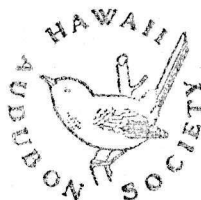


THE ELEPAIO

*Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society*



*For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii*

Volume 13, Number 12

June, 1953

DUCK BOTULISM AT KAELEPULU POND, KAILUA, OAHU

by

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Fish and Game, Honolulu, and
Paul L. Breese, Director Honolulu Zoo

During early December, 1952, personnel of the Division of Fish and Game engaged in duck banding at Kaelepulu Pond began to encounter a number of sick and dying ducks. By the middle of December the situation had worsened so badly that the banding program was converted to a rescue program, and with the Honolulu Zoo as a partner, an attempt was made to save as many of those birds as possible. A fish and game rescue crew would make about three trips weekly to Kaelepulu, catching all the sick birds that could be caught, and then bringing these birds to the Honolulu Zoo where they were given good food and rest. Since the botulism poisoning was doubtless in a good proportion of the natural foods at Kaelepulu, it was hoped that a transfer to another locality together with a change in diet would effectuate a cure.

From the beginning of the duck rescue program through January, 1953, some 357 birds were delivered to the Honolulu Zoo. An estimated 65 per cent of these recovered. During this same period, some 636 dead ducks were counted at Kaelepulu Pond.

The species composition of the rescued birds is given in the table below. It is of interest in that the proportion of species is obviously rather different than that observed at Kaelepulu; those species whose feeding habits would expose them to botulism would be expected to occur more abundantly among the sick birds.

SPECIES COMPOSITION OF
SICK BIRDS TAKEN AT KAELEPULU POND

<u>Species</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Pintail Duck (<i>Anas acuta tzitzihua</i>)	69.1
Shoveller Duck (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>)	19.0
Baldpate Duck (<i>Mareca americana</i>)	3.5
Hawaiian Coot: Alea kea (<i>Fulica americana alai</i>)	5.1
Hawaiian Coot: Alae ahi (<i>Fulica americana alai</i>)	1.0
Hawaiian Stilt (<i>Himantopus himantopus knudseni</i>)	1.3
Scaup Duck (<i>Nyroca</i> sp.)	0.3
Aukuu (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli</i>)	0.3
Green winged Teal (<i>Anas crecca carolinensis</i>)	0.3
Buffle Head Duck (<i>Bucephala albeola</i>)	0.3

One rather interesting observation resulting from the duck rescue work was concerned with the recovery of bands from both dead birds and those deposited at the Honolulu Zoo. Some 268 ducks were banded at Kaelepulu during the early winter months of 1952. Only eleven of these particular bands were found on the dead birds at Kaelepulu and only two on those birds picked up alive and brought to the Zoo. Additionally, some five bands were found which were probably of mainland origin. This relatively low number of bands recovered through the examination of sick and dead ducks would imply that most of the banded ducks were not at Kaelepulu at the time of the outbreak of botulism. In turn this may simply indicate that a duck which had been trapped and banded associated this disturbing experience with Kaelepulu and sought therefore security in another pond. Or, possibly, the duck population at Kaelepulu was fluid, with some leaving as others arrived. It is not suggested that the new visitors to Kaelepulu were new to Hawaii or that those that left were leaving Hawaii. There were some scattered field observations which reinforced this interpretation; it was noted that large changes in the apparent number of ducks would occur even from day to day. Since a number of banded ducks were trapped twice or even three times during the banding program, it is perhaps possible that the operation of banding did not, in itself, cause the departure of ducks, and in such a case it may be more probable that the Kaelepulu duck population was a fluid one.

This outbreak of duck botulism was apparently for Hawaii a rather unique situation. There was an unusually large number of ducks in Hawaii during the winter of 1952-1953, and aside from Kaelepulu Pond, no other occurrence of botulism was noted. Additionally, as far as could be ascertained, no such outbreak has been reported in the past.

THE MEJIRO from

Afoot and Afield, by Helen Shiras Baldwin.
(Appeared in Hilo Tribune Herald, Dec. 4, 1949)

Travellers in any part of Hawaii, except in the driest and most barren regions, will be cheered along their way by a little malihini bird who has made these islands his happy home. He is the white-eye or mejior, known to the tech-

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nically minded as *Zosterops palpebrosus japonicus*, according to G. C. Munro, or as *Simplex simplex* according to the data furnished the Hilo Chamber of Commerce at the time of the bird's liberation.

