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HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRD COUNT 1949

The following is a tabulation of the bird count taken on the Island of Oahu by members of the Hawaii Audubon Society on December 26, 1949:

	Kaneohe N.A.S.	Bellows Field	Kaelepulu & Kuapa	Tantalus Trail	Resid. areas	Poamoho Trail	Total
Amakihi				2		52	54
Apapane						217	217
Booby							
Red-footed	387						387
Brown	4						4
Cardinal							
Brazilian		1	3		7		11
Kentucky	2	22	9	4	5	1	43
Coot	147		494				641
Doves							
Barred	47	38	126+		52	3	266
Chinese	28	154	11		10	4	207
Ducks							
Black brant	1						1
Pintail	207		608				815
Elepaio				6		7	13
Finch, house	3		36				39
Frigate bird	68	7	7				82
Heron, black- crowned night		1	6				7
Iiwi						9	9
Mynah	29	116	60		86		291
Mocking bird					1		1
Owl, Hawaiian	1		1				2
Plover							
Pacific Golden	67	67	60		2	9	205
Robin, Jap. Hill				6		6	12
Rice bird	20	5	30		81	11	147
Sparrow, English	15	207	1		66	31	320
Stilt, Hawaiian	41		45				86
Sanderling	4		11				15
Skylark, English						2	2
Tern, Haw. Noddy	11						11
Thrush, Chinese						2	2
Tattler, Wandering	2	20					22
Turnstone, Ruddy	53		63				116
White-eye			8	16	6	45	75
Curlew, bristle thighed		1					1
TOTALS	1137	639	1579	34	316	399	4104
Species	20	12	18	5	10	14	
Total species:	32						

The following is a tabulation of the bird counts taken on the Island of Oahu by members of the Hawaii Audubon Society 1945-49:

	<u>1949</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1945</u>
Amakihi	54	50	8	44	36
Apapane	217	23	34	63	15
Booby					
Red-footed	387	671	799		
Brown	4	13	1		
Cardinals					
Brazilian	11	17	6	5	5
Kentucky	43	16	55	38	43
Coot	641	915	158	1200 est.	231
Creepor				1	
Curlew, Bristle-thighed	1			1	
Doves					
Barred	266	215	276	63	81
Chinose	207	43	55	20	29
Ducks					
Sp.?			1000		
Black brant	1				
Blue-winged teal				2	
Mallard				6	2
Pintail	815	1400+	1064-	3	42
Ruddy					2
Shoveler		9			2
Hawaiian		5			
Elopaio	13	99	28	77	19
Finch, House	39		6	7	3
Frigate bird	82	19	19		
Gallinule			1	2	18
Gull, Ring-billed					1
Heron, Black-crowned night	7	5	75	20	8
Iiwi	9			2	
Mynah	291	175	97	70	129
Mocking bird	1			2	2
Owl, Hawaiian	2		1	1	
Pheasant					1
Plover, Pacific golden	205	133	170	36	311
Robin, Japanese Hill	18	41	73	65	82
Rice bird	147	199	140	44	40
Sparrow, English	320	44	117	82	140
Stilt, Hawaiian	86	134	176	36	204
Sandorling	15	5	2		16
Skylark, English	2			3	3
Terms					
Common Noddy				4	
Hawaiian Noddy	11	1	25		
Sooty		2	194		
Thrush, Chinese	2	1	3	3	4
Tattler, Wandering	22	10	6	2	10
Tit, Japanese			2	1	1
Turnstone, Ruddy	116	268	118	7	238
White-eye	75	100	103	109	122

POAMOHO TRAIL

The one difficulty with Poamoho lies in its inaccessibility in wet weather, hence we watched the skies anxiously as the 26th approached. It had been decided if it were impossible to drive to the start of the trail, we would park the car at the entrance to the jeep road, and cover that road on foot, and as much of the trail as possible.

