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LETTER FROM KOBE, JAPAN By Chester Fennell

On Sunday, March 13th, I arrived at the foot of the Rokko Range behind Kobe just as the dawn flushed crimson and gold over the placid waters of Osaka Bay. The display endured for only a few minutes, and thick billows of fog rolled in from off the Inland Sea to envelop the rest of the day in dull, heavy grayness. Carrion crows and a lone bulbul were the first avians to greet the newborn day, soon followed by a black-eared kite soaring overhead and uttering his weird, lonely, matutinal cry. The kites should be nesting already in the tops of the tall pines along the base of the mountains in this area, but try as I may to spot an acric, success has not been with me.

I entered the Range along a trail which steadily and often sharply ascended a narrow canyon. The sides of the canyon were heavily covered with a mat of tall "bamboo" grass, groves of young conifers, deciduous evergreens, wild camellias, and vines tying all the growth together in an almost impenetrable mass. The tops of the ridges were well wooded with taller pines, arbor vitae, cryptomeria, chestnut, etc.. I had proceeded along the trail only a short distance when the rich, gurgled, "ho-hoh, hokelkyo," of the bush warbler broke upon the morning stillness. It was so wholly unexpected and sounded so entirely different from the songs I had heard from the windswept ridges of Pa Lehua, Fuji-san and in the Japanese Alps that I had difficulty convincing myself that it was the uguisu. The acoustics of the canyon were all one could desire and every little overtone, variation of pitch and nuance were clearly audible. Then, too, the singer was often within fifteen to twenty feet of me so that little of the quality or volume were lost because of distance. Never before have I quite so well noted the strange quality of the first introductory "ho-hoh..." It's a soft mellow whistle which at the beginning sounds for all the world as though it were coming from a great distance and often from even a wholly different direction. Smoothly it crescendoes into the full rounded tone and then breaks into the rich, mellifluous warble of the latter half of the performance. Little wonder that this species is referred to as the Japanese nightingale, and is so highly prized and revered as a cage bird. During the course of the day I heard a total of eight individuals singing so that the courtship season must already be well under way. Not once, however, did I hear the "bouncing ball" performance which we used to hear at Pa Lehua. I can't remember having heard it on Fuji-san or in the Alps last summer, either, strangely enough. You'll probably be interested to know, also, that the species here in its native habitat, is just as elusive and reluctant to show itself as its Hawaiian representative. Of the 8 I heard singing, only one rose above the matted underbrush long enough for a very brief glimpse before taking to cover again.

Japanese great tits, long-tailed tits and long-tailed rose finches busily scoured the lower branches of the conifers and the upper portions of the underbrush in search of bits of sustenance. They all seem to get along most amicably

and though now and then there's a querulous chatter and a short pursuit, it all seems to be over within a jiffy and they're side by side again working on the same pine cone or the same branch. The varied tits, too, often mix in with the same crowd as do also the Japanese kinglets. Had one of those rare opportunities, Sunday, to see several of this last species under perfect lighting conditions and with a good, dark background. So often these smaller species must be viewed at a considerable distance and against a strong light which wholly robs them of any color markings. Identification in the field, in such cases, is based more upon recognition of the bird's outline and characteristic actions with perhaps a fleeting glimpse of some outstanding color marking. When occasion does permit one to see them under good lighting and at close range what bird observer doesn't thrill to the moment. Such a pleasure was afforded me Sunday and the bright yellow cap of one particular individual will vividly stick in my memory for a long time.

