

Journal of the  
HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 10 Number 2



For the Better Protection  
of Wildlife in Hawaii

August 1949

LETTER FROM KOBE, JAPAN  
By Chester Fennell

I enjoyed another wonderfully successful day of birding with Mr. Kobayashi out along the delta of the Shin Yodo Gawa yesterday. The Shin Yodo Gawa is a large river on the western outskirts of Osaka, some 25 miles east of Kobe. The delta area is an especially fine place for gulls, terns, cormorants and both nesting and migrating shore birds. Kamchatkan black-headed gulls were very common and many of them already in the dapper summer plumage with the shiny, handsome, black heads which give them their name. Two species of terns were seen: the Asiatic little tern, which nests right here on the sand bars and mud flats of the delta, and the larger Nordmann's tern, which nests farther to the north in the Kuriles and on Sakhalin and Hokkaido. Both were first observations to me.

The shore birds took over the day, however, with three species of plover, three species of sandpiper, the eastern dunlin and the eastern little stint all holding sway over a small area of mud flat surrounding a stagnant pool of sea water. All except one of the sandpipers and one species of plover were first observations for me, so we stayed in the vicinity for several hours while I walked round and round the gathering studying every minute field mark, pose, action, call, etc. It was a remarkable opportunity to watch at close hand for they were all quite tame and permitted a fairly close approach.

Of the migrants, the Stegmann's Mongolian plovers were the most handsome and colorful, of a fairly good size with a bright rufous color around the shoulders, across the back of the neck and in a wide strip across the breast. They caught the eye at once, and it was difficult to concentrate on any lesser colored bird which might have been near at hand. Often, they rose in flocks of ten to fifteen and swiftly swept across the adjacent countryside as though in preparation of departure for parts farther north but each time they circled back and finally landed once more in the very same spot that they had just left. The other migrants, the little stint, the dunlins and the Terek and Siberian pectoral sandpipers, often joined the Mongolian plovers in these restless flights but rarely kept up with the main flock in its aerial gyrations.

The little ringed and eastern Kentish plovers were already busy with household duties and continued to express their anxiety at our presence in the area by heart-rending cries overhead and numerous displays of feigned injury. According to Mr. Kobayashi, this last technique of luring the intruder away from the nesting site is indulged in only by the Kentish plover. We found two nests of the ringed plover with four eggs and a single nest of the Kentish plover with three eggs. Several new nests were noted still in the process of construction, that is, if one can reasonably term the formation of this skimpy, shell-lined depression in the ground "construction." This is just the beginning of the nesting season and the next two weeks should bring forth many more efforts along this line.



The following is a list of the species and approximate number of individuals observed throughout the day between the hours of 1100 and 1700:

1. EASTERN CARRION CROW, *corvus corone orientalis* Eversmann, (5).
2. JAPANESE SKYLARK, *alauda arvensis japonica* Temm. & Schlegel (7).
3. JAPANESE FAN-TAILED WARBLER, *cisticola jundidis brunniceps* (Temm. & Schlegel) (15). All in full song.
4. DUSKY THRUSH, *turdus naumanni eunomus* Temminck (4).
5. EASTERN HOUSE SWALLOW, *hirundo rustica gutturalis* Scopoli (18).
6. BLACK-EARED KITE, *milvus migrans lineatus* (Gray) (10).
7. EASTERN GREAT WHITE EGRET (?), *casmerodius albus modestus* (J.E.Gray) (1).  
Probably of this species, though not definitely determined.
8. JAPANESE CORMORANT (?), *phalacrocorax carbo hanedae* Kuroda (12).  
Probably of this species though not definitely determined.
9. COMMON SANDPIPER, *tringa hypoleucos* Linnaeus (3).
10. TEKEK SANDPIPER, *xenus cinereus* (Guldenstadt) (1).
11. EASTERN DUNLIN, *calidris alpina sakhalina* (Vieillot) (5)
12. EASTERN LITTLE STINT, *calidris ruficollis ruficollis* (Phallas) (3).
13. SIBERIAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER, *calidris acuminata* (Horsfield) (1).
14. STEGMANN'S MONGOLIAN PLOVER, *charadrius mongolus stegmanni* Stresemann (75).
15. EASTERN KENTISH PLOVER, *charadrius alexandrinus dealbatus* (Swinhoe) (10).
16. LITTLE RINGED PLOVER, *charadrius dubius curonicus* Gmelin (20).
17. NORDMANN'S TERN, *sterna hirundo longipennis* Nordmann (4).
18. ASIATIC LITTLE TERN, *sterna albifrons sinensis* Gmelin (23).
19. KAMTSCHATKAN BLACK-HEADED GULL, *larus ridibundus sibiricus* Buturlin (40).