This confusion of names does not disturb the light hearted little mejiro in the least. He flits among the bushes or darts from tree to tree with a swift angular flight, or perches on some twig or telephone line to sing his gay syncopated little song, shaking his wings and tail and jerking his head from side to side in time to his music, as happily when called by one name as another. No doubt he is just as well pleased by the local name of "jitterbug" which some local people have given him as by any other.

Certainly any real bugs in the mejiro's neighborhood should get the jitters when he comes near, for the mejiro feeds mostly upon small insects such as tiny flies, ants, caterpillars, mosquitoes, mealy bugs, scale insects, leaf rollers and leaf hoppers.

Since many of these insects are serious agricultural pests, the mejiro's human friends should make him doubly welcome in their gardens, even if he does help himself to ripe figs, papaias or cherries if he craves a little change in diet. The mejiro does not eat fruit of marketable value; but soft slightly over-ripe fruit left on the tree makes him an excellent salad or dessert.

Like many another laborer here, the mejiro came to this island by request, was at once sent into the field and given a definite locality in which to work. A total of 252 birds of both sexes were purchased by the funds of the second Buy a Bird Campaign and were liberated in groups of 20 pairs each at Papaaloa, 29 Miles Oloo, Waimea, Kohala Puu Waawaa, Kaumana and Pahala, on June 19, 1937, and have long ago more than repaid the \$4.50 per pair they cost.

For the mejiro is more than a mere insect eradicator. He is an entertainer and singer of more than ordinary bird ability, agile and beautiful to watch as well as to listen to. He is a trim neat little bird about the size of a ricebird, as green of body as the leaves of the trees and bushes he likes to live among, with a patch of yellow sunlight on his throat and ashy gray underparts. His tribal mark is a round white ring about each alert dark eye.

Though both sexes and the young look very much alike, there is a considerable difference in the amount of yellow or the extent of the white eye-ring on individual birds. In some specimens the yellow extends well down on the abdomen and tinges the green on head and neck till the bird looks almost as yellow as green. In other specimens the yellow is limited to a small chin patch and the bird is definitely a gray and green one. Also, in some birds the eye-ring is wide and conspicuous while in others it is narrow and hardly noticeable.

Whether this difference is due to sex or age or to a range of variations within the species such as is found in chickens and pigeons, the writer does not know, but is inclined to believe the latter is the true explanation. Grayish birds can sometimes be found singing as lustily as yellowish ones. Fledglings which still have short immature plumage are sometimes quite yellow. This is a matter which local bird students may take up and study to their satisfaction.

The mejiro has songs and so many call notes that he has a language of his own with considerable vocabulary. His best song is a high pitched warble, somewhat like that of the song sparrow of the mainland but more syncopated in rhythm. Another common call is a loud "pling" like a high note plucked on a stringed instrument. This is given in flight and is probably used to keep in touch with mates or other members of a flock, for the mejiro is a sociable bird who likes the company of other birds of his kind and seldom if ever fights with them.

When the birds are flitting and gliding about the trees and bushes, they keep up a conversational whispered twitter, a language so soft and beautifully modulated that it can almost be put into words. Unfortunately most people hardly notice it.

The nest is small, compact, beautifully made and hung from forked branches in such a way that it is partly swung from above and partly supported from below. Usually four eggs are laid for a brood and three or more broods are raised in a year. The initial 252 birds have increased until now the mejiro is one of the more abundant birds on this island.

JUNIOR BIRD LOVERS

On Saturday, April 11, 1953, an overcast morning, a group of Girl Scouts of Kailua went to Mokapu Peininsula for the purpose of observing birds in their natural state. Under the leadership of Mrs. Arthur Powlison, Mrs. Warren Clark, Mrs. Campbell Stevenson and Mrs. Waldron Barrere, the following girls made the trip: Sally Ackerman, Sarah Ralston, Cynthia Gillette, Mary Wood, Betty Baker, Gay Stevenson, Dale Stevenson, Judy Jirikowic, Kay Powell, Vivaleen Chapman, Daniele Barrere and Michele Barrere.