Slowly and quietly stepping along the moist bed of the trail I was suddenly brought to a halt by the harsh, sputtering chatter of a bird concealed only a few feet from me in the dry "bamboo" grass. I froze in my tracks and within only a very few seconds a wren climbed to the top of one of the grass spears within five feet of my nose, cockily looked me over, cussed another blue streak, and flew down into the shelter of a nearby clump of young cryptomerias. It was my first observation of a wren here in Japan and I was more than happy to have run into it at such close quarters. Oddly enough, the following day I found one in a cage in a small Japanese bird shop here in Kobe which I regularly visit to check on the turnover of captured species. The shopkeeper claimed that it had been captured in Okayama, or rather in the vicinity of Okayama, a city some 75 miles south of Kobe. It was still quite wild as though it had only recently been captured. The shopkeeper wanted 2000 yen for it, which seemed to be unusually high. Evidently it is highly prized as a song bird.

These accounts are fairly well representative of the late winter season here in the Kobe district. As the spring season advances with warmer weather and longer hours of sunlight, many of the winter visitants will undoubtedly be replaced by migrants and summer residents. That is when I'll have to be on my toes to fully observe and record the changeover. I often wish I were twins so that "one of me" could be covering the flat, open river country while the "other of me" were up in the mountains recording the other half of the avian population. But I guess I'll have to be content and just devote every other Sunday to each type of terrain.

Have given a couple of little talks within the past month here in the Kobe area on the "Birdlife of Korea and Japan." The first was presented under the auspices of the Army Education Center to a group of Allied Occupation Personnel; the second to a small group of English-speaking Japanese called the Mainichi Club which is organized and supported by the Mainichi Press, a Japanese newspaper printed entirely in English. Both talks were supplemented by some fifty live and mounted specimens which I took along as representative of the avian population of the two countries and which added to the interest in no small degree. The active, spontaneous interest aroused by these little sessions was most gratifying to me, and I have gained some very valuable cooperation and made some fine contacts through them. It all helps a great deal in acquiring a thorough, overall picture of the avifauna of this fascinating country, one of my chief goals at the present time.

I have followed with keen interest the Munro plans for the development of

Kapiolani Park, as outlined in his articles in the Elepaio. It's surely a great idea and one of the most worthy I have yet heard. More power to you all!

Lots of luck, and my very best wishes to one and all of the Audubon group.

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SOME HAWAIIAN ECOLOGICAL NOTES

By Ira La Rivers

The Wasmann Collector, 7:85-110, August, 1948.

Reviewed by Paul H. Baldwin

This paper contains new information on Hawaiian birds and merits review in an ornithological journal. The author made an ecological study during 1944 and 1945 of animals living on a small peninsula jutting into Pearl Harbor. A variety of habitats was included, such as a small wooded area, a small marsh, a miniature cane field, some semigrassed open areas, and interlocking salt, brackish and fresh water areas. These were populated mainly by immigrant animal species, although indigenous birds, reptiles, fishes and crustaceans were present. In view of the rather artificial nature of much of the habitat and the presence of predominantly exotic plants, the study purports to contribute less to native ecology than to our knowledge of the feeding habits and related ecological characteristics of the major animals encountered. These included the mongoose, some birds, the fox and mourning geckos, the blue-tailed skink, the bullfrog, and certain insects and crustacea. For all these he gives notes on habitat, food-catching activities, identified food items, and ecological competitors and predators. The discussion of the mongoose is especially interesting and occupies eight pages. From twenty-three mongoose stomachs analyzed he found an unstated number of occurrences of the Peaceful Dove (Geopelia striata tranquilla) and of smaller passerine species, probably the House Sparrow and House Finch. In one instance he found a freshly-killed mynah on a muddy marsh where only mongoose footprints were seen.

In a faunal list of eighty-three species (including invertebrates), eleven species of birds are recorded. Three of the birds he mentions as being indigenous, the Wandering Tattler, the Hawaiian Gallinule, and the Hawaiian Stilt, and he should have included a fourth, the Black-crowned Night Heron.