TOTAL:            19 species                            257 individuals.

-----00000-----

#### THE PACIFIC FLYWAY OF THE GOLDEN PLOVER

By F. W. Preston

(This article was taken from the General Notes section of The Auk; a quarterly journal of ornithology. Vol. 66, No. 1, Jan. 1949, pp. 87-88)

Almost all recent discussions of bird migration include a comment of astonishment at the feat of the Pacific golden plover (*Pluvialis dominica fulva*) in passing each year from the Aleutians to Hawaii over 2400 miles of open ocean. The astonishment is not so much at the great length of the trip, as at the featurelessness of the terrain, "without even an island or a rock to serve as a landmark" (Mac Donald, *Birds of Brewery Creek*. (Oxford Univ. press), p. 13, 1947); or again, "The Golden Plover performs with no landmarks over the broad expanses of the Pacific Ocean" (Yeagley, *Journal Appl. Physics*, 18: 1035-1063, 1947), or still again, "Since there are no 'Sign posts' of any kind (underline mine) over the ocean wastes, the flights (of the albatross) must involve true navigation until the island home comes into view" (Yeagley, loc. cit.).

The purpose of the present note is to point out that the Pacific is not one vast featureless expanse, merely because solid land is scarce. Some of the most spectacular "sign posts" of the planet lie over the oceans.

Thus, off the coast of California is a "landmark" which must, to a dweller of Mars or the moon, appear to be one of the most brilliant features of our planet.



In July, starting at the coast at San Francisco and extending 800 miles out to sea in the direction of Hawaii, is a brilliant white band paralleling the coast. It is a belt of clouds, like a white quilt, with scarcely a hole through it. The base of the clouds is sometimes not a thousand feet higher; but this stratum of air is a solid blanket of cloud. Above it is brilliant sunshine; below it is cold. The clouds apparently lie over the California Current.

The position of this current varies somewhat with the seasons. The extent of the cloud canopy (according to a report from Pan-American Airlines) varies considerably with the seasons. But during part of the year, at least, an aviator or bird could fly a course parallel with the coast and nearly a thousand miles out to sea, by following the seaward margin of the solid cloud. Beyond the 800-mile point, or thereabouts, the cloud topography is different. It consists of scattered low cumulus clouds. The base of these cumulus clouds seems often to be at about a thousand feet; their tops may be a thousand or sometimes two thousand feet higher. They occupy only a minor fraction of the total area.

The West Wind Drift or Current circles eastward past the Aleutians, and then under the name of the California Current flows southward down the coast to the edge of the tropics, where it turns westward directly toward the Hawaiian Islands, to become the North Equatorial Current in the latitude of Mexico. If the cloud canopy follows it, a bird has only to follow the cloud to find itself within sight of these islands. Among the small cumulus clouds in this area are a few towering giant ones where the trade winds striking the Pali (cliffs) and steep slopes of the islands, go shooting upward. No better beacon would be asked, in the morning sun, for a bird approaching from the east. The volcanoes of the southeastern islands are almost 14,000 feet high, and if the air were clear enough they would be visible to a bird flying at an equal height nearly 300 miles away.

It is not the purpose of this note to suggest that the plover does fly at a great height, or that it does follow the cloud or other, perhaps more subtle, differences in cloud topography or ocean features; this may, or may not be the case. My purpose is to utter a word of warning against the assumption that the ocean is featureless, merely because it is so shown on a map.