Mrs. Ruth Rockafellow and I left town before 5:30, picking up Mark Kerr on the Pearl Harbor road. For the guidance of future groups - that was at least half an hour too early. It was still dark when we reached the entrance to the jeep road, held a hasty conference, and decided to take a chance on driving in. At 6:50, at the parking space close to the entrance of the trail, we lighted matches to read the thermometer. Daylight soon began to appear, and a chorus of bird songs greeted us. The sky was heavily overcast. As we rounded the turn to start on the trail, the wind was blowing violently, with rain clouds sweeping down from the interior in a threatening fashion. Hence we decided to turn, and work back to the entrance of the jeep road.

Apapane were in evidence everywhere, and amakihi were frequently seen and heard, even singing their rare song. A single eucalyptus tree in full bloom provided us with our first big lift on the apapane count, as well as the first iiwi. It was interesting to note how the scarlet of the iiwi, contrasting with the darker crimson of the apapane all about him, called attention to his presence. We had almost reached the end of the road, hoping against hope that we would see enough apapane to bring our count to 100, when we arrived at the eucalyptus and paper bark grove, the Elysian fields which we had passed in darkness at 6:00 a.m. Like honest, conservative souls, we closed our count at 217, feeling that we could no longer be sure that we might not count the same birds twice, but we all felt that another 100 could safely have been added.

It is beyond my power to describe our morning's experience. The trees and the air were full of apapane, feeding, frolicking, darting here and there, singing joyously all the while. We offer no explanation for the small elepaio and hill robin count. The birds just were not present. Twice we heard, unmistakably the unidentified bird, but had no glimpse of it. The skylarks - need we say - were obliging enough to rise and sing as we waited for them at Wheeler Field. -- Grenville Hatch.

TANTALUS TRAIL

The bird census trip this year on December 26th, was almost as bad as that of last year, as far as the weather was concerned, and the number of birds seen and heard was much less. There was a lot of wind, and the rain came down most of the time, but occasionally we could see out onto the coastal plain where it appeared to be fine weather.

I think one reason for the absence of birds might be the very fine cloudless days preceding this day. There was evidence that the Tantalus trail had been heavily traveled, and perhaps the birds were so disturbed that they moved out to a less traveled area. This is only an idea, for it may possibly be that there are fewer birds in that locality.

Mrs. Pedley, Mrs. Hamilton and myself made up the party and enjoyed the trip in spite of the weather. -- E. B. Hamilton.

KANEOHE NAVAL AIR STATION

The 1949 Christmas Bird Census of Kaneohe Naval Air Station was noteworthy only in that there was nothing outstanding about it. The weather was neither bad nor good. The count was neither high nor very low. No new species were added, but neither were there any old standbys missing. Though it was much too dark to count birds even when they were silhouetted against the sky, the boobies were already leaving the colony when we arrived there. Though the birds showed no signs of alarm by the time the light permitted counting, there were only 387 individuals left. All the birds were in white plumage. The departures continued steadily until by an hour after daybreak no more than four or five birds remained. In contrast to the twilight counts made in October and November, which indicated an increase in the population of the colony, the count of 387 total is below the totals of the last three years. Another evening count will be made this month. On past counts there have always been nestlings present in the colony; this year there were none.

Upland birds were quite plentiful and the usual shorebirds and water fowl were listed. The only question mark on the count was a large, blacknecked, white-collared individual who stayed in the middle of the pond rather apart from the ducks and coots. It was possibly a Black Brant. -- Ruth Dingus.

KAELEPULU AND KUAPA PONDS

The Christmas census party assigned to cover Kaelepulu and Kuapa ponds consisted of Miss Myrna Campbell, and Margaret and Paul Porter. We went first to Kaelepulu pond through light drizzles, and after ploughing through quite wet (and waist high) rushes, observed a considerable number of birds resting near the opposite bank. The writer had just settled himself comfortably to count them when, as if at a given signal, a great flock arose. As they wheeled overhead and headed out towards Kaneohe, we saw that they were pintails. Counting rapidly (and estimating the rest) we determined that there were about 500 individuals in the flock. They trailed out across the sky, forming irregular lines and erratic vee-formations, until they looked like wisps of smoke as they disappeared in the distance.