The mynah he found to be omnivorous to the extent of eating insects, seeds, bread crumbs and dead animals. In a table of analyses of twenty-nine mynah stomachs he gives identifications and statistical data on the occurrence of thirty-seven species of insects. The insects eaten most abundantly were the commonest on the peninsula, such as the cockroaches Periplaneta americana and Pycnoscelus surinamensis. Among other insects prominent in the stomachs were the nitidulid beetle Carpophilus humeralis, the hide beetle Dermestes marmoratus, the grasshopper Conocephalus saltator, and the syrphid fly Volucella obesa. Non-insect foods were not treated statistically. They included the isopod Ligyda sp., the centipede Scolopendra subspinipes, a scorpion, the fish Eleotris fusca and the mourning gecko and blue-tailed skink.

Of the Black-crowned Night Heron only three stomachs were examined. From these he found remains of the mullet, a mosquito fish, a small bullfrog and fragments of three species of crustaceans.

This paper shows that an investigator can work out many facts concerning even the most common species by systematic observation in a small area over a limited period of time. The value of the report is much enhanced by the completeness of identifications in all animal groups mentioned. Statistical treatment could profitably have been extended to the handling of data other than that concerned with insects, but perhaps the limited amount of data in some cases discouraged this. Had the actual size of areas studied in the different habitats been described, some seasonal data been included and mention made of important plant associations, it might have facilitated comparisons with similar studies elsewhere. The advantage of working such simple plant-animal communities is the relative ease with which interactions between organisms can be traced. A fairly good food-chain diagram could be drawn from the data presented. Considerations of length may have prevented inclusion of some of these matters, and they are suggested not as criticisms of this worth while study but as suggestions for future work.

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NESTING NOTES FROM MANANA ISLAND

By Ruth Dingus

It would be difficult for me to explain to you, who have lived most of your lives within sight, sound, and perhaps even smell of the sea bird colonies, the excitement that the spectacle of Manana Island during nesting season produces in a midwesterner like myself. On the 4th of July it was almost beyond description.

As is customary when I am to become sea-borne the ocean changed from glassy serenity to moving mountains of water. The usual loading into the skiff, then transferring to the larger craft was accomplished without incident. The round-about channel was negotiated in record time. Then came the landing. Three unsuccessful attempts were made to anchor the large boat and each time the anchor dragged. On the fourth try it held and we scrambled back into the skiff. We had been warned that it was probably going to be rough to land so it was a happy moment when we found ourselves high and not too wet on the reef edge. We waded to higher land, waved goodbye to the boat, and started out.

The cameras were unpacked, loaded and placed in the packs and cans for carrying. The day was perfect for photography--bright blue skies with shining white cumulus clouds. The roar of the heavy sea did tend to drown out the bird sounds, however. The landing was made at the point of Manana nearest Kaohikaipu Island so on the first trip around we skirted the bluffs to the widest portion of the shelf and started our survey from there.

The first fauna encountered was not of the order Aves but a "Disneyish" rabbit who discounted the advisability of fraternizing with the invaders and departed from us with great haste. To avoid stepping on or in the Shearwater burrows we followed a gully to the lowest part of the saddle on the landward side of the crater and then walked around the crater rim in a counter-clockwise direction, encountering an endless succession of nesting areas.

The Common Noddy Tern (Anous stolidus pileatus) nests in areas that extend in some places from the rim almost to the tidal limits. The sooty tern (Sterna fuscata oahuensis) nests only along the rim and seemingly prefers the higher, rougher portions of that. Since the Sooties are outnumbered by the Noddies, it may be that they occupy the area left them by the Noddies.

After leaving the lowest part of the rim the Noddies predominated until the sharper ascent was reached on the slope to the highest point of the rim. There was first a scattering of Sooties with a gradual increase in their numbers until at the top only an occasional Noddy was seen. The process reversed on leaving the high side of the crater, but was repeated all the way around. While the Sooties stayed close to the ridge, long fingers of nesting Noddies extended down the slopes or even occurred in isolated areas. True to their custom, the Sooties had apparently nested in succession around their areas. The first birds found had only eggs or very young nestlings while the last section contained, for the most part, birds comparable in size to young quail which ran and hid in the grass tufts, or took refuge on the very edge of the cliff--depending on their age. These birds made no attempt to fly, not even flapping their wings when running. There were some young of all ages and some eggs in every area. In the areas that are predominantly Noddy, no uniformity of age is apparent--all ages of young and eggs being found in each area.

