

THE ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society



For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii

Volume 12, Number 10

April 1952

REVISITING THE ISLAND OF LANAI IN 1952

by George C. Munro

For six and a half days from February 20 to 27th I spent renewing my acquaintance with trees and plants of Lanai. There were many other interests - principle of these was meeting the few that are left of my old employees. Those and their families I found as loyal as ever and I left the island decked with beautiful leis made with their own hands. My nephew, Mr. Hector G. Munro, devoted his vacation largely to taking me over many miles of country in a plant investigating cruise in connection with the collection of seed for Leahi Native Garden, he being one of the best seed collectors for the Garden.

I was unable to more than visit the edge of the main forest so saw no native birds. The Boy Scouts have a camp site at Waiakeakua, a place easily accessible to the forest, and they will undoubtedly take an interest in research for what remain of these birds. It is hoped we will have a correspondent there for the "Elepaio". On the grassy lands especially in the vicinity of the Kanepuu dry forest, skylarks were particularly numerous. Wild oats were plentiful there and these birds no doubt feeding on the falling seed. I remember from my boyhood farming days the skylarks persisting in pulling up the sprouted oats to get the grain. They did not eat the sprouts. Pheasants and owls were common almost everywhere. Plover were plentiful wherever there was open ground in the pineapple fields.

I interviewed three persons who had seen the landing of migratory shore birds last September after their long flight overseas. From the descriptions given I gathered that the majority of these birds were probably ruddy turnstones (Arenaria interpres interpres) as the descriptions were definitely white and black, but undoubtedly the Pacific Golden Plover (Pluvialis dominica fulva) formed a part of the migration. However, this and other points will be cleared up if these birds continue to use as a landing place the well-kept lawn of the Lanai Airport. The station manager, Mr. Leonard H. Zalopany, will have a careful watch kept during the August and September arrivals this year and it is hoped will make his notes available to the Hawaii Audubon Society for the "Elepaio". An account of the landing kindly written out for me by Judge A.W. Carlson from his own and others' observations said they arrived in late September from about noon to 4 p.m. in flocks of about 50 to 75, perhaps 2000 altogether. They were flying low and seemed tired while on the wing and sat and rested after landing. Whether these birds stayed overnight or others arrived in the night, they were seen in the morning to collect and drink at the small pools of water formed with the dew

which dripped from the eaves of the building. Others had a smaller estimate of the numbers and said that the birds arrived during several days. One thought they came from the south; another had not taken note of the direction of arrival. It is possible that they went around the mountain if flying low and so seemed to come in from the south. This will give an excellent opportunity for the Board of Agriculture and Forestry's biologist, Mr. Donald Smith, to band these birds. They should be easily trapped with water and food and allowed to rest before being caught and banded.

The Lanai ranch country was cleared of cattle during the last two years, only a remnant now remaining. The growth of grasses and forage plants which were spread and fostered for thirty-nine years under stock now form a solid mass over most of the surface. There are of course intervening hard surfaces where the wind driving over it prevents the growth of seedlings. The flowering and seeding of rare native plants mixed with the grasses provides a wonderful opportunity for a botanical survey of the dry lands before they become covered and the smaller plants choked out by the koa haole or ekoa (Leucaena glauca) which was spread over the lands for cattle fodder. With no cattle to keep this aggressive plant trimmed, it is threatening to take complete possession. The Maunalei valley is being rapidly filled with it except where kiae or wiliwili are too dense for it to get a hold.

I was pleased to see that the xerophytic forest at Kanepuu has not been much injured by fifteen years under cattle. It had been kept clear of stock for seventeen years before 1935 and rare plants brought from other parts of the island were successfully growing there. On my last visit in 1948 it seemed that all of these had been exterminated by the cattle, but on this occasion we found remnants of two of them. I was fortunately able to bring back plants of these for Leahi Native Garden and seed will be procured from the larger plants there later on. Lantana camara had increased around and in the open spaces of the forest and served a good purpose in helping to protect it from cattle and to keep the driving wind from sweeping under the trees where the cattle had trimmed the lower branches. Lantana-destroying insects are now at work on it and will prevent its further spread. Young seedlings of the native trees are showing in the open ground under the old trees. I brought back some of Keahi (Chrysophallum polynesium) and Aiea (Nothocestrum latifolia). They seem unaffected by the change to Diamond Head, as does a plant of a rare form of awikiwiki (Canavalia galeata). Only two plants of this delicate very slightly pinkish-tinged, white-flowered variety were found in nature though much of it was growing at Kanepuu later and this came true to type. I feared the cattle had destroyed it so imagine my delight at being able to bring a good strong plant to Leahi Native Garden and to know of four good young vines, two at each of the two places where the plant formed masses in 1934! It will be interesting to see if this beautiful type will persist on Diamond Head in its original color. I also brought plants of the tree-like form of Hibiscus brackenridgii which I also thought was gone. But we found one plant about three feet high and some very small ones, so we are assured of seed later. Still missing are the Lanai variety of Euphorbia loriifolia, Haplostachys munroi, and Abutilon erimetopetalum, all of which have an interesting history which will be told when my "Story of Lanai" finally gets into print. It is hoped, however, that they will eventually show up. Most of the old trees are still there, and hala, hala-