On Ulupau Head we saw a flock of about 12 sooty terns, 6 female frigate birds, 2 male frigates, and, nesting in the trees, hundreds of red-footed boobies and 3 brown boobies on the wing. We were able to approach to within three feet of two nesting boobies, and also to inspect two other nests with an egg in each.

Driving up to Ulupau Head sparrows, plovers, cardinals, and rice birds were seen by all the party.

At Nuupia Pond, from 10:30 to 11:30 A.M., these birds were seen: 2 wandering tattlers, 5 (dark-coated) golden plovers, 20 ruddy turnstones, 50/ Hawaiian coots, 100/ Hawaiian stilts.

This trip was made to help the girls identify birds, a requirement for the Girl Scout Bird Badge, and would not have been the success it was without the knowledge of Mrs. Polison and Mrs. Clark, both Audubon Society members of long standing. If members of the Society could have heard the girls express their thus-awakened interest in birds, it might be an incentive to offer such assistance to other Scouts--all potential members of the Society!

Dorothy Barrere

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(The Honolulu Audubon Society is delighted to know of interest in birds awakened in the young. How can the Society carry on if new members do not join, and how can there be new members if interest is not created? Response to Mrs. Barre's urgency will be made. Editor)

REVIEW

The Massachusetts Audubon Society, in its "Blue Heron Wildlife Series", has achieved the publication of two more booklets about birds: "Birds of Massachusetts" and "Birds of the Everglades". Each extends to 15 pages only, has five color illustrations, including the cover, and several other black and white illustrations, all by that master of clarity as well as beauty of illustration, Roger Tory Peterson. The text is by Henry H. Collins, Jr. The Booklets are aimed at satisfying some of the questions of amateurs as well as leading them on to greater knowledge. The descriptions of the birds are designedly meager, of course, being limited to answers of what might be first questions. The birds are listed under such captions as "Birds of Swamp and Marsh", "Birds of Sky and Water", "Birds of Coast and Ocean". Each booklet has an insert, "When You See a New Bird", which tells how to go about finding what bird you have seen, what characteristics to record first. At the end is a short bird quiz, a test of how much attention has been paid to the preceding pages, and list of where the birds may be seen most surely. This last is a most helpful idea.

The format is attractive, and altogether these should be extremely helpful and popular booklets.

Hawaii is not lacking in its bird aids, but it would be gratifying--when color illustration is within range--to flatter the Massachusetts Audubon Society by getting out something as effective.

Editor

LETTER FROM W. R. Donaghho

News from our old friend, Walter Donaghho, is always of great interest. Excerpts from a recent letter to Miss Hatch, from Madison, Wisconsin, follow:

I received all the Elepaios and was very glad to get them. I have just spent the last 24 hours reading them! I am still keenly interested in Hawaii and its birds, although my actual doings may take me far away. However, it is always my hope to come back and work on several research problems that are screaming to be done...

My films are mainly geographical, with, of course, emphasis on wildlife, as long as they are about Africa. For whoever heard of an African film without wildlife! I now have four which I hope to bring to Hawaii next Fall or Winter, if I can be at least assured that a program can be arranged upon arrival...

Africa is a paradise of birds indeed. There are many thoughts that come to my mind as I go back over my trip there. Of rolling savannahs, or veldt, covered with scattered, flat-topped Acacias, under which browse or graze many kinds of animals: zebra, wildebeeste, jibgoni, the lovely red impala, the cute Thompson's gazelle and the larger Grant's gazelle. A giraffe stands over in the middle distance looking at you with a look of contempt. Then, snubbing you, he lumbers off, his neck lowering and raising as he bounds along. Birds

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are numerous. Hornbills of several kinds call like chickens, a "ka, ka, ka, ka." Shrikes, grey lorries, or "go away" birds, that actually cry "go way" (actually ooo-waaahh); a flock of mousebirds or brown colies, long-tailed birds the size of a cardinal and with a crest. They resemble pyrruloxias somewhat. They fly out of a thorn thicket and disappear into another. A tree adorned with lovely imperial starlings, lovely blue, red-breasted birds. A large flock of guinea fowl runs in front of me, and with a whirr of wings makes off through the trees. This in turn stirs of a couple of francolins, or partridge. And the birds one hears but can't find! The anvil bird, that keeps up a monotonous note resembling an anvil or a steel spike being hit with a mallet. Another that resembles a stringed instrument. It plays one note and repeats, then the note gets lower and lower. A tree nearby may be festooned with weaver bird nests. And doves! Many, many doves. The thorn scrub rings with doves. Turtle doves resemble the African ring-necked dove-- which I think they are. Laughing doves, mournful doves, and others. Overhead Batelour eagles, seemingly tailless, wheel about in the blue sky.

