

THE ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society



For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii

Volume 11, Number 6

December 1950

AT THE NEST OF THE BLACK-TAILED GULL

By Chester Fennell

Part III

The inn was owned and managed by the Japanese Government Railways and was constructed in much the style of an old European mountain chalet. A large locker room for skis and sundry outdoor equipment was just within the entrance, and one huge high-ceilinged general assembly and dining room occupied the main portion of the building. A balcony ran around two sides of the large room and held enough bunks to contain some twenty-five people. The kitchen and washrooms occupied one end of the hotel and completed the general layout. The high ceiling, large rafters and open balcony all gave it the atmosphere of some ancient festal hall, and a feeling of coldness prevailed throughout. We kept all our outer clothing on and shivered even more as the wind laid siege to the place and made it creak and groan in all its joints. The wood-burning stove which they must have used during the winter had already been dismantled and removed so that we had to huddle around little hibachi (charcoal braziers) trying to warm our hands while Mr. Sugitani told us of the birds he had observed in this region during his past several years of residence. One of his most interesting observations was that of the Japanese hawk eagle (Spizaetus japonensis japonensis) which he had found nesting not far from this hotel and in the very same tree during the years '45, '46, '47, and '48. On 19 September 1948 he had observed full grown young which he thought had just left the nest. Another outstanding observation was that of the forest wagtail (Dendronanthus indicus) which has frequented his garden during migration for the past two years. While all other wagtails are content to pump their caudal appendages in a more or less vertical line, this little dandy of the woods must be different and swing his in a sort of circular horizontal manner. Needless to say, this habit gives him a most ridiculous swagger, and the very first time I observed the species along a steep wooded, rock-bound coast some ten miles northeast of Pusan, Korea, I was barely able to hold my field glasses steady long enough to watch him from sheer chuckling. It was fairly common in the deeper coniferous forests around Pusan but as yet I have failed to meet with it here in Japan.

The next morning, the first of May, without waiting for breakfast, we eagerly hit the trail and for four hours pretty thoroughly scoured the neighboring mountain-side for bird life. Large drifts of snow still filled the highest canyons and gulches of the Daisen cone and a strong fresh wind continued to sweep down from off the upper ridges.

A Japanese green woodpecker was first observed by Mr. Sugitani in among the pines to the right of the trail but refused to tarry closer inspection by other members of the party. An occasional bush warbler was heard singing in the distance, and the insect-like song of the short-tailed bush warbler sizzled up from a densely wooded ravine below us. But, apparently, because of the strong wind, birdlife in general seemed none too abundant. Then, not more than some three hundred feet from

the Mountain House and approximately fifteen feet from the trail Sgt. Burns discovered the prize of the morning--the finely constructed nest of a Japanese jay. It was concealed among the thick branches of a small fir tree approximately eight feet above the ground and contained six beautifully patterned eggs. It was rather a bulky affair made of small dead pine branches and green moss on the outside and carefully lined with fine black pine rootlets. It measured 13.5 cm. in total height and 20 cm. from outside rim to outside rim across the top; the inside bowl was 7.5 cm. deep and 13 cm. in diameter across the top. It was the very first nest of this species that I had ever seen so that this discovery alone marked the day in bold red letters for me. The parents were nowhere to be seen, and though we spent a good fifteen minutes in the vicinity, they failed even to voice a single note of resentment. This absolute silence and utter lack of parental belligerence surprised me no small amount, since I had always presumed that all members of this family, the wide world over, were of more or less a noisy, rowdy, aggressive behavior. However, this stealthiness around the nest did fit in perfectly with the other, comparatively quiet, conservative habits I had heretofore observed in this particular species and in its close relative the Brandt's jay of Korea. Their call notes, for instance, and actually the only notes I have ever heard them voice, are a low-pitched guttural, though rather pleasant, "churr" sound. Surely a decided contrast to the loud boisterous screams and cries of their new world cousins.

Farther along the trail in the immediate vicinity of some grand old moss-overgrown temple buildings dramatically and impressively bordered by a grove of tall magnificent cryptomeria trees we observed two of Japan's most gorgeously colored forest dwellers, the blue and narcissus flycatchers. The former was a handsome azure male perched in the top of a bush and pouring out his short though sweet refrain of melody. The latter, a pair, were among the lower underbrush on the hillside directly above the main temple itself. The male was in his very finest Lord Baltimore's attire with satiny black upperparts, burnished gold rump and throat, white wing bar and lemon yellow stripe over the eye and underparts. His mate, on the other hand, was more demurely clad in grayish green and with only a slight flush of orange on the upper breast. In among the same patch of underbrush and close to the narcissus flycatchers a Temminck's crowned willow warbler was busily engaged in the search for a meal and occasionally stopped to peer out at us from behind the protecting foliage.