-----00000-----

#### REPORT ON JUNE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY:

Mr. Reginald H. Carter, Chairman of the Education Committee of the Hui Manu, told of his work in the public schools of Oahu. The purpose of the Hui Manu is first, to import birds that have not been brought here before - this had been done in the past on a small scale by such persons as Dr. Hillebrand and the McInernys, but to assure any success at least 50 to 100 couples should be released at one time. Second, the group wishes to protect the birds after they are released; and third, to teach children to appreciate the birds and help protect them rather than to shoot them or steal their eggs.

In dealing with children one must encourage their interest and sense of responsibility. They should be told that the birds belong to them, but not only to them individually, but to their friends and teachers, and so they should protect them, not harm them. The children are asked to report some of the unusual birds if they see them, and in some cases they have reported instances of seeing people shooting birds. Pictures of six of the colorful birds are shown - the two cardinals, mejiro, shama thrush, and the Japanese blue bird. It is also pointed out that there



are laws protecting wild birds and persons harming them are subject to arrest. But the problem is not really a question of law, but of cruelty. For this reason it is the pledge that is significant: "I promise to protect all wild birds from harm and will do my best to see that others do the same."

. . . . .

At the same meeting, Mr. Robert MacDonald, Field Executive of the Boy Scouts of America, spoke of nature counseling and conservation as brought to boys through the Scout movement. He emphasized that in any and all phases of their program, they can work only through adults to get any point over to the youth. They must inspire men to do things with boys to produce better citizens. The whole purpose is character building and citizenship training. A boy may find himself in the out-of-doors, perhaps through an interest in birds, perhaps through some other phase of outdoor life. The work of adults is to teach boys how to appreciate the out-of-doors. Occasionally there is a special project in conservation, such as after one of the big storms in the East the scouts undertook a large tree planting project. In the West groups go out with the Forestry Service. But generally, the plan is to bring about an appreciation of all phases of nature, and the privileges it offers.

Boy Scout publications include bird study as one phase of nature work. Requirements for one of the merit badges for Eagle Scouts are outlined in a pamphlet entitled "Bird Study," which includes birds of Hawaii and making a trip with the Hawaii Audubon Society. There is also a merit badge for conservation--to earn these badges requires actual experience in the field. A boy must do, not just read or plan to do something. The magazine Boys' Life has been running a series of silhouettes of birds to aid in flash identification. For the men who work with the scouts, the magazine Scouting presents program material.

One must not deny a boy the right to use his ax or his gun, but encourage his use of these valued possessions in the proper way--direct his enthusiasm into proper channels. What we try to teach must be in terms of interest to the youngsters and to adults as well. There is a conservation pledge which is part of our thinking. But above all, we must realize that we look to men to produce for boys.

-----000-----

#### NOTES ON SOME BIRDS By George C. Munro

Mr. J. Donald Smith's paper on Migratory Water Fowl in the June 1949 "Elepaio" is interesting. But speaking of the Pacific Golden Plover he says: "The season was closed because the reason for their low numbers seemed to be overshooting." The reason really was that any shooting of that valuable bird is overshooting. It is too valuable to the people of Hawaii ever to be brought under the sportsmen's guns again. There is no other insectivorous bird that can serve us so well. Having done a great deal of sport shooting of pheasants, I have every sympathy with the sportsmen. But I shall fight every effort to have our plover back on the list of sporting birds. In my business life I have had a keen appreciation of its value.

The pintail duck has been shot by thousands in Hawaii, yet Mr. Smith says we do not know what it feeds on while here. Surely the sportsmen have helped very little in research. This is difficult to understand.

