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of Wildlife in Hawaii

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PRESERVING OUR BOTANICAL TREASURES
By Charles S. Judd

It has frequently been pointed out that Hawaii is not only a rich field botanically but it is of particular scientific interest because of its wealth of endemic plants. New trees and smaller plants are constantly being discovered and the range of certain trees that were thought to be rare is being extended with more intimate acquaintance of forest regions.

This may be illustrated by the Mohamehame, probably the largest tree that ever grew in these islands for in its prime it attained a height of over 70 feet and a diameter at the ground of 12 feet. Mr. J. F. Rock discovered three specimens of this tree in South Kona, Hawaii, in 1912 and in describing it as a new species, named the tree Neowawraea phyllanthoides after the botanist with the Australian exploring expedition and its phyllanthus-like arrangement of leaves. Fifteen years later Mr. G. W. Russ found two more of these trees a mile further up the slopes of Mauna Loa.

In December 1929, five Mohamehame trees were discovered in a side gulch in Makua Valley where at 2,000 feet elevation there are no less than 41 other kinds of indigenous trees within a radius of 200 yards. Since then more of these trees, numbering over 50, have been found not only in Makua Valley, but also in Makaha Valley and on the north-east slope of the Waianae Range back of Waialua from Puu Pane, behind the "Maile Pocket," westward as far as Kealia. These live trees usually occur in clumps of from two to eight but their chief characteristic is that they are almost invariably old and decadent with dead tops and they are apparently on the decline. That they were much more abundant a few hundred years ago is evidenced by the dead logs of this very durable wood which may be found in almost every gulch bottom on the windward slope of the Waianae Range.

In 1930, Mr. Russ found a poor, weak specimen of this tree at Waihi on Molokai and on July 15, 1932, two of these trees were pointed out to the writer by Mr. A. W. Duvel in Paaiki Valley, Kauai, at 2,100 feet elevation and were identified at once as the Mohamehame. They were growing near a grove of 10 red cotton or Kokia trees which were 25 to 30 feet high and whose crowns were full of a gorgeous display of bright, red blossoms somewhat resembling the hibiscus.

Probably more specimens of the Mohamehame tree will be discovered not only on these same islands but also on Maui as more explorations are made. Present attempts to propagate this languishing tree by seed and by cuttings are meeting with fair success.

The Kauila tree (Colubrina oppositifolia) which took the place of iron with the Hawaiian warriors in ancient days and whose very hard, dense, and strong wood was fashioned into spears, is fairly abundant at Puuwaawaa in North Kona, Hawaii,

but on Oahu it is rarer than the Sandalwood or Iliahi. Until July 1932, the Kauila was found on Oahu only as a few scraggly specimens in Makua Valley, but during that month a grove consisting of at least 12 fine specimens was discovered by Mr. Russ on the west slope of the small central ridge in Makaleha Valley under the shadow of Mt. Kaala. The propagation of additional Kauila trees from seeds obtained at this grove has been successful.

This grove was discovered in the course of building a fence on the exposed boundaries of the Mokuleia Forest Reserve which now protects 6,000 acres of a beautiful Hawaiian forest against the further ravages of stock. In this forest region there have already been enumerated 105 different species of native trees and large shrubs, the total for Oahu being only about 150. In the Mokuleia forest are white-barked hibiscus trees laden with fragrant white blossoms and whole hill-sides covered with nothing but yellow blossomed lehua trees. Here wild peacocks are holding their own with more recently introduced pheasants, turkeys and Hungarian partridges and here among the red and the yellow lehua blossoms still flit the rarer Hawaiian perching birds, the red apapane and the green amakihi, and the trunks of the trees are studded with landshells, "the jewelry of the Forest."

To preserve for study and perpetuate some of our rarer and fast disappearing Hawaiian trees and shrubs, an Hawaiian garden was started by the Board of Agriculture and Forestry in April 1932, on the government land of Waahila in cooperation with the University of Hawaii, as an adjunct to other tree planting on this land. Here at 1,000 feet overlooking the city of Honolulu on the ridge between Palolo and Manoa valleys and readily accessible by automobile have already been planted at least 50 specimens of 12 different species of Hawaiian plants, some of which are already quite rare. These consist of the well-known wiliwili, producing light wood; the drought-resisting allii with its seeds envelopes in papery wings; the familiar koa and hala; the rare nioi, a Eugenia, with orange-colored fruit; the kokio keokeo or native white hibiscus; the aulu or Oahu soapberry; the rare Molokai red cotton or kokia; the rare ohai bearing red, sweetpea-like blossoms; the indigenous Trema for which no native name is known; the scandent anapanapa which is of the same genus as the kauila and which was the Hawaiians' soap plant; and the naio or bastard sandalwood. Here also has been set out on a small knoll a grove of 1,716 sandalwood trees, the seed of which was introduced from Mysore, India. Koa and ironwood trees were planted out six months in advance of the sandalwood tree, for the latter is a root parasite and must have a host tree from whose roots it may obtain a part of its sustenance. Attempts to propagate the indigenous sandalwoods from seed have so far met with very little success.