The open plains, rolling, stretch away as far as the eye can see, covered with a scattered covering of whistling acacia, a low shrub with large thorns in which ants have bored holes. The winds are supposed to whistle through these, thus giving the plant its name. I never heard any.

Plains are covered with animals, all kinds of animals. Many hawks, falcons and kites, white-fronted and black-shouldered kites, large red-tailed jackal buzzards, harriers (related to the marsh-hawk and somewhat resembling it), eagles. At dusk, as you speed along the roads, you flush grass owls, and nightjars, as well as an occasional dik-kop, or stone plover.

The lovely deep blue, red-winged louries of the mountain forests of wild olive and podocarpus trees, all festooned with bearded moss, and with a dense understory of bamboo. The lovely iridescent blue, long-tailed Johnston's sunbird that lives only in the moorlands of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya, and sips nectar from the lobelia blossoms. The weird cry of an eagle owl during the night at Mt. Kenya.

Great flocks of hundreds of Black Storks were seen in a meadow in Central Tanganyika. They were migrating to the northeast, and this was a temporary rest stop. Flocks of the lovely Crowned Crane (with the equally pretty name of Kavirondo Crane) in marshy spots at various places in Kenya, Tanganyika or Uganda. Lovely birds, with their crowns of "straw."

Great numbers of lovely pink flamingoes around the shores of Lake Nakuru. They form a wide pink band along the shore here as well as a Lake Man-yara in Tanganyika, although the flamingoes are not as common. But other birds are far more numerous: wood ibis, Great White egrets and Yellowbilled egrets, maribou storks, great numbers of lapwings, Blacksmith plover and other shorebirds.

And the memorable trip up the Nile. A great bird paradise... (a long list of birds follows) Large flocks of crowned cranes on savannahs; at ponds, crowned cranes, knob billed ducks... Country is mostly open grassland, park-like, with scattered trees. East bank is more open. Literally millions of waxbills in a grove of trees. The birds rose upon our approach and flew through and over the trees in dense clouds again as high as the trees. Sometimes these dense clouds would swoop down over the water. It reminded me of a locust swarm, or of a snow storm with swirling snow.

In the Sudd. (?) and on Lake Albert the snakebird became common, as well as the Jacana, the latter especially so on Lake Kioga, where it ran about over the lily pads. Once we passed a large colony of Carmine bee-eaters in a steep bank of the river. A large, long-tailed and lovely bird of beautiful carmine and cobalt blue, it nests in holes that it builds in the riverbank, along with the pied kingfisher.

A great place, Africa. Of course, I could go on with the animals, with the great numbers of hippo in the Victoria Nile and beaches of crocs nearby so covered with them that they are piled two deep. Herds of elephant. Stalking buffalo and rhino... The thrilling night spent in a treetop hotel with running water and flushing "waterclosets" near a jungle waterhole, and seeing five rhino, sixteen elephants, and eighteen buffalo at the hole, all at once, and all bathed in lovely moonlight. How I thrilled when my first rhino came out of the forest at this spot! To say nothing of my first elephant! I still never tire of seeing rhino, I am fascinated by them, so prehistoric! And the cute little dik-dik, of gazelle no larger than a fox terrier, with lovely eyes.

Well, I hope I can get home with my films. I have much to show!

Very sincerely yours,

Walter R. Donaghho

(All of us will be eager to see those films and see a reflection of the great pleasure this African journey was to him when we meet him again. Editor)

HAWAIIAN BIRD PROTECTION

In the Honolulu Advertiser of April 19th an excellent account appeared of the Honolulu Zoo's efforts, under Paul L. Breese, Director, together with the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, to build up the numbers of the Hawaiian goose (nene) and the Hawaiian duck (koloa). There is also under consideration, help to be given to the Laysan teal, found on Laysan Island only, and estimated to be at the low count of about three dozen. Mr. Breese is quoted as saying, "Technically this bird is protected, but actually there is almost no policing of this remote island. The entire population of these non-migratory, trusting little ducks could easily be wiped out by the crew of a fishing vessel using them for food." The preliminary plan is to get a few pairs of these birds and give them place at the Honolulu Zoo, where they might be sufficiently at home to breed. Then the island of Laysan could again be populated with them, if they should disappear there and the birds would not be extinct. The nene population is now about 30. The koloa population is "a few hundred" on Kauai and about two dozen wild birds on Oahu. The nene is on Hawaii only.

