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MAUI BIRDS

By
Hannah Lou Bonsey

This is an enumeration of the birds we found on Maui during a survey, July 7 to September 11, 1951, and a discussion of the three areas visited most extensively: Kanaha Pond, Kahalui, Haleakala crater, the up-country pastures and forests.

On July 7th, Derwent Suthers and I took a bird trip to Kanaha Pond. While gazing at the birds from our side of the fence, a government official came by.

"Could we possibly go into the pond area?" I asked hopefully.

"For your purpose, yes." He saw our field glasses. We found a broken wire and squeezed through the fence.

We were surprised to find the golden plover still here, in both spring and fall plumage. We counted two wandering tattlers, saw a flock of ruddy turnstones, also in spring plumage, and noticed a number of sanderlings darting among the larger birds. To the noise of the Hawaiian stilts who circled overhead with cries as soon as we came, we walked further in to identify birds among the reeds. They were black-crowned night herons. A dozen herons flew, a few at a time, from the kiawe trees. Coots kept their distance in the water. Barred doves, mynah birds, English sparrows, and flocks of ricebirds busied themselves among the kiawe.

On September 5th, we made a second trip to watch the migrations. The same birds were present,all the plovers and turnstones now in fall plumage. Three Hawaiian ducks swam near by; fifteen more on the other side of the pond preened themselves, their buff breasts glowing in the sun.

We kept a sharp lookout for birds everywhere we went and found the greatest variety between Makawao at about 2000 ft., and higher up, the pastures of Haleakala. White-eyes, linnets, mynahs, English sparrows, and ricebirds were abundant at Makawao. The rock pigeon and lace-necked dove nested near the house. I was pleased to see a Brazilian cardinal on the road from Paia. A pair used to come to our house for grain daily. Skylarks sang at dawn and late afternoon. Occasionally, a pueo (Hawaiian owl) soared over the pasturelands, and button quail and pheasants constantly flew up before our mounts as we rode the higher pastures. Songs of the Chinese thrush and Pekin nightingale were heard continuously from the woods.

In July we saw cardinals from Makawao to Kula, and a pair of mocking birds at the Kula Sanatorium as well as three ruddy turnstones. Often when we went by a stream in Makawao a black-crowned night heron flew up. I was surprised to flush one in the

Waikamoi Forest. In the native forests were amakihi, apapane, iiwi, and the Maui creeper, besides the white-eye and Pekin nightingale. We had a glimpse of some strawberry finches in a gulch at Olinda. High up in the National Park, two California valley quail with three young marched across the road.

The plover appeared up country around August 24th. On the 23rd I saw one in the crater, and on the 24th a flock of about forty. Mynah birds and linnets were at the Holua and Paliku cabins in the crater. At Paliku and in the forests over the ridges were the white-eye, Pekin nightingale, iiwi, amakihi, and apapane. The white-tailed tropic bird soared among the cliffs, the pheasant, pueo and skylark lived in the meadows.

During many years of crater-going, I had heard the strangest noises from the Kapalaoa and Holua ridges at night. The sounds were light calls - "0-0-0-we!" - drawn out on the first syllable and rising to a short bark on the second. One moonlight night, to investigate, Derwent and I grabbed a battery light and climbed the ridge behind Holua. The cliffs were silent for a while. Then the noises started again, one or two birds at first, then many joined in. The eerie chorus rose and fell, moans, short barks, and rumblings like a tractor engine. A dark, pigeon-sized bird flew past us to the cliff and startled us with a loud "tk-ooe-we."

The old timers in Makawao say that the birds are "ocean birds that nest in the cliffs." Another down-country person agreed, and said that they alight in her yard during migration. Others say that the birds are the pueo. But the call of the pueo is different, and it nests in burrows in grasslands, not in cliffs. We are inclined to believe that it is a petrel, probably Bulwer's petrel, as the description of the call coincides. I went out at 1:30 in the night, and the birds were still chorusing. At 4:30 they were silent - already gone to sea? Derwent and I searched the Kapalaoa cliffs a little in the daytime with no results.