Going on around the pond, we saw that there were still ducks left among the coot, and we counted 108 individuals. There were 486 coot. Mynahs, plover and turnstone were numerous in the pond margins, and returning to the car, we were surprised and pleased to see a large Hawaiian Owl, cruising around about six feet above the tops of the rushes and being heckled by several mynahs who flew after and over him, squawking as they flew.

Kuapa pond and its margins were much less interesting, noteworthy principally for the numbers of barred doves that were active in a small field adjoining the pond, and for thirty-six linnets (house finch) sitting on a telephone pole line. -- H. Paul Porter

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RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS - By Grenville Hatch and Priscilla G. Harpham

Oahu, T. H. (Kapalama Heights, Tantalus Trail, Kuapa pond, Kaelepulu pond, Bellows Field, Mokapu peninsula-Ulupau Head, residential areas in Honolulu) ponds and marshes 30%, open country 17%, sandy beach 14%, coastal headland and adjacent crater 4%, lower forest 18%, residential areas 17%.

Cloudy with occasional showers; 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temperature 68° to 76°; wind S to SW, 2-21 m.p.h. The fifteen observers in six parties were: Myrna Campbell, Mary Cummins, Ruth Dingus, Francis and Mary Evans, Grace Gossard, E.G. and Ida Hamilton, Bernice Kuhns, Louetta Kuhns, Blanche A. Pedley, Helen Peterson, Margaret and Paul Porter, George Sonoda.

Total number of hours on foot: 26½; total miles covered, 248, of which 29 were on foot, and 219 by car. Total number of species, 28; number of individuals, 3705.

Oahu, T.H. (Poamoho trail, adjacent pineapple fields, Wheeler Field). Upper forest 97%, open country 3%. Overcast with frequent showers; 6:50 to 2:30 p.m.; temperature 66° to 68°. Wind E to SW, 8-25 m.p.h. Eucalyptus and paper bark trees in full bloom. The three observers in one party were Grenville Hatch, Mrs. Ruth Rockafellow, and Mark Kerr.

Total hours: 5 on foot; total miles, 74 (3 on foot, 71 by car). Total number of species: 14, number of individuals, 405.

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This is the forty-ninth year the National Audubon Society has conducted the annual Christmas census, but only the eighth year the Hawaii society has participated in it. It might not be amiss to review our yearly struggle to choose the most suitable 15-mile radial circle for the count - as directed by the rules and regulations of the National Audubon Society. The first count taken on Oahu was done in 1939 over a very limited area. That year 22 species and 646 individual birds were counted. Most unusual were two Northern Phalarope, seen at Kahuku - a bird which has not been recorded as having been seen on Oahu since that time.

In 1940 J. D'Arcy Northwood worked out a plan of a circle drawn to cover larger areas on the Poamoho trail on one side, and Kahuku ranch and pond on the other, thus covering one of our best trails for forest birds, and a good area for shore and sea birds. Even though these areas were much smaller than those covered in later years, 25 species and 1058 individuals were counted. Most noteworthy were 243 plover and the 8 Oahu creeper seen on the Poamoho trail. Since 1940 only one Oahu creeper has been counted at Christmas time - that in 1946, seen on the Kipapa trail. The outbreak of the war in December 1941 brought the Hawaii Christmas counts to a close for three years. Both Poamoho and Kahuku were taken over by the Army, and transportation was virtually impossible.

In 1944, gasoline rationing was relaxed a trifle, and under the leadership of Howard Cogswell, a circle again was drawn, with Aiea trail on one extreme and Kaelepulu pond on the other, which gave an excellent survey of the shores and ponds, but Aiea trail is not particularly rich in perching birds. Nineteen forty-four was the first year the residential areas in Honolulu were included in the count. It was also the first time a Japanese tit, or Yamagara, was recorded - seen on the Woodlawn trail, and also the first, and only time an egret has been observed on Oahu - seen by Cogswell at Kalihi flats. The Yamagara was seen in 1945 on Tantalus and again in 1946 on the Woodlawn trail.