On the large gray lichen-mottled limbs of a certain species of birch, which Mr. Kobayashi claimed was found only in this area, we saw a solitary Hondo pigmy woodpecker humping his way around, and then on the very same branch a bit lower down we found a pair of the species which we had been particularly anxious to find in this area--the Hondo nuthatch. This is the only spot in Japan (including the islands of Shikoku and Kyushu), south and west of Mt. Fuji from which this species has been recorded so that we were especially gratified to make its acquaintance. Altogether we observed a total of five in this one small area and all were actively prowling around, at times bottom side up as is the wont of this genus the world over, on the large branches of this one certain species of birch.

Two handsome black-capped male ashy minivets boldly gave forth their matins from the topmost pinnacles of nearby pines and for the first time allowed me to observe them at my complete leisure. A Hondo great spotted woodpecker drummed his love call from the top of a dead stump which housed his partially excavated nest hole, and Eastern gray wagtails flaunted their bright yellow underparts and white outer tail feathers as we returned to the Mountain House through a small cluster of low Japanese cottages.

The End

NATURE IN KAPIOLANI PARK

By George C. Munro

Pluvialis dominica fulva

Four plover flying in together over the park about 6:30 a.m. on August 13 were the first of these returning migrants that I saw this year. Another observer on the southeast side of Oahu saw two on the ground about 7 a.m. on the same morning. The ones I saw did not alight where I could see them and for awhile I was uncertain that they were our *pluvialis*. Next morning six were seen and in the evening eleven. They were shy, stayed together on the ground, did not seem hungry or very tired and took wing readily. From the 15th to the 27th there were few to be seen though at times I imagined they were of the lot that so interested me last year. On the 27th I was sure of this as two were together for some time and the slight difference in size could be detected. These birds of apparently last year's brood settled down and have remained so since. It would seem that there are three pairs, each pair with its own location, sharing it but seldom together. If disturbed they fly to the other part of their area but never to the run of another pair. They evidently belong to a different group to those in another part of the park which I seldom see unless I go out in the evening. There are about sixteen of them that do not come to the park until after seven in the morning as noticed by a park worker. On September 8, I passed through the park in mid-afternoon and saw sixteen plover in two lots about the location where the park worker sees the sixteen. They had evidently just arrived and were standing around as were the first lot I saw. They may have stayed on but the lot of August 14 flew on to other fields.

The question arises by which route does the Pacific golden plover return to Hawaii and go again to the Arctic for the nesting season? By some it is thought that they may return to Siberia before setting out through the Pacific. This would give them the shortest overseas flights without alighting on land. By working down the Kamchatka Peninsula to the middle of the Kurile Islands and from there to Kure or Ocean Island, the end island of the Hawaiian Chain, would be an overseas flight of about 1800 miles. From the middle of the Andreanof Islands of the Aleutian chain would be about 1400 miles. They could reach their takeoff there either by flying across the Bering Sea from Siberia or coming down the Alaska Peninsula and along the easternmost of the Aleutian Islands.

The distance marked on the National Geographic map of the Pacific, 1942, gives the distance from Dutch Harbor at Fox Islands off the extreme end of the Alaska Peninsula to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, as 2040 nautical miles. To the group of lakes at the beginning of the Alaska Peninsula by Kodiak Island would be about 2500 miles. This would be the most direct route from Alaska to the Island of Hawaii. Coming by this route would account for the exhausted condition of plover arriving on the Hamakua Coast of Hawaii as told by Henshaw and of observers seeing them fly north from Hawaii. I am sure, however, that they have other flyways that bring them along the Hawaiian Chain as they were on those islands in June and July 1891. In that year a small flock was on an island of the French Frigate Shoal early in June. In the middle of June on Laysan Island there were plover, curlew, turnstones and wandering tattler. There were all four of these on Lisianski in early July, the curlew in frayed plumage. On Midway in the middle of July there were plover, turnstones and curlew. The latter numerous and in better condition than on Lisianski. The turnstones were usually in flocks but the plover in small numbers. Between Nihoa Island and Kauai on August 11, on our return voyage, a stray plover was seen. It was tired and alighted on the water for short rests. On August 13, the day before we sighted Kauai, two were seen and one turnstone. This is good timing as the first arrivals I saw here this year were on August 13, fifty-nine years afterwards.