I think Mr. Donald Smith is wrong in saying that there is no use trying to induce birds to nest in Kapiolani Park. In the "Elepaio" of April 1943, Vol. 3, No. 11, I have a note: "A short time ago David Woodside saw a pair of pintail ducks in



a small pond in the middle of the city of Honolulu." This referred to a time he also saw a mudhen's nest and old nests of coots at the same place, near where the Honolulu Seed Company's building now stands on Kapiolani Boulevard. In a small pond, reed-bordered on one side by my brother's house at Kainalu, Molokai, both coots and mudhens nested. Mrs. James G. Munro watched the old bird gathering nesting material and carrying it to the nest. I saw the male and female feeding their young as I stood on the side of the pond. Why would they not nest in Kapiolani Park if given the same conditions? These birds will find a pond. They migrate at night, mudhens, coots and stilts. I remember about 1891 an exceptionally heavy fall of rain made a pond in a forest of kiawe trees at Papohaku, on Molokai. It stayed there about a year and killed the trees that stood in it. Papohaku is at the extreme western end of Molokai and there were no coots within 11 miles, yet I saw coots swimming among the trees in the pond.

I might again call attention to my remarks about the broods of young wild mallard ducks in unfenced ponds in the William Land Park in the city of Sacramento, California.

-----0000000-----

ERRATA:- Seventeen words were omitted from the third line on page 2 of the July issue, Vol. 10, No. 1, which should read: "I approached as near as I dared to watch them take off and get a good count. Others seemed to join them there.

-----0000000-----

BOOKS belonging to the Hawaii Audubon Society are now available to all members between the hours of 8 and 4 on week days and Saturday mornings in the library of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, second floor of the new building on Young Street (just ewa of Sears Roebuck). The shelf space in this library has graciously been set aside for our use through the courtesy of Mr. Colin Lennox, President of the Board. The various periodical literature received by the Society is also on the shelves, including the magazine and field notes of the National Audubon Society, the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and The Condor, published by the Cooper Ornithological Club. Any of the books may be withdrawn on presentation of a current membership card in the society to the clerk in charge. It is to be hoped that members may take advantage of this new opportunity.

--0--

Highly recommended reading to all members of the Hawaii Audubon Society is the following book:

A Guide to Bird Watching, by Joseph J. Hickey. Oxford University Press, 1943.

This book may be borrowed from the University of Hawaii Library or the Library of Hawaii.

-----00000-----

#### FIELD NOTE:

The Bush Warbler is in town! It was heard June 5, 1949, on the Wilhelmina Rise - Lanipo trail in the Waialae Valley, Waikiki of Palolo Valley at the intersection of the trail running from Palolo to Waialae Valley near Maunalani Heights.

U. Kojima.



FIELD NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF OAHU, H. I.  
By Alvin Seale, Collector of the Museum  
Nov. 12, 1899 to March 1900.

(Excerpt from Bishop Museum's Director's Report, 1899)

"Off the coast of Oahu two large volcanic rocks, covering about 300 square feet rise abruptly from the water to the height of 200 feet; these rocks are about half-mile from the shore, directly off Mokapu Point. Owing to the coral reef, Heeia, six miles distant, is the nearest accessible point by boat. These rocks are called Moku Manu (Bird Island). I resolved at once to visit them. On January 3, taking two expert native boatmen from Heeia, I started down the coast. Long before the rocks were reached I could see multitudes of birds hovering in the air above the rocks and looking exactly like a swarm of bees. When about a quarter of a mile away I began to hear the noise and gabble. As we got nearer the big Frigate bird (F. aquila) could be seen sailing about and soaring up to wonderful heights, surrounding these birds like clouds, but not arising to such great heights were Sooty Terns (Sterna fuliginosa), which by thousands were the most abundant birds on the rocks. Flying among these birds were many Noddy (Anous stolidus), very conspicuous by their dark color.

"One big albatross (probably Diomedea chinensis) took flight as we were quite near the rocks: unfortunately our shot (No. 8) proved too small and the distance too great, as this very desirable bird merely shook his feathers to rid them of the shot and swept serenely past us, turning his head to give the boat a very sagacious look as he took his leave. Sooty Terns by the thousands were sitting about all over the rocks and flying about our boat in swarms, so near one could hit them with an oar. The din raised by their cry and the noise of their wings was so great one had to shout at the top of the voice two or three feet distant. The rocks were honeycombed with burrows and must be an ideal nesting place. I looked in vain for a landing; owing to the direction of the waves there seemed to be no lee shore; on the south side one could land on a calm day, but the seas were too high, and so the attempt to land was given up to my great disappointment."