This 1944 count-plan was followed with minor changes for three years. Before the 1947 count, the colony of red-footed boobies at Ulupau Head was discovered, I believe in 1946, and had become of absorbing interest, so it was decided to shift the circle once again to include the colony. Halawa trail, on the extreme edge of the circle was covered for forest birds. In 1947 and 1948 we sent our hardest souls to Halawa, who returned covered with mud, but with only a small count to compensate for the difficulties and actual dangers encountered. This year we abandoned the effort to enclose everything in one 15-mile circle and took Poamoho as a separate count. The two counts, taken together, give a much more accurate picture of our bird population.

Of the approximate 45 fairly common species of birds to be seen on Oahu, 32 were seen in 1946, 30 in 1945, 1947 and 1948, 28 in 1944, 25 in 1940, and 22 in 1939. There have been greater variations in the totals of individuals seen: from 646 in 1939 and 984 in 1946, to 4622 recorded in 1948. The greatest increase in the 1948 count seemed to be in the waterfowl population. The Black Brant, egret, mallard, phalarope and ring-billed gull are the five species of stray visitants observed during the Christmas counts. The blue-winged teal, an imported bird, has been seen only in 1946 in the Kaelepulu pond area. And the bristle-thighed curlew was first noted during the 1949 count, reported to have been seen at Bellows Field. The mocking bird, introduced to the Islands from the mainland in 1928, shows often enough to prove that it is still in these parts.

Down through the eight years of Christmas census-taking, the struggle to find the best-for-birding 15-mile radial circle has taken us from one end of the island to the other; from Kahuku to the swamp and pond areas of Kailua. Neither the Waianae range nor the Pearl Harbor shore areas have ever been included in the counts. Trips to Halawa, Woodlawn-St. Louis, and the Kawainui swamp have been generally discontinued because of the difficult terrain and the small number of birds seen. Kahuku district has decreased in birding value since the pond was drained, so in the last years of the census it appears that the Poamoho trail and the Kaneohe Kaelepulu districts are the two best spots in which to obtain a representative count of conditions at that time of year on Oahu - two areas, which even in the wildest stretch of the imagination, cannot be squeezed in a 15-mile circle.

<u>1949 Count:</u>	<u>Mi. in car</u>	<u>Mi. on foot</u>	<u>Hrs. in field</u>	<u>Wind vel.</u>	<u>Temperature</u>
Kaneohe N.A.S.	97.2	5+	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	8-12 mph	71° - 76°
Bellows Field		10	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	12-15 mph	
Kaelepulu &					
Kuapa ponds	43	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	2 mph	75°
Tantalus trail	18	5	4 $\frac{3}{4}$		68°
Poamoho trail	71	3	5	8-25 mph	66° - 68°
Residential areas					
Makiki			1 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Kapalama Hgts	24	3	3		

Total Count By Years

	<u>1939</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1949</u>
Species total	22	25	28	30	30	32	30	32
Individual total	646	1058	3823	1793	984	3816	4622	4104

Districts Covered in Christmas Counts

District	1939	1940	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	Total No.
Aiea trail			x	x					2
Halawa trail						x	x		2
Kahuku ranch and pond	x	x							2
Kaneohe N.A.S.						x	x	x	3
Kipapa trail					x				1
Kawainui swamp			x						1
Kaelepulu pond			x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Kuapa pond			x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Kalihi flats			x	x	x				3
Moanalua pond				x					1
Upper Manoa trail			x						1
Poamoho trail	x	x						x	3
Residential areas			x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Tantalus trail				x	x	x	x	x	5
Woodlawn-St. Louis trail					x	x	x		3
Bellows Field								x	1
Sites per year:	2	2	7	7	7	7	7	7	

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FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: February 26th, to Poamoho. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 A.M., bringing lunch (and car if possible). The lehua should be in full bloom to attract the many birds of this area.

MEETING: February 20th, Staff Work Room of the Library of Hawaii (first floor on the left corridor opposite the courtyard) at 7:30 P.M. The group will consider native island dry-land plants with a view to determining their proper location in the projected wild life refuge at Kapiolani Park.

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