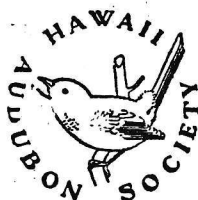


THE ELEPAIO

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For the Better Protection
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NENE (Hawaiian goose) ON MOLOKAI

By George C. Munro

Early in July, I received a letter from Mr. Donald Smith, Biologist with the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, containing a copy of a letter from Sir Frederick Whyte of Pall Mall, London, to Mr. Peter Scott, Honorary Director of the Severn Wildlife Trust. Sir Frederick had read an account by Peter Scott of the successful breeding of the Hawaiian goose (Nesochen sandvicensis) in England. He told Peter Scott that in January, 1926, Mr. Jimmy Wilder "then living at Wai-kiki" took him and a guide in a fast motor boat to the south shore of Molokai, thence "up to a height of about 2,000 feet, where the hill breaks down in steep cliff." There Mr. Wilder showed him a "goose which he called nene, but he gave it an alternate name of the Labrador goose, saying it was a great rarity, but that a pair of them had nested on Molokai for two or three seasons back."

I at once made inquiries from persons who had lived on Molokai. Though they had not heard of the goose being on Molokai in 1926, three persons independently told me of the nene frequenting a hill called Keono Kuino, near Kamalo, Molokai. Mr. George McCorriston, who as a small boy lived at Kamalo, said he thought there were about half a dozen birds and that they used occasionally to go down to a fish pond on the coast. He could not remember ever seeing a nest.

I wrote Sir Frederick Whyte for permission to use his letter in the Elepaio and for information as to whether he had seen more than one goose and whether there was a nest. He readily granted my request but said, "at this distance of time, I am not sure that you can regard what I have to say as scientific evidence." He went on, "I am safe in saying all the same that we certainly saw two adult birds on that occasion on the island of Molokai, one of them actually on the nest."

From the U. S. topographical map of Molokai of 1924, reprinted in 1937, I gather that Keono Kuino is a very small ahupua'a, or land grant, at the south of the west boundary of the ahupua'a of Kamalo, a large ahupua'a running up to 4,535 feet near the highest point of the range, on the south end of Molokai, and overlooking the Pelekunu Valley on the north side. Keono Kuino sets into the east side of the seaside part of the ahupua'a of Kapuokoolau which bounds Kamalo from 710 feet to the Forest Reserve line at 2,300 feet elevation, where its two lateral boundaries, wide at the seashore, meet together. Keono Kuino, bounding Kamalo near the sea on the west, is also wide at the bottom, with the two sides converging and meeting at a hill of 710 feet elevation. On the south side of the hill is a small, steep cliff. The Waikuilani gulch comes down from the forest reserve

through the Kamalo lands in a southerly direction, turning suddenly to the west into the ahupua'a of Kaupokoolau for a short distance and then at about 710 feet turning south to the coast. In a sort of pocket caused by the turn of the gulch and between the hill and the gulch is an area of fairly level land suitable for feeding ground for the nene. This all agrees with Sir Frederick Whyte's story except the elevation. If, as we may infer, his elevation was a guess, it can easily be understood how one coming from town on a boat and climbing the rocky hillside might think he had climbed 2,000 feet, especially as he tells it from memory. Of course the birds may have had nesting places higher up the mountain side than Keono Kuino.

From this evidence I think it can be safely assumed that about fifty-five or sixty years ago the nene frequented the hillside at Keono Kuino, near Kamalo, and probably nested there. The mongoose, which was common in that part of Molokai in the late 1890s, probably kept down the increase, and sportsmen killed off most of the old birds and perhaps drove the remnant back to Hawaii, so that during the time I was on Molokai, from 1899 to 1906, there was no word of nene being at Kamalo. The pair referred to by Sir Frederick Whyte in 1926 was probably birds returning to the old nesting place. I know of a number of instances of birds returning to long deserted nesting places. The McCorriston families had carried on a sugar plantation on the level coastal lands about the early 1890s and the Kamalo Sugar Company in 1899. This was discontinued about 1901. Mr. Jimmy Wilder was interested in Boy Scout activities and the Scouts may have camped at Kamalo and found the geese nesting on the hillside above. Mr. Wilder may have kept it out of the newspapers for fear the birds would be disturbed.