At Hana, Derwent and I were surprised and thrilled to find a pectoral sandpiper at the Seven Pools. It was unmistakable, its white belly contrasting sharply with its brownish streaked breast. Six Hawaiian terns with black bodies and white foreheads flew from a lava islet at the Waianapanapa black sand beach. They circled several times, then two alighted again, and one flew to the rocks near the lava tube. Droppings on the rock islet gave evidence that the birds nested there perhaps.

In closing, I want to remark that I was impressed at seeing the white-eye in all types of locality - from the wilds of dry Makena, throughout all the tropical forests, and in the highest forests on Haleakala. The mynah has an almost equally wide range, for a small number are in the crater itself. The linnet was fairly common in most places, especially in the upper reaches.

List of Birds Seen

1. Maui amakihi	rain forests in upper altitudes	common
2. Apapane	upper altitudes in forests	common
3. Brazilian cardinal	Paia to Makawao	rare
4. Kentucky cardinal	sea level, spreading through Kula	common
5. Hawaiian coot	Kanaha Pond	common
6. Maui creeper	Wakamoi forests	occacional
7. Barred dove	lower and middle altitudes	common
8. Lace-necked dove	Makawao	common
9. Hawaiian duck	Kanaha Pond	18 (estimated)
10. Strawberry finch	Olinda	one
11. Black-crowned night heron	Kanaha Pond, Makawao, Waikamoi	common
12. Iiwi	Waikamoi to inside crater	occasional
13. Skylark	Makawao to inside crater	common
14. Linnet	high altitudes, sometimes sea level	common

15. Mocking bird	Kula	common
16. Mynah	everywhere, except near cabins	common
17. Pekin nightingale	gulches and forests everywhere	common
18. Pueo	Makawao to inside crater	occasional
19. Petrels	Kapalaoa and Holua at night, over the sea at Hana?	numerous
20. Ring-necked pheasant	Makawao to inside crater	common
21. Rock pigeon	Makawao to Kula	common
22. Pacific golden plover	Kanaha Pond, up country to crater during migration	-
23. Button quail	Kula to Haleakala	common
24. California valley quail	Haleakala	one
25. Ricebird	sea level to Kula	common
26. Sanderling	Kanaha Pond	small number, common
27. Pectoral sandpiper	Seven Pools, Hana	one
28. English sparrow	sea level to Kula	very common
29. Hawaiian stilt	Kanaha Pond	common
30. Wandering tattler	Kanaha Pond to Kula	common
31. Hawaiian tern	Waianapanapa beach	six
32. Chinese thrush	Makawao to Kula	occasional
33. White-tailed tropic bird	crater, near Kaupo village	three
34. Ruddy turnstone	Kanaha Pond to Haleakala	common
35. White-eye	sea level to highest land where trees grow	common

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AKUNE, WINTER HOME OF THE CRANES OF JAPAN

By C. M. Fennell

Akune is a small, peaceful little village lying along the coast of the East China Sea, in Kagoshima Prefecture, in the extreme southwestern part of Kyushu, southern big island of Japan. We kept putting off our visit to Akune till the latter part of February, 1951. By that time the majority of the cranes had left there wintering grounds and begun their long flight across the Tsushima Straits and up the Korean peninsula to nesting grounds in Manchuria and Siberia. However, we were rewarded for the effort of making the trip by being able to observe the stragglers which remained, seemingly reluctant to start the northward flight.

