manana. However, the two specimens in the Gay and Robinson collection in 1891 and the name given by Mr. Gay establish the fact that the noddy was in the main group at that early date.

The Rothschild expedition in 1891 along the northwest chain of Islands to Midway found the noddy breeding on all the islands but not in large numbers. I also saw it on the Whippoorwill expedition in 1924 on Baker and Howland Islands and again in 1938 on the U.S.C.G.C. Roger B. Taney to the Equatorial, Phoenix, Tokelau, Samoan and Danger Islands. The species was present on most islands we visited but nowhere comparable in numbers to those that frequent Manana at the present time in the nesting season. On Swain's Island near Samoa the birds had well grown young in the tops of the cocoanut trees. This was undoubtedly to get away from the pigs that ranged the island and prevented birds

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from nesting on the ground. Two small boys had been sent to guide me to where I could find birds for banding. The only bird they got for me was a well grown noddy chick from the top of a ~~xxix~~ tall cocoanut tree. The birds of course could not survive and were consequently no use for banding so I stopped them from the apparently hazardous climb up the tall trees and banded no birds on Swain's Island.

The noddy (Anous stolidus pileatus) is about 17 inches long. It is brown in color with a greyish white forehead. There is little difference between male and female. Its cry is an eye-ak which in the breeding season is kept up by the birds on the wing over the nesting island the whole night long. Their flight is the flip, flip of the terns but slower than that of the sooty tern. Sometimes they rise to great heights and drop down in a series of dives.

They arrive to nest on our offshore islands about March, at first appearing only at night. They leave about November after rearing their young. If the nesting site is on a grassy or weed covered surface there may be some attempt at a nest but on bare shelving rock as on Manana a few straws are all that is considered necessary. But one egg is laid in each nest which may be a few feet apart. They vary in color and shape. They are spotted with dark and light brown on a greyish surface, ovoid in shape sometimes with one end a great deal larger than the other. This shape prevents them from rolling off the bare rock ledges. The eggs are little affected by the birds leaving them for periods. Airplanes constantly fly over Manana and the sitting birds rise in clouds but few eggs seem to spoil. I took some specimens of eggs once and after several days chicks in them were still alive. When the young are first hatched they are grey in color and later turn brown. When fledged they differ little from the adults except that the white on the forehead does not extend so far back. On one occasion when we

were leaving Waimanalo for Manana in a launch and towing a small boat a young noddy alighted on the small boat and stayed there for the whole trip and only left when we arrived at the island. It would have had difficulty in flying back there against the wind so took a ride on the boat. When the sea got rough it was a few times thrown off as the boat pitched but it always returned and held on more firmly.

The food of the noddy is squids and small fishes which it picks from the surface of the water in the open sea, the food is swallowed and regurgitated for the chick. In this it differs from the white tern which carries its food crosswise in its beak. Those that nest on the islands off Oahu do not get their food near the coast but fly to sea where the shoals of small fishes are driven to the surface of the water by larger fishes. Fishermen take advantage of this when they see large numbers of the birds leaving the nesting place for the sea. It is not known how far they go out to fish or where they go when they leave at the end of the breeding season. Numbers are now being banded on Manana in cooperation with the Bureau of Biological Survey. We hope some time to get by this records of their range. Banded birds may alight on ships or be cast up on the shore after death. If persons finding them report the number to the Biological Survey, as instructed on the band valuable information may be obtained.

George C. Munro

January 24, 1941

March 8th 1941. David Woodside records finding a dead Red Phalarope on the beach at Lanikai. This is a rare migrant to Hawaii.

CHECK LIST OF BIRDS REPORTED FROM THE HAWAIIAN GROUP

(Not including caged birds.)

Compiled by Edwin H. Bryan, Jr.

Curator of Collections, B.P. Bishop Museum.

Order PROCELLARIIFORMES

Family ~~DIOMEDEIDAE~~, Albatrosses.