Koloa have been raised at the Zoo since 1947 and an experiment of freeing some at a likely spot is underway at Hilo, another is contemplated at Kahalui, Maui. The experiment is being watched closely, the Fish and Game Division of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, under Mr. Vernon Brock, cooperating by "observing the birds closely and supervising their protection."

FIELD TRIP

To Poamoho, April 26th. In our memories are the beautiful purple of the koutain orchids among Lindsaya ferns, the bright scarlet of lehua. Other colors

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blended well with the surrounding greens of the forest shrubs and trees.

The air was filled with whistles, chirps, calls, and twitters of the feathered "residents." Bush warblers gave forth their loud, clear whistles. They moved quickly from place to place, but always beyond our vision, though much time was spent trying to locate them.

The day was warm, but in the upper reaches, the mountain breezes were cool. We were happy to be on the trail.

Mynahs, sparrows, plovers, barred doves and rice birds were observed on the lower approach to the trail, but white-eyes, elepaos, amakihi, apapane and Liothrix rewarded us for penetrating to the higher elevations.

B. Kuhns

Bird count:

Chinese thrush, 1; Apapane, 73; Bush warblers, 3; Amakihi, 10; Garrulax (heard), 3; Elepaio, 5.

Added Notes: One group, that in Mace Norton's car, did further birding. At Wheeler Field two sky larks were seen, one a young and unsophisticated little fellow, who had ventured outside the fence, and stayed close to the visitors. At the ponds in Moanalua garden, 2 gallinule, 5 night heron and 15 coot were observed.

A TRIP TO MOKULUA

On May 3rd, a small group, who had received permission from the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, made the trip to Mokulua. As the boat neared the islands, dozens of sooty tern were observed in the air, with noddies and boobies, although the latter were in smaller numbers. Our pass was a special one, enabling us to go above the fence which marks the boundary for the fishermen who are permitted to land upon the island. We explored the larger of the two islands quite thoroughly, hoping to find the rare Hawaiian duck, which breeds upon the island. We were disappointed in this, finding only wedge-tailed shearwaters, hundreds of them, in burrows on the slope above the beach. As we ate lunch under a kiawe tree, we watched two affectionate shearwaters, who alternately moaned, rubbed bills together, and gently probed the feathers of the other's neck and throat, completely oblivious of the onlookers, who were within a few feet of them.

One perplexing question - why are there no terns upon Mokulua? To the human invader, it appears to be quite as well suited to tern life as Rabbit Island, but Mr. Munro says there never have been terns there to his knowledge. They flew past the island in a more or less constant stream, with never a glance that way.

On the return home, we visited Kaelepulu pond, where Hans Meinhardt pointed out a stilt's nest with four pointed eggs, of which we shall hear more later. Hans has much information on these nests, and has promised an article on his findings. We looked at Rabbit Island through the sport scope, finding it covered with terns.

Another stop at Kuapa yielded a total score of 11 wandering tattlers, 4 golden plovers, 2 stilts and an estimated 70 turnstone.

Grenville Hatch

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JUNE FIELD TRIPS

June 14th. To Pupukea trail. This is interesting because of the many indigenous trees and shrubs, both along the trail and the road. The trail is very short, joining the Summit trail at Black Junction, but if a longer walk is desired we can go along the Summit trail for a time. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Thomas McGuire, leader.

June 28th. To Kapalama trail, behind Kamehameha Schools. Those who were on the delightful trip in March to this trail need no further word. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 a.m.

JUNE MEETING

June 15th, 7:30 p.m., at the home of Miss Grenville Hatch, 2007 A. Round Top Rd., (the second house after Makiki Street becomes Round Top). Keep to the right of the pumping station. Bus transportation is not good, so anyone who needs transportation call Miss Hatch, 94862. Mace Norton will lead the discussion on the iiwi.

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