Akune has long been famous as the wintering ground of the cranes, although there seems to be no written record as to when they first started coming to the area. Even now, written records do not seem to be maintained as to arrival and departure dates. I found it difficult to obtain any scientific data on the activities of the birds. I did learn, however, from the station master, Mr. Ogami, the Chief of Police, Mr. Minami, and another well-informed policeman, Mr. Hashiguchi, that the nabe tsuru, or hooded crane (Grus monacha), is the most common species that frequents the area. Before the last war it used to winter at Akune to the number of about 3000 birds. The town used to receive a special allotment of funds from the government in Tokyo for the purpose of feeding and protecting the birds. The food provided was principally wheat and a species of eel-like fish called dojo (loach) with which the ditches and canals running through the rice fields were kept well stocked. During the war the subsidy was discontinued and many of the cranes were trapped and shot for food. With this sudden turn of events the numbers of wintering birds quickly decreased from 3000 to approximately 300, at which number it still remains today. The comeback is slow and apparently the cranes do not easily forget the days of persecution and danger. However, Akune is once again receiving a small allotment of money from Tokyo for protecting and feeding - 30,000 yen ($83.33) for 1951. The cranes are in great demand for zoological parks all over the world and even now a few are trapped for this purpose. Straw rope nooses are placed in a baited

rice field, the ends leading to a straw hut in which the trapper patiently waits until an unsuspecting bird steps into a noose. A quick jerk of the rope and the bird is caught.

According to my local guides, most of the cranes spend the night in the rice fields near Akune, but feed during the day on the more extensive, open rice fields near the little village of Arisaki, about 5 miles northeast of Akune. They leave the Akune fields just at daybreak and return in the evening, as darkness enfolds the landscape. During our two days stay, Mr. Hashiguchi kindly guided us, morning and evening, to the outskirts of the town to see the departure and arrival of the few birds left in the area. It was still quite dark, with a bright moon overhead, as we reached the edge of the rice field one February morning, shivering from both excitement and chill. At 6:40 the first group of twelve hooded cranes leisurely and silently flapped their wings overhead, flying in single file, and disappeared over the low wooded ridge in the direction of Arisaki. Five others soon followed, then three more brought up the rear. No colors or color patterns could be seen, only the majestic, graceful outlines of outstretched necks and legs in silhouette against the cold, gray dawn. Indeed, after it was all over it seemed as though we had seen a flight of winged ghosts and were awakening from some beautiful dream. The silence of the birds added to this fanciful illusion.

After breakfast at our hotel, the mayor's private car called for us. In company with the same guides we drove across the low, wooded mountains to Arisaki to observe and photograph the birds on their feeding grounds. When he had come into the vicinity the driver suddenly slammed on the brakes and pointed to a distant group of white, motionless birds which I first thought to be plumed egrets. However, as we slowly approached over the flooded stubble fields, frequent glances through the field glasses revealed more sturdily shaped birds with long, broad, flattened bills. That sudden surge of excitement and thrill took hold of me as it always does when I find a species new to me. I realized that I was beholding for the first time in my life that avian rarity, the Japanese spoonbill (Platalea leucorodia). A total of seventeen birds comprised the flock and they all stood resting, single-footedly, with as much as possible of their unwieldy bills tucked under their wings, apparently dozing and resting after a hearty breakfast. Their legs, much heavier than those of any heron, and knotted at the knee-joint, added to the grotesque appearance already given by the paddle-like bill and stocky body form. There were fourteen in a compact group by themselves and three others a short distance away, in company with three hooded cranes and a single gray heron. I slowly approached, both still and movie cameras in readiness, stopping every few steps to bend over and pluck at a few strands of grass or rice stubble, hoping to give an imitation of a Japanese rice farmer at work. This act seemed to work exceedingly well and they permitted me to approach within some 500 feet before they roused themselves and leisurely took wing, flew several hundred feet and again alighted on the ground. The cranes and gray heron were far more wary and took flight long before the spoonbills, never relaxing their vigilance from the moment we got out of the car. After alighting in their new location, the majority of the spoonbills started to feed in the shallow water of the small ditches throughout the field, following one another in a single file in small groups and sweeping their bills back and forth in a sideways motion through the water as though straining it through their mandibles. It gave them a head-wagging, sagacious appearance so humorous that it was all I could do to steady the field glasses.