Other rare and interesting Hawaiian trees and shrubs will be added to the Hawaiian garden at Waahila which, in time, should become one of the attractive show places of Honolulu.

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Editor's Note: Mr. Charles S. Judd died in 1939 at the age of 57, after an illness of two years. He was born in Hawaii in 1881, the son of Alfred Francis Judd and Agnes Hall (Boyd) Judd. He attended Punahou, Yale and received his masters degree from the Yale forestry school in 1907. After his graduation he spent three years in Washington and Oregon with the U.S. Forest Reserve, but in 1911 he returned to Hawaii to become the Territorial Land Commissioner. In 1912 he went back into the U.S. Forestry Service. In 1915 he returned to Hawaii to accept the position of Territorial Forester and Chief Warden. He taught forestry at the University of

Hawaii and wrote widely on the subject of reforestation, a cause to which he devoted his life.

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NATURE IN KAPIOLANI PARK

By George C. Munro

On September 11 several plover were in the Park but their action was quite unusual. They preferred to run rather than fly and if forced to take wing they flew only a few paces at a time. On the 22nd there were also a few and their action was the same. It was quite different to that of the few seen in the Park between those dates which acted as usual flying round the pedestrian, which seems a regular practice of this bird. These were evidently young birds and females just arrived from the Arctic and still wing-tired. On the evening of the 29th we saw a dozen plover, the most yet counted at a time this season in the Park.

Observations during October and November have been principally on the Pacific Golden Plover. In August after the first contingent arrived it was noticed that they were wild. Some were still blackbreasted, and were plump and active. Up to September 1 there were but a few scattered about singly. On that day several were seen and from then on there were more and their action was quite different. They were more tame, reluctant to fly and when followed would run a considerable distance before taking wing. They were not so active when undisturbed, standing longer in one place. Four in the south end of the Park share that part together, in twos not far apart but not close to one another. One smaller than its companion stays closest. I have been told of plover fighting one another off their particular beats but have never seen this. In the Park they have to change their location often: ballplayers, picnics, persons exercising dogs and horses take up much ground but the birds generally find space somewhere near their beat. They frequent the ground before the other birds in the morning and long after the others have gone to roost. I don't know if they eat the Peidole ant whose little cones of earth in the grass are extremely numerous in the Park. The mynahs go in flocks and sweep the ground when the ants are out. I think by the action of the plover they also eat them. It must take an enormous number to satisfy them. There are certainly millions of the ant in the Park and make a fine reserve for the birds.

Judging by these observations I would say that many of the old plover that arrive in the middle of August pass on to other islands, towards or south of the Equator, leaving the young and perhaps their escorts to occupy these islands. I feel sure the birds occupying the Park now are mostly this season's chicks. It will be interesting later to see if these young birds move northwards and their places be taken by older birds from the South.

Mrs. Sonia W. Willard of Lanikai, Oahu, a very enthusiastic bird observer, mentions "low flights of small flocks of plovers going directly to the Islet" on their way, no doubt, to roost on Mokulua Islands. Once she saw "a flock of perhaps 20, a little higher, in wild goose formation, though not with such precision." These were going southerly, undoubtedly to other islands of the group. She mentions also that some weeks ago and not for several weeks since (writing on November 28) about 9:45 p.m. she "heard what seemed large and high flocks, judging by sounds" which seemingly were "headed overland southward." These observations may tie in with mine in the Park. It is fortunate to have a good observer on the southeast part of Oahu and we will look forward to more of her interesting notes, especially on the plover.

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LETTERS AND GENERAL NOTES

Honolulu: With the transfer to Washington of Mr. and Mrs. Karl W. Green I am wondering what the flock of Chinese doves in the court at Oceanside will do. Not having seen the Greens before they left I make the above statement; however, knowing the Greens I am certain provisions have been made for their daily guests. This is what has occurred daily for longer than I know: About four o'clock each day the little doves would gather on and about the lanai of the Green apartment, waiting for Mr. Green to come home. He, having changed to lounging garments, would appear before his guests with pieces of bread which he would crumble into the tiniest of bits. The doves would gather at his feet cooing and bowing while enjoying their evening meal.

The Greens were not the only interested people; Mr. C. B. Willoy, during his stay at the court, also fed the doves - his contribution consisted of crackers, and Mrs. Putnam, also a former resident, contributed rice. The very interesting part of all of this is that the doves would not eat crackers at the Green's, neither would they eat bread at any of the other homes. They wanted bread at the Green's, crackers at Willoy's and rice at Putnam's.

I have learned since writing the above that the Irving Boop's are continuing the bread menu.-- Ruth R. Rockafellow.