It seems remarkable that this information has come to me in this roundabout way. I corresponded with my brother, who lived on Molokai from 1901 to 1943, about straggling geese on Molokai during the 1930s, but I cannot remember that he ever said anything about the nene being on Molokai, or of any goose nesting there. It is fortunate that Sir Frederick Whyte wrote to Mr. Peter Scott about it or the record might have been lost.

When on Molokai, I collected two specimens of straggling geese: the American white-fronted goose (Anser albifrons gambelli) and the cackling goose (Branta canadensis minima). The latter was shot with a bullet in the neck by a cowboy on the Molokai ranch as the bird was flying past.

Wonder is sometimes expressed that a bird so numerous as was the nene should approach extinction. The true wonder is that it held out so long. An unwary bird forced to contend with wild dogs, cats and mongooses in protecting its eggs and young, and which for many years faced an open shooting season during the time it was caring for them, could not long exist. In December, 1891, I saw sportsmen bring down from Hualalai a young bird not full grown, two little downy goslings and four eggs from a nest. The chicks were so tame that they followed us around. These particular ones were probably reared, but the numbers must have been great that were left to starve after the parent birds were shot. It was ten years after that when Professor Henshaw, an eminent ornithologist, drew attention to the wastefulness of such a course. What we shot as collectors was nothing to the numbers the sportsmen killed from year to year.

LATE NEWS OF THE NENE

It is cheering to hear word of the nene being observed in 1951 and 1952 in the Hawaii National Park region on the island of Hawaii. The following notes were kindly turned over by the staff of the Park. It is all the more remarkable that there have been these recent sights of the nene for the previous observation was thirteen years ago, according to Ranger Ross Bender.

1951 June 7: photographed (movie) at Three Trees Kipuka

1952 August 31: a flock of 6 in flight over Halemaumau, seen by two staff members; same flock (?) seen that day at Hilina Pali by one observer

1952 September 5: one bird on the road at entrance to Bird Park. "The goose waddled across the road, took to the air in a southerly direction, then reversed his flight to the north-northeast."
(from letter to Colin Lennox from Acting Superintendent I. J. Castro)

1952 September 11: 7 observed in flight over Kilauea.

THE ALALA (crow) SIGHTED

On September 3rd, Dr. Henry Bess, Entomologist, University of Hawaii, together with Clifton J. Davis, former Hawaii National Park Ranger, now Board of Agriculture and Forestry representative on the island of Hawaii, and Dr. George C. Ruhle, Park Naturalist, Hawaii National Park saw half a dozen Hawaiian crows on the trail a mile above the Puuwaawaa Ranch houses and shops. Their presence was first indicated by a few loud caws, but soon two of the birds flew into a nearby alahi, the better to observe the intruders! One of the birds came within three feet of a watcher, and leisurely peered at him with cocked head and studied gaze. This was indeed close, and long enough to permit observing major characteristics of color, shape and plumage. Upon returning to the spot an hour later, the party was again met and followed for several hundred yards, the birds moving in short hops from tree to tree. Mr. Davis called attention to the singular nature of the alala and the happy fortune of the episode.

G. C. Ruhle

VACATION BIRD NOTES, from the Island of Hawaii

September 13, 1952, Hawaii National Park: It was 3 p.m. when I arrived at one of the staff cottages for a two weeks' vacation. I could not believe my eyes and ears. Hurriedly I changed into warm clothing, and to my delight I found it was true--I was in a Hawaiian bird heaven. In one hour's time I counted:

62 apapane, 27 Liothrix, 12 iiwi.

The trees were blossoming fairly heavily, and all of those red birds among the red lehua blossoms made me all aquiver inside. It was too beautiful for words. And their songs and chatter were delightful.

September 14th: a trip over the Saddle Road. The count en route was as follows:

1 Kentucky cardinal, 1 white-eye, 46 rice birds, 12 plover, 11 nene (at Pohakuloa), 4 koloa (ducks, also behind the fence, at Pohakuloa), 7 skylarks, 2 pheasant. Three ducks flew over us at Kona at sunset time. I was unable to identify the species.

September 15th: having spent the night at Kona, we slowly travelled back to the volcano area, our headquarters. En route, among others, we saw:

3 tropic (bo'sun) birds, 5 amakihi, 16 rice birds, 50 odd apapane. It is a pleasure to note that we had the chance to bid aloha to other bird lovers-- Commander Stephen Thomas and family.