As I watched, a hayabusa, or peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus), swooped in from the east over the heads of the spoonbills and scattered them into flight. With necks outstretched in crane fashion, they soon regrouped themselves and took off over the fields to alight once more approximately a quarter mile away. The falcon settled on a grassy dyke near by and, without moving, gave alert attention to studying me for several minutes. Only when I attempted to approach did he take wing and leisurely disappear in the distance, out over the stubble fields. He seemed to have no intention of attacking the spoonbills as he swooped in over them but appeared to take a playful delight

in just scaring them. Actually, it quite amazed me to see a flock of birds almost five or six times the size of the falcon react in such a panicky manner. All birds remained absolutely silent, even when flushed into flight by the falcon.

Residents of the Akune area appeared to know but little about the habits of the spoonbill, and indeed were unable to give me any definite information about it.

(To be continued)

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REVIEW:

THE POPULATION OF THE WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER (Puffinus pacificus)
By Robert Cushman Murphy
(American Museum Novitates, No. 1512, 1951)

Dr. Murphy's paper covers all populations of this shearwater, which is found throughout the tropical and subtropical Pacific and Indian Oceans. It is unknown in the Atlantic or in areas where surface ocean current temperatures are less than 20 degrees centigrade. A related species, Puffinus bulleri, breeds only in New Zealand.

Puffinus pacificus has been known by various names - at least a dozen of specific or subspecific rank. Confusion has been increased by its wide range, variation in size, and the occurrence of three distinct plumage phases: dark, white-breasted, and an intermediate, masked plumage. A study of some 400 specimens has convinced Dr. Murphy that all belong to one species, and that only two subspecies can be distinguished.

"The Kermadec Islands have been accepted as the type locality of the species, and therefore of the subspecies pacificus." This subspecies is distinguished by slightly larger average size and heavier bill from Puffinus pacificus chlororhynchus Lesson, to which all the other wedge-tailed shearwaters are assigned. The name Puffinus pacificus cuneatus, by which the bird is known throughout the Hawaiian chain, is regarded as a synonym of chlororhynchus, as is also Puffinus knudseni. Dr. Murphy discusses the type locality of cuneatus - Krusenstern Reef - with the conclusion that it must have stood for some island in the northwestern Hawaiian chain. What happened was that the collector of certain shearwaters, Captain Henry James Snow, was a sealer who made raids in areas supposedly closed to him. Some localities of birds he collected were given as "Krusenstern Reef", "South of Lisiansky", or "forty degrees east of the Bonin Islands". In 1923, this mythical island was sought, finally declared non-existent, and erased from the map! But Captain Snow did procure some seals, doubtless the Hawaiian seal. Laysan and Lisiansky were forbidden territory, hence it is likely that his landings there were veiled by the name "Krusenstern Reef" on labels of birds collected.

Dr. Murphy states that the numerous other subspecies cannot be separated on the basis of size, and that their distinguishing characters as defined in descriptions are such that "in nearly all instances it would be impossible to identify examples of the putative races unless the respective breeding grounds were known." He adds, however, that "Despite this fact, the dimensional characteristics of discrete island populations have reality. Some of them can even be quantitatively expressed as clines of increasing size, extending from equatorial regions toward higher latitudes of both Northern and Southern Hemispheres, as though fulfilling the requirements of Bergmann's rule. A similar cline in the size of one or more characters appears to run from west to east through topical areas of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, ultimately turning northward towards Hawaii." "The more subspeciation has been studied, particularly among island organisms, the more we have realized the importance of quantitative criteria of differentiation. In the present paper, the '75 per cent rule', as defined by Amadon (1949), has been taken as a standard, or at least a point of departure."

Although offering no clue to subspecies, the plumage phases also have distinctive distribution. In the Indian Ocean and the southern part of the Pacific, plumage is wholly dark. In the North Pacific white breasted examples become common. In the northeastern Pacific (Revilla Gigedo Islands, off Mexico) dark and white breasted birds occur in the ratio of 2 to 1. In the northwestern Pacific (Bonin Islands and Formosa) they approach 100 per cent white breasted. In Hawaii, and other areas between, dark phases are found, but white breasted predominate. One white breasted bird was found among those of dark plumage on Canton Island by the Whitney Expedition (credited to Beck, but he was not on the "France" in the Phoenix Islands). In addition, a third phase has intermediate, "masked white" ventral plumage. Dr. Murphy suggests that the several color phases are probably examples of polymorphism, likely to vary temporally as well as spacially, and he considers them of no taxonomic importance. There is no notable difference in size between the sexes.