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Kahaluu, Oahu: A short time ago my son, James T. Munro, was watering his lawn at Kahaluu on the east side of Oahu when he heard a familiar whistle. He had not heard it since he left Molokai when he was a small boy in 1906. He realized at once it was the call of the bristle-thighed curlew (Numenius tahitiensis). Enthused by old memories he dropped the hose and whistled to the bird. It responded and came down between the tree tops over his head and hovered as if to alight before proceeding on its way.

I have no record of this very interesting bird having frequented Oahu. If it did it was probably shot out as it has been on other islands except Niihau. It is fortunate that Niihau is being kept as a private bird sanctuary by the Robinson family and that stragglers of this species will visit here on Oahu. So there is hope that when the Wild Life Refuge is established in Kapiolani Park that they will tarry there and perhaps frequent Oahu again.

This bird's curiosity is its undoing on these islands, as imitating its whistle, throwing up of a hat, or the shooter lying on the ground and waving his feet in the air attracts it within easy gunshot, so like the plover at its drinking place, it falls an easy victim. It is hoped that stragglers that come here are not seen by those sportsmen who have an itch to shoot at anything that flies. The broken legged stilt that was found recently by a soldier was no doubt an instance of this. Fortunately the soldier took it to the dispensary and had its leg dressed, then handed it to the authorities at the Zoo where it will have good care. It can take its place with the golden plover, a former victim but now in happy circumstances with the Hawaiian ducks from Mokulua.-- G. C. Munro.

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November Bird Walk: Sunday, November 13, 1949, was a bright, sunny morning with just enough "nip" in the air to make the bird lovers and hikers happy they remembered to take along that extra sweater. Everyone was on time and there were plenty of cars to provide rides for all of the enthusiasts. The ride over the Pali was a most enjoyable one and of course with the usual wonderment about how the weather would be on the Windward side. The weatherman was most accommodatng as it was

just as clear on the Windward side as it was in Honolulu.

At the entrance to the Kaneohe Naval Air Station we were met by another group of club members who have recently moved to the Windward side.

Several Pacific Golden Plover were sighted along the way before we reached the naval base, our destination for the day. As soon as we arrived at the ponds we were fortunate to see many pintail ducks and Hawaiian stilts. The stilts were particularly attractive stepping around in the shallow water. It seemed that they were enjoying the day just as much as the bird enthusiasts enjoyed peering at them through their binoculars. Mr. Porter thought he recognized some Canada geese and later we were all extremely happy when we met Mr. J. Donald Smith, Game conservationist with the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, who confirmed the observation. Mr. Smith is banding pintail ducks in this area and he told us that there were three Lesser Canada geese on the ponds, and on our return trip all three of these geese were identified. A group of the ducks put on a nice parade out on the road which runs between the ponds affording a good opportunity for close observation. The second pond had many Shoveller ducks swimming around on it.

A visit to the Booby colony on Ulupau Head was included in the plans for the day as many of us had remembered the hundreds of boobies we saw there a year ago. Before we drove to the colony we ate our lunch in the shelter of a grove of Ironwood trees, and while eating a flock of about 18 Frigate birds flew overhead. At Ulupau Crater we did not find the hundreds of boobies we had anticipated, but we did see about 25 immature birds with their brownish plumage, sitting on the dry bushes. Only two mature birds were sighted. Here again, a few Frigate birds were flying around.

This trip did not require much hiking but everyone felt that these ponds are an ideal spot to observe the shore birds that visit these islands. The count for the day included: Stilts, 52; Tattlers, 3; Night herons, 3; Plover and turnstone, 50 each; Sanderlings, 2; Hawaiian noddy tern, 3; common Noddy tern; 7; Frigate birds, 26; Boobies, 2 adults, 25 immature; Ducks, pintail, 400, Shoveller, not counted.--
Antonia Pechacek.

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JANUARY ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: January 22nd, to Kaelepulu and Kaneohe Naval Air Station. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8 A.M. Note time and date. Bring lunch, water and car (if possible). Renewed water supply at Kaelepulu has brought many of the migratory water fowl to this area and a second trip to Kaneohe at this season will enable us to become more familiar with the migratory and other shore birds found about the ponds.

MEETING: January 16th, Library of Hawaii Auditorium at 7:30 P.M. This meeting will be devoted to organization of a program for 1950 and consideration of the formation of a study group. The following motion will also be put to a vote at this meeting: "That Section 7, of the Constitution of the Hawaii Audubon Society be amended to read as follows: A quorum shall consist of those members present at any regular business meeting of the society, notice of which has been issued in writing not less than one week prior to the date of such meeting."

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OFFICERS: President: Mr. H. Paul Porter Sect'y-Treasurer: Miss Grenville Hatch
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Editor, The Elepaio: Mrs. Priscilla G. Harpham, P.O. Box 2198

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