The Shearwaters (Puffinus pacificus cuneatus) were less in evidence than on previous visits. Even the moaning was lacking. There were eggs in all the burrows examined, but no young were found. Perhaps the lack of visible activity can be attributed to the season. One small white egg was found near the location of a 1947 nest of a Bulwer's Petrel, but no Petrels were seen.

The lower level area and the beach on the island have been opened to fishing. The bird areas are still closed. The two parties that were on the island while we were there caused little disturbance to the birds. Signs of destroyed eggs were plentiful and some dead young were found, but no more than is to be expected in a colony where the eggs are laid without the protection of a nest and where the two species of birds delight in trouncing each other's young.

On a hurried trip of this kind all observations are hasty and sure to be colored by personal opinions. It is hoped when all the data and pictures are collected that they will give some concrete information.

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LETTERS AND GENERAL NOTES

New York City: ... When I return I shall tell you of the many delightful experiences that fell my way, but will concentrate at the moment on one of the brightest high spots of my trip--the time I visited Olive and D'Arcy Northwood. They both look wonderfully fine and have apparently made a definite place for themselves in their new environment. Both Olive and D'Arcy are very happy in their work but haven't forgotten their Honolulu friends. I soon discovered they'd kept in close touch with Island Audubon activities and are as interested in the Society's progress as when they lived there. They now have a new camera that takes kodachrome stills and I had an opportunity to see some of their slides of Eastern wild flowers, many of which are breath-takingly beautiful. Sunday morning the three of us rode out to the East Orange Water Reserve. Here is found a photographer's paradise--a composite of woodlands and marshlands--and you've guessed it, I had no camera. However, I doubt if there'd have been many pictures taken during a first visit. Birdlife is so abundant throughout the entire area, we were kept busy trying to identify them all. In the two hour interval we had before I had to return to New York City, we'd checked 32 varieties and found a phoebe's nest. It was an unforgettable experience, ended much too soon, but rich in recollections.

The Northwood's send their alohas to their Island friends and I left them with a sincere wish that regardless of their wider horizons, we'd have the pleasure of seeing them soon, even if the sojourn were temporary.-- H. Peppin.

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Midway Islands: ... June 21, 1949... We had been thinking of banding the baby bird goonies but were waiting till they were a little older... The death rate among the babies has been bad the last several weeks. We have had some very hot, sticky weather, and it seemed to kill them. We heard that in two days the "gooney patrol" picked up almost 800 dead babies. Earl and I still think that from the time the egg is laid till the bird takes off for flight there is over a 50% loss. The death toll is terrific. ... We have the Captain's permission here on Midway to send out six pair of fairy terns, and bring in six pair of cardinals. We told Paul Porter about it - so it will be his job to get the cardinals and ours to get the fairy terns. We are trying to figure out some way of "netting" them. They usually travel in pairs, and are very curious, so will fly quite close to you and hover, so perhaps we can get them when the time comes. We have a feeding station and watering basin for the wild canaries in our side yard, and have from 2 to 50 there all the time, so will keep the cardinals...there in a cage at first, then let them go--and perhaps they will stay close to the feeding place...