This would indicate that all these migratory shore birds have flyways that connect with islands of the Hawaiian Chain. Their safest route apparently would be down the Alaska Peninsula to the Andreanof Islands and from there to Kure Island. Some of course may take the longest route from Kodiak Island to the Island of Hawaii and perhaps be guided to some extent by the cloud bank F. W. Preston tells of in the Auk and quoted in "The Elepaio," Vol. 10, no. 2, of August 1949. Others may leave from Umiak or Dutch Harbor at the end of the Alaska Peninsula to any part of the chain or main group.

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"HAWAIIAN BIRDS"

A useful mimeographed booklet, "Hawaiian Birds," has been brought out recently in Honolulu upon which a few words of comment might be in season. This publication has been issued by the Department of Public Instruction, dated January 1949 "upon an experimental basis" asking for criticisms and suggestions to be sent to Mr. Deal Crooker, Deputy Superintendent. Also for information from observers to help fill in vacancies in the compilation to be sent to Miss Grenville Hatch, Roosevelt High School.

The pamphlet is twenty inches by eight and a half in size with 33 pages, three birds occupying two pages and forty-five birds altogether dealt with. There are columns for each bird giving: Drawing of the bird - Family - Color - Size and Structure - Flight and Movements - Calls - Eggs - Nests - Haunts - Food - Habits - Native of - Arrival in Hawaii - where Established. The birds are grouped into Residential Birds, Birds of Open Fields, Birds of the Ponds and Swamps, Forest Birds, Shore Birds, Birds of the Shores and Islets, and Birds of the Upper Air. There is a drawing of each bird giving the position of the different colors. This with the text make it easy to identify birds in the field. The publication itself is not a field book but one can copy from it enough of description of birds likely to be met with in locations to be visited.

In the Foreword Mrs. Opal Kelly of Robert Louis Stevenson School is given credit for organization of material and collection of information and Mr. H. Paul Porter for his work on drawings of the birds. These credits are well deserved. Though the author is not mentioned much credit must be accorded to Miss Grenville Hatch in this capacity. She has given liberally of thought, time and toil in the compilation of this material, resulting in a creditable, informative composition. - George C. Munro.

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Just received at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Library is "New Zealand Bird Life," by E. G. Turbott. It is a delightful book, quarto, 101 pp., illustrated by excellent close-up photographs of birds--photos on one page, text opposite. The book is out of print but I hope any who are interested will have time to come in and see this copy. - Margaret Titcomb, Librarian.

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A nest identified by Mr. Thomas McGuire as having been constructed by *Leothrix lutea* has been found in a Tecoma tree in a garden of the Kainalu Tract about two blocks from the beach at Kailua, Oahu. Whether young were raised is not known.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:

The Hawaii Audubon Society plans to participate in the annual bird count of the National Audubon Society on Sunday, December 31, 1950. It is urged that as many members as possible plan to join one of the groups and help make our count as thorough as we can. There follows a list of the trails to be taken and names of persons in charge of each area; please telephone the person leading whichever group you wish to accompany and make final arrangements. Residential areas may be reported individually rather than by groups to broaden the area counted.

Ulupau Head and Kaneohe Naval Air Station Ponds	- Miss Helen Peterson - 415751 evenings, Hickam (40511) Loc. 42288, days.
Kaelepulu and Kuapa Ponds	- Mr. H. Paul Porter - 52511, days.
Bellows Field	- Miss Laura Draper - 546654, evenings.
Tantalus	- Mr. Charles Dunn - 92237 evenings, 57911 days.
Foamoho	- Miss Grenville Hatch - 76085 evenings.
Any residential count	- Mrs. Blanche Pedley - 903903 evenings.

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DECEMBER ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: Sunday, December 10, 1950, to the ponds of the Moanalua, Red Hill and Waipahu areas. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 A.M. bringing lunch, and car if possible. Since the rainy season makes forest trails relatively inaccessible and the migratory shore birds are best observed in the same period, it seems doubly advisable to study the shore birds at this time.

MEETING: Monday, December 18, 1950, Auditorium, Library of Hawaii, at 7:30 PM. Two short moving pictures will be shown, one on Bird Migration and the other a study of the development of the chick in the egg. Following this program the annual meeting and election of officers for the year 1951 will take place.

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HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS:

President:	Mr. H. Paul Porter, 335 Manono, Lanikai P. O.
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Dues: Regular - \$2.00 per annum. Junior (18 yrs. and under) - \$1.00 per annum.
Life - \$50.00.