pepe and ti are still on the edges of the forest. We did not see Pisonia, Tetraplasandra, or Sophora but they are probably still there. A fine tree of Renoldsia still stands alone on a ridge near the forest. We were especially fortunate in finding an old vine of the rare Breweria menziesii from which seed will be taken later.

It will be remembered that the Honolulu Botanical Society made a strong plea to the Hawaiian Pineapple Company date May 8, 1936, to protect this interesting relic of the forest that covered a great part of Lanai before the intrusion of man on the island. The Conservation Council should take this up and urge that it be protected from animals in the future and kept as one of their "living museums". However, my friends on Lanai will continue to furnish me with seed for Leahi Native Garden and maybe the plants will be permitted to be perpetuated there.

This forest is little affected by introduced plants; Passiflora edulis and Leucaena glauca are the most menacing at present. The first can be easily kept in check and it is doubtful if the latter will thrive in the dense shade of the pua trees.

I had the pleasure of seeing the dense groves of wiliwili (Erythrina sanwicensis) in Maunalei valley that grew up after I left the island. This was while we made a fruitless search for Abutilon Eremtopetalum where I found the type specimen a number of years ago. I found difficulty in recognizing the terrain as koa haole, kiawe and wiliwili have grown so much since I saw it last. The first is particularly aggressive there. In the evening Hector Munro showed the beautiful colored pictures of the flowering wiliwili he took in October 1949. It would be difficult to get such pictures now as the koa haole so much impedes the views. I hope he can be persuaded to show these fine pictures at a meeting of the Hawaii Audubon Society as demonstrating how the groves on Diamond Head may look some day.

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WALTER DONAGGHO writes from Uganda, Kenya-Tanganyika, that he is having a fine time and getting good pictures as he treks about with his motion picture camera. He has seen and photographed crowned cranes, secretary birds, hawks and eagles, sunbirds, finches, weavers, and many others. He has also seen giraffe, zebra, buffalo, baboon, elephant, but no lions or tigers yet. At Mt. Kenya he reports interesting hyraxes and ground-sills up to fourteen inches high. Best of all, he promises a free show for the Hawaii Audubon Society when he comes home to Honolulu with his films.

TANTALUS DWELLER Priscilla Harpham reports that on March 9 she observed three Japanese tit feeding on insects in the bushes in her yard, and two more on the 10th. Mrs. Harpham had been hearing them for two weeks but these were the first dates on which they showed themselves. They were first observed and reported by Mrs. Harpham in June of 1949 when she found two feeding at her home 1350 feet above sea level. This year is the first time she has observed three at one time. They appear to be nesting nearby this year.

NOTE FROM NEW ZEALAND. Mr. George Munro has kindly sent in a clipping from a New Zealand paper (Christchurch) recording "Giant Petrel's Long Flight to N.Z." It begins, "Ringed while it was still a chicken on the Falkland Islands, off the tip of South America, a seabird found on the beach at Chase's Gorge, Dargaville (North Island, New Zealand) had flown at least 6500 miles in four months. This information, which is of wide scientific interest, has been received by the president of the Whangarei Acclimitization Society, Mr. S. J. Snow, who handed the bird, a giant petrel, over to the Wild Life division of the Internal Affairs Department".

The dead bird was found on September 14, 1951, and on one of its legs was a band with the inscription, "S.B.L. No.63526". The "giant petrel" is the Macronectes giganteus, called by sailors the "Nelly" or "Stinkpot". W.R.B. Oliver in "New Zealand Birds", describes it thus: "Adule. Dark slaty brown, wings and tail darker. Bare skin at gape, band around eyes bluish grey. Bill yellowish horn. Iris brown, feet grey, webs fleshy. Length 86, bill 10, wing 52, tail 19, tarsus 9 cm".

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MIDWAY ISLANDS, March 2. Robert Sheehan reports: "Red-tailed tropics are back. Arrived in numbers on 26 February. Sooty terns are back. Have not yet landed. Began arriving in small numbers 25 February and are flying about 180 feet in a circular pattern."