Genus *Diomedea* Linnaeus (1758)

1. *Diomedea nigripes* Audubon (1839) Black-footed Albatross, Brown Gooney.
N.W. Hawaiian Islands and at sea. North Pacific Ocean.
2. *Diomedea immutabilis* Rothschild (1893) Laysan Island Albatross, Gooney.
N.W. Hawaiian Islands.
Central North Pacific Ocean

Family PROCELLARIIDAE, Shearwaters, Fulmars.

Subfamily PUFFININAE

Genus *Puffinus* Brisson (1760), Shearwaters.

3. *Puffinus pacificus cuneatus* Salvin, Wedge-tailed Shearwater,
(*Puffinus cuneatus* Salvin, 1888) uau kane.
N.W. Hawaiian Islands, Kauai, Oahu. North Pacific Ocean.
4. *Puffinus nativitatis* Streets (1877) Christmas Island or Black Shearwater.
N.W. Hawaiian Islands and Oahu. Wake Island to the Tuamotu Archipelago.
5. *Puffinus newelli* Henshaw (1900) Newell's Shearwater, Ao.
Niihau, Maui and Molokai.

Genus *Pterodroma* Bonaparte (1856), Petrels.

6. *Pterodroma phaeopygia sandwichensis* (Ridgway) Dark-rumped Petrel,
(*Oestrelata sandwichensis* Ridgway, } Uau, Uwau.
1884 } Main Hawaiian islands.
7. *Pterodroma leucoptera hypoleuca* (Salvin) Bonin Island Petrel,
(*Oestrelata hypoleuca* Salvin, 1888) Salvin's White-breasted Petrel.
N.W. Hawaiian Islands and Lanai. Western North Pacific Ocean

Genus *Bulweria* Bonaparte (1842)

8. *Bulweria bulwerii* (Jardin & Selby) Bulwer's Petrel. N.W. Hawaiian islands and Oahu.
 (*Procellaria bulwerii* Jardin World wide.
 and Selby, 1828.)

Family HYDROBATIDAE

Genus *Oceanodroma* Reichenbach (1853), Storm Petrels.

9. *Oceanodroma castro cryptoleucura* (Ridgway) Hawaiian Storm Petrel,
 (*Cymochorea cryptoleucura* Ridgway, 1882) Oeoe, Akeake.
 N.W. Hawaiian Islands
 and Kauai.
10. *Oceanodroma markhami tristrami* Salvin Tristram's Petrel, Sooty
 (*Oceanodroma tristrami* Salvin, 1896) Petrel. N.W. Hawaiian
 (*Oceanodroma fuliginosa* (Gmelin)) islands and Lanai (?)

Order PELECANIFORMES

Suborder PHAETHONTES

Family PHAETHONTIDAE

Genus *Phaethon* Linnaeus (1758), Tropic Birds, Bos'n Birds.

11. *Phaethon rubricauda rothschildi* (Mathews) Red-tailed Tropic Bird,
 (*Scaeophaethon rubricauda rothschildi* Bos'n Bird, Koae ula.
 Mathews, 1915) N.W. Hawaiian islands,
 Niihau, and Mokumanu,
 Oahu (?).
12. *Phaethon lepturus dorotheae* Mathews (1913) White-tailed Tropic
 Bird, Koae. Main Hawaiian islands, nesting
 in cliffs.

Suborder PELECANI

Family Sulidae, Boobies, Gannets.

Genus *Sula* Brisson (1760), Boobies.

13. *Sula sula rubripes* Gould, Red-footed Booby. Kure to Oahu.
 (*Sula rubripes* Gould, 1838) Indian and tropical western
 (*Sula piscator* of authors) and central Pacific oceans.
14. *Sula leucogaster plotus* (Forster) Common or Brown-vested Booby.
 (*Pelecanus plotus* Forster, 1844) Kure to Oahu. Tropical western
 and central Pacific ocean,
 to N.E. Australia.
15. *Sula dactylatra personata* Gould Blue-faced Booby, Masked Booby.
 (*Sula personata* Gould, 1846) Kure to Oahu, Central and
 (*Sula cyanops* of authors) western Pacific, to N.E. Australia.