September 16th: at Byron's Cliff trail and Hilina Pali. By this time I did not count iiwi and apapane any more--too numerous. I was always thrilled at their flight, and song, and the sight of them, however. The amakihi were also to be seen and heard, but no elepaio. The unusual observations of the day were:

9 creepers, 5 doves, 14 valley quail

The quail were a delight with their "antennae" waving in the air. They were not frightened, but they slithered into the high grass and faded out of sight before our eyes. (No cats or dogs are allowed in the Park area, which makes it a delightful field for bird study. The birds seem not to be afraid. They even seem to want to perform, to "strut their stuff" when an audience is before them.)

September 17th: Kilauea Iki trail. My count this morning was

63 apapane, 11 amakihi, 47 Liothrix, 22 iiwi.

I was having difficulty between the amakihi and the olive backed creeper about this time. After all, the creeper creeps--why didn't I let that decide for me? The usual bird concert was to be heard on this trip.

September 18th: down to the Old Camp Grounds. It was much farther than we had expected. Birds were in profusion, so I decided to look for something special. Imagine wanting something other than iiwi, apapane and the like! Well, I found it--two mynahs--the first I had seen, to that date. I was truly disappointed in my plover count. But this was not real plover territory.

September 19th: Bird Park. The trees are so high that one needs to lie on one's back to see the iiwi and apapane and an attack of vacation laziness came to me. Why should I make the effort (!) to lie on my back and count birds when they visited us constantly in the trees about the cottage where we lived! In the shrubs, however, I found the elepaio, and that made me happy. I had missed that little fellow. The Park naturalists told us that the elepaio would come back to the area soon--they go higher up the mountain in mid-summer, for a stay.

September 20th: Sandalwood trail: my only "thrill" today was a bosun bird.

September 21st: took a rest as far as the birds were concerned. My hiking pal, Jane, left for Honolulu. Taking her to Hilo to her plane was not conducive to bird counting.

September 22nd: walked to Kilauea Military Camp by way of the crater rim trail, and there they were--my plover. Sixteen of them were there, along with five skylarks. From this date on, plover were to be seen in the entire volcano area; evidently they had just flown in. I also saw them on the very rim of the active volcano pit--Halemaumau.

September 23rd: Covered the above walk again and greatly increased my plover count. Think of it--74 of them, plus skylarks and the usual other birds of the area.

September 24th: this day I joined a conducted tour by Mr. Bennet of the Park staff. There was no "walk feet", but bus riding, so I could do little counting. I did see

2 bosun birds, 17 iiwi, 3 pheasant cocks and 2 hens, AND 6 goats.

September 25th: birds had been my alarm clock during my stay in the Park area. This particular morning I decided to notice which was the harbinger. It was little old white-eye, followed by the apapane, and then the Liothrix.

I saw several of the olive-backed creepers each day. As I placed papaya shells and seeds out for the birds the various species would flutter about as I approached the little stand. And no sooner had I placed the shells when down they all flew. It was a wonderful way to study the birds and their habits. I was often as close as three feet from the eating birds.

I heartily recommend a stay in this area for the real bird lover.

Ruth R. Rockafellow

VACATION BIRD NOTES, from the island of Kauai

Birding seldom produces the result that one expects. I went to Kauai for a week's stay at Kokee, expecting to return well acquainted with the Japanese tit, which frequents that area, coming into the cottages and taking peanuts from the hand. Our cottage was screened, but I hopefully put out peanuts, which were eagerly eaten--by the mynahs. Despite constant watching, I never glimpsed a tit, but was surprised and delighted to find the white-tailed tropic bird in numbers in every valley, and along the seaside cliffs. Chinese thrush appeared to be the most common song bird. His loud, melodious song rang out from the underbrush constantly, interspersed with occasional harsh cries, but he remained out of sight, so that one had only rare glimpses of him.

Owls at Kokee seemed very common. We found them in the brush near the cottage; close to the road, and soaring overhead. I also found two dead, one apparently shot, the other with no mark upon him.

One memorable morning was spent at the Mokuaeae lighthouse. The little islet offshore was covered with nesting frigate birds that sailed overhead to examine us carefully. A young booby with natal down still clinging to its forehead was resting, exhausted, in the Scaevola just outside the guard rail close to the edge of the cliff. Apparently, it had flown from the island, although the officer in charge said that never before had he seen such an occurrence. A booby in immature plumage, evidently the parent, hovered about, diving furiously at the observers that came close to the young one.

I had one grand day's birding with Myrna Campbell. Apapane, elepaio, amakihi were numerous. The most surprising feature of the day was to