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THE BIRDS OF MT. FUJI

by Keisuke Kobayashi, as related to Chester M. Fennell.
(continued from volume 12, no.9)

At a point approximately one mile above Subashiri we branched off to the left of the main Summit Trail onto the trail leading to Dainichido. A hike of approximately four miles finally brought us to the little shrine on top of the ridge at some 3400 feet elevation.

As is generally the case on all mountains of volcanic origin, water is a scarce item on Mt. Fuji so that the presence of a spring in a small canyon directly below the shrine at Dainichido is of utmost importance to the birdlife of the vicinity. Here, in the little pool where the water flows out of the side of the mountain and all along the tiny rivulet below, many species gather to drink and bathe. Actual observation of many of the deep forest birds is generally difficult because of the surrounding heavy vegetation. However, by building a small blind of leafy branches along this stream and quietly and patiently waiting in hiding many of them can be clearly observed at close range and even photographed. Although we constructed such a blind to be used later, the shimmering snowcapped cone of Mt. Fuji, free of clouds, as is rarely the case, lured us away to other photographic goals, and with frequent changes of both lenses and filters we captured its majestic likeness time and time again without tiring.

The afternoon was spent in search of bird nests in the vicinity of the shrine and at the very edge of the forest we came upon our first discovery. An aoji flushed from the ground directly in front of me and a brief search soon revealed a nest with five eggs just at the base of a small pine tree. The Japanese Bunting is one of the most common birds in this area and in the open, brushy areas and at the edge of the forest generally builds its nest directly on the ground. However, within the limits of the forest itself, it also often places it in low bushes.

As we pushed into the forest, a medium-sized bird was flushed from a nest on a bough of a deciduous tree approximately ten feet above the ground and silently disappeared among the surrounding trees. Its outstanding white rump at once identified it as the kakesu or Japanese Jay. In order to examine the contents of the nest I climbed a nearby tree to a height where I was able to look over into the structure and found it to hold four dark green eggs. Shaded light conditions of the deep forest necessitated the use of a flash bulb in order to take a picture of the nest and by the time I had satisfied myself with efforts along this line dusk was already closing in on that side of the mountain. As we returned to the trail the lonely, scale-descending call of the ōkonohzuku or Feather-toed Scops Owl drifted down from a grove of tall cryptomeria trees. Still somewhat tired out from my long train ride of the evening before, and with the shades of night settling down upon us, we hurried along the descending trail towards Subashiri and the promise of rest at the hotel.

At the very moment that we attained the road the last bus rolled by us in a cloud of dust and flushed a Tree Pipit from the bank near which we were standing. A search soon disclosed a nest containing five eggs. In color they had a white background and they were finely speckled with blackish-brown spots. This species usually nests in central Honshu at an elevation of 2600 to 9800 feet. I have, personally, observed it nesting in the Japanese Alps at the latter elevation and on the summit of Mt. Daisetsu (7500 ft) on the island of Hokkaido, the northernmost of the Japanese chain. It commonly winters in the vicinity of Kobe.

As we turned out footsteps down the road and towards Subashiri the nocturnal aerial call of the yotaka of Japanese Jungle Nighthawk was heard over the treetops and fields along the way.

At 9:30 the following day (26 May) Mr. Takada and I again entered the deciduous forest around Subashiri which echoed with the calls of the Gray and Brown Thrushes, Bulbul, Tomminck's Crowned Willow Warbler and Siberian Bluechat. It wasn't long before the first nest was spotted - a dry grass and mud affair of the Brown Thrush located in the fork of a konara or oak tree approximately fifteen feet above the ground level and well concealed with the green vines of Akebia quinata. Upon climbing the tree I found it only freshly constructed and still without eggs.

As we progressed into the woods, a White's ground thrush suddenly flew low over the forest floor before us and at once put us on the alert for a nest in the vicinity. This is a characteristic flight of this species and invariably indicates the presence of a nest in the immediate area. We were not disappointed and soon discovered the bowl-shaped structure in the fork of a medium-sized oak tree some nine feet above the ground. The outside was constructed entirely of green moss and

lined with dry pine needles. Four bright tan eggs lay nestled within. One was already chipped and the egg tooth of the nestling within could be observed struggling to break a way to freedom.

White's Ground Thrush is reasonable common on the lower slopes of Mt. Fuji and made the already scenically famous peak ornithologically famous as well when Mr. Katsumata, a collector of Alan Owston first collected its eggs some fifty years ago and thus first established its breeding range in Japan and in the whole world. This was a major event, particularly in the ornithological circles of Europe, since White's Ground Thrush had long been known as a rare straggler in that part of the world, its breeding range wholly unknown. Owston sent the eggs to Lord Rothschild in London and, as far as I know, they still remain in that collection which was subsequently purchased by the American Museum of Natural History in New York. It is of extreme pleasure to find the toratsugumi still holding its own on Mt. Fuji even though many of the other species have dwindled in numbers during the past decade or so with the cutting and gradual disappearance of the forested areas.