July 11, 1949... We had a notice run in the little newspaper here on Midway asking that if anyone saw or found a dead gooney which was banded, to note the band number and phone us. The Navy Sanitation Dept. (which picks up the dead ones) has been very cooperative in phoning us the numbers shown on the listing. I was quite interested in the recent article on the gooney birds. Perhaps the writer was correct in saying the birds are nipping at a louse, etc., but we have reason to believe that that is part of their "dance"--a sort of greeting. Proof of that statement being our two pets--the one we had last year and this year. Last year "George" (sex unknown) started doing that when about 4 or 5 months old. When we would go out to "him" and say "Hello, George," he would raise his wing and 'click, click, click' under it. He never failed to do it after he first started. And, now, this year's pet "Susie" (sex unknown) has just begun to do that when I go out to pet "her."-- Mrs. E. Earl Sawyer.

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Honolulu: ... About eight o'clock on the morning of July 17th, I watched for several minutes with the naked eye a lone plover over the landing field at Honolulu airport, until he flew away toward the sands bordering the nearby ocean. The light was such that I was unable to see whether he was in breeding plumage. No sound was uttered, so the identification must remain one of sight alone. Since no other plover have yet been reported, it is possible that this was one which did not leave the islands, or was it merely a single early arrival?

Two days later, over Kaimuki, very close to Wilhelmina Rise, twelve frigate birds were seen circling, then flying back toward the sea. The day following, Mrs. Podley observed one frigate bird over Punahou School. Frigate birds are often seen over Kaimuki, but it has never before been my fortune to see so many at once, nor to see them inland as far as Punahou.-- G. Hatch.

Another instance of a lone sea bird flying inland was noted on August 3rd. From the roadway at the Kamehameha School for Girls a white-tailed tropic bird was observed flying makai over Kalihi-uka.-- C. Hoskins.

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Woodlawn-St. Louis Trail: Aug. 7, 1949. After hiking the very steep guava forest into the koa and lehua, about one hour from the bus stop, two Japanese tits were heard and seen. The 1946 Christmas bird count was the last time the tit was reported from this area. They acted very much at home. I was in a tree, and they came to about a yard from me. The lehua was in full bloom. Amakihi was very plentiful, but I saw only one apapane in the St. Louis section. Unfortunately, the St. Louis section of this trail is very over-grown, and very few birds were seen. Hill robins and white-eyes were very busy and melodious, but I unsuccessfully listened and watched for the Chinese thrush (maybe I started too late-- 8:45 a.m.). Hibiscus was not blooming, but the brilliant lehua made this hike a very pleasant affair.

The plover is back again! I heard the first call of this year at Crane Park on Kaimuki Avenue on July 15th. I often hear them at night at home (Kaimuki near Kapahulu), a most satisfying greeting mingled with the balmy air and the sweet ginger blossoms.-- U. Kojima.

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ERRATA:- I made an unfortunate mistake in my paper "Notes on Some Birds" in the Elepaio of August, 1949. On the 9th line of page 10 I say: "about 1891" when it should read 1901. Eighteen ninety-one was a banner year for me, as it was the only year of my life devoted exclusively to the study of birds, including the trip along the Hawaiian Chain. So it has become habitual to write it inadvertently when dealing with birds.-- George C. Munro.

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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: September 11th, to Pa Lehua. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8 A.M. Please note change of time. Bring lunch, water and car (if possible). Pa Lehua trail is at the southern tip of the Waianae Range. A paved road runs through sugar cane and pineapple fields to Gate one at the military camp into the forest reserve. The trail leads to Mauna Kapu, elevation 2667 ft. Predominating trees are koa, kukui nut, silver oak, eucalyptus, lehua, and guava. Bush warbler is very common on this trail, but very few people have seen it. Beginning with Hill robins and white-eye, pheasant, Chinese thrush, apapane, elepaio, amakihi and even skylark have been heard. This is a dry (usually) and interesting trail.

MEETING: September 19th, Library of Hawaii Auditorium at 7:30 P.M. The Society is particularly fortunate to have Dr. Edwin H. Bryan as its speaker for September. Dr. Bryan, associated with the Bishop Museum, has just returned from New Caledonia where he has been working with the South Pacific Commission and will tell us about his experiences and something of the bird life of that area as well as our own.

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