Notes are given on life cycle and movements. "Information...indicates that the larger shearwaters spend approximately two-thirds of the year in close association with the breeding station and the other third at sea. In higher latitudes...absent four months, more or less. In an intertropical belt, where migration among many species is less extensive...not uncommon to find some members of a population making use of their nesting shelters even during the non-breeding season." A tabular illustration is given of the variation in life cycle between picked areas north and south of the equator: Hawaii and Revilla Gigedo vs. Kermadec and Norfolk Islands. Colonies close to the equator seem to agree with the regime of the Southern Hemisphere. Movements seem to vary with the northern and southern seasons. Tables of measurement are given for adults and eggs; a distribution map and a bibliography are included.

E. H. Bryan, Jr.

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FIELD TRIP, October 14, 1951

BIRD WALK TO ULUPAU HEAD AND TO KAELEPULU POND. Through the courtesy of Lt. Col. P. W. Melton, U. S. Army, the Hawaii Audubon Society was able to obtain a pass permitting members to visit the booby colony at Ulupau Head on Oahu on Sunday, October 14th. Elepaio readers may remember that during the war a colony of red-footed boobies took up their abode among the gun emplacements on Kaneohe Naval Air Station, which includes Ulupau Head, and the colony has remained there.

About thirty members showed up at the gate and were processed by the Marine on duty a little before nine in the morning. It was a bright, clear morning with good conditions for observing the birds. The party stopped at the ponds and observed turnstone, tattler, plover and stilt there before making the ascent of Ulupau Head.

At the Head we found hundreds of birds nesting. Many adult as well as many full-grown but immature birds were flying about. The larger number were on the nests, however, the eggs could sometimes be seen; only a few newly hatched young were found. There seemed to be no young at an in-between stage.

Frigate birds and Hawaiian tern flew among the boobies; the air seemed constantly filled with wheeling, darting, soaring birds. On Moku Manu, many hundreds of yards away, the rocks looked patchily snow-covered; the birds were innumerable on the nests and flying about.

The estimated count for the Ulupau Head booby colony and the Kaneohe NAS ponds was provided by Grenville Hatch, as follows: 75 stilt; 200 plover; 75 turnstone; 12 tattler; 14 Hawaiian tern; 25 frigate birds; 500 red-footed booby; 1 brown booby.

Part of our group went on to Kaelepulu Pond after leaving Ulupau Head, and were rewarded with the astonishing sight of the pond being literally covered with birds. Here the estimated count was: 1000 pintail duck; 500 plover; 300 turnstone; 150 stilt; 12 tattler.

It will comfort those members who missed this excursion to know that many camera fans were busy. When films are processed you may have the pleasure of seeing most of what we saw.

Charlotta Hoskins

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NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: Sunday, November 11, 1951, to Leahi Native Garden. Meet at the entrance to the Honolulu Zoo at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch, water, weeder or trowel (if you have any), and car (if possible).

Leahi Native Garden is Mr. George C. Munro's project. For more detailed information on this work see Elepaio, Volume 12, Number 2, August 1951.

The Hawaii Audubon Society members realize the importance of this type of project and have decided that the November bird walk to be an arbor day. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to share with Mr. Munro the excitement and happiness of realizing a beautiful dream.

MEETING: Monday, November 19, 1951, Auditorium, Library of Hawaii, at 7:30 p.m. Mr. J. Donald Smith, Wild Life Biologist of the Division of Fish and Game of the Territorial Board of Agriculture and Forestry, will talk on the "Nene Project".

Nene, Hawaiian goose, is nearly extinct, and Mr. Smith has done considerable research on this project. Those interested in wildlife conservation will find this talk to be very stimulating.

Following this program a short business meeting will be held.

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