That was over 49 years ago. Did Alvin Seale mistake a brown booby for an albatross? This seems rather likely as he does not mention boobies at Moku Manu at all on that trip. We have no other record of a blackfooted albatross, at that time known as Diomedea chinensis, at Moku Manu. -- G.C.M.

-----00000-----

BIRD WALK on Poamoho Trail, July 10, 1949. God-fearing rays of the rising sun...promised...hinted...teased twenty odd Poamoho bound enthusiasts with interpretative revelations of the advancing day. The weather is fine, they appeared to say, and with hopes we accepted it at that. Passing the Pearl Harbor area, only one solitary night heron was sighted at waterside.

Poamoho seemed dry and worthwhile on arrival, and it remained that way but for a mild outburst which disrupted the almost perfect day. The most consistent native bird, it so seemed, was that bashful cry of the amakihi. However, the amakihi compared but little in volume to the rich, resonant song of the hill robin which completely dominated the forest. The apapane proved very numerous, appearing now and then at a resourceful distance. It was particularly interesting to note her song. She departed from her usual shy cry and slipped into a musically very distinctive song. To complete it all, our trusted friend, Mr. Elepaio by name,



sneaked in its occasional short, blunt outcry.

A fitting semi-climax occurred for those who journeyed to the end. One slight half mile before the end of the trail a surprisingly pure, crisp and modulated song, precipitated from none other than the bush-warbler. We failed to see the shy little creature.

The bird count for the day totaled twelve amakihis, twenty-nine apapanes, one iiwi; a number of hill-robins, some white-eyes, ricebirds, and one night heron were heard. An iiwi and one bush warbler were heard.

Perhaps no truer statement can better emphasize the merits of this recent hike than that of Mrs. Rockafellow who, benefited by sudden inspiration, remarked sincerely, "It's a shame...it's a shame we have to leave all this beauty - but it's here to come back to."

Harlan Chong.

-----00000-----

The President and the Society are indebted to Priscilla Griffey Harpham for accepting the assignment of acting editor of the Elepaio beginning with the June issue. The Editor, Charlotta Hoskins, has had to relinquish her duties for a time due to the press of other business and Mrs. Harpham is doing a fine job in continuing Miss Hoskins' good work.--H.P.P.

-----00000-----

#### AUGUST ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: August 14th, Poamoho Trail. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8 A.M. (please note change of time). Bring lunch, and car (if possible). On July 10 there was no sign of the unidentified bird, but a quarter of a mile from the summit a bird call - "tea-cher, tea-cher, tea-cher" came sifting through the New Zealand heather. It was a bush warbler. The August bird walk may be the last chance for the summer to study the unidentified bird. - U. Kojima.

MEETING: By authorization of the members present at the July meeting, the August meeting will be held on Sunday, August 21st, at 9 A.M. at the Honolulu Zoo. We will meet at the entrance gate just off Kalakau Ave. at Kapahulu, and will have the privilege of observing the bird collection under the guidance of Mr. Paul Breese, Director, who says he has a number of interesting new species.

-----00000-----

#### HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS:

President: Mr. H. Paul Porter, 2623C Ala Wai Blvd.  
 Vice-Presidents: Mr. E. B. Hamilton, P. O. Box 3679  
                     Miss Grenville Hatch, 1548 Wilhelmina Rise  
 Secretary-Treasurer: Mrs. Margaret C. Porter, P.O. Box 5032  
 Acting Editor, The Elepaio: Mrs. Priscilla G. Harpham, P.O. Box 2198

Dues: Regular - \$2.00 per annum. Junior (18 years and under) - \$1.00 per annum.  
                     Life - \$50.00.