The koruri or Siberian Bluechat is another resident of the deep forest and generally builds its nest in a small depression along the bank of a trail. A male bird was heard singing from the surrounding heavy vegetation, which was a good indication that a nest was nearby. A search, however, failed to expose its whereabouts and we continued on our way.

As we emerged from the forest into a brushy clearing a Green Pheasant cock was suddenly flushed in front of us and with a sharp, startled cry of "ken-ken-ken!" shot out over the open slopes of the mountain. The sound of the strong, rapid wingbeats and the sight of the scintillating green "fire" of its upperparts seen against the distant snow-mantled cone of Mt. Fuji is a truly stirring sight and well explains the reason it has been chosen as the national bird of Japan. As we silently stood watching the spectacular scene, two hens suddenly flushed from nearly the same spot and followed the cock bird in hasty departure.

Upon crossing the clearing and once again entering the wooded section, a pair of mejiro drew our attention by anxiously flitting from branch to branch of a nearby tree and acting in general as though they might have had a nest close by. However, look as we might, it wasn't to be found. Two more nests of the Brown Thrush were discovered in this same area and since they were also only recently constructed and still without eggs, we drew the conclusion that it was still a bit early in the season for the actual eggs laying of this species.

The forest increased in density as we progressed till at last it was no longer penetrable and we were forced to turn off to our right and hit the Summit Trail. It was just at this point along the trail, called Ichirimatsu (lit. One Ri Pine. A ri is approx. two miles), where, just about a year ago, Col. L. R. Wolfe and I found the nest of a Temminck's Crowned Willow Warbler with five eggs. As we leisurely climbed along the trail to the First Station, the songs and calls of Brown Thrush, Davidson's Ground Thrush, Temminck's Crowned Willow Warbler, Little Cuckoo, Chinese Hawk Cuckoo and Himalayan Cuckoo greeted our ears from the thick forest on each side and added pleasant accompaniment to our advance.

To be continued

MARCH BIRD WALK. On March 9th, one dozen of us started off for Mokapu and had a fine sight of that amazing booby colony. The day was a bit overcast, cool and windy, but birding was good, even so. Just beyond the gate into the military reservation, we stopped at the lagoons and were rewarded by the sight of a flock of nine ducks in flight and three more busily paddling about near us. Two frigate birds soared high above. Two stilts were reported and one wandering tattler. Across the road, in the other lagoon, two noddy tern were fishing, concentrating on their work, displaying their full grace in turning and dipping low over the water.

After a stay in that spot we went on to Ulupau Head, and there were the boobies waiting for us, hundreds of them on their nests, blue-billed, red-footed. We were honored by the company of a young boy and he was much impressed by seeing a kiawe tree loaded with squatting boobies, like an old-fashioned nosegay. We vied with each other to find the best spot, nearest to a booby nest, and to approach it so as not to disturb the birds. No young were seen, but eggs could be glimpsed at the side of the crouching birds in some nests. Overhead the frigate birds soared, fourteen of them. But at the next glance upwards their number had increased greatly. Few birds seemed to be feeding in the waters below the southern part of the Head. The magnificent view held our attention, even so.

Mr. Norton had thoughtfully brought along his telescope, and all of us had a chance to look through it to Moku Manu Island. The air there was thick with birds, boobies, frigates.

Looking down toward the foot of the sheer cliff toward the Kaneohe shore some sooty tern were seen low over the waves. There must have been many at Moku Manu.

Coming back through the kiawe jungles, there was time to notice how innumerable were the plover, their calls in our ears most of the time, and many in flight. Just before leaving the reservation, seven turnstone rewarded our searching eyes.

Present were members Shields, Delamere, Rockafellow, Titcomb, Kilpatrick; and guests Brenda Bishop, Ethel Matheson, June Ishihara, Sumiko Yamagata, Edith Tominage and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Wallenger.

We thank Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Thomas for getting permission for us to visit Ulupau Head again.

M. TITCOMB

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APRIL BIRD WALK: April 6, Sunday. Meet at Library of Hawaii at 8 a.m. Route will be determined by weather conditions that day. Bring lunch, car(if possible).

APRIL MEETING: April 21st, at 7:30 p.m. Members of the Society are invited to come to the Library of Bishop Museum. Miss Hatch, whom we shall be glad to have a sight of, will lead the meeting. She chooses the marsh birds as worthy of attention. The birds will be there too! But not in flight. (Enter at rear of the Museum, on Kalihi Street side, middle of block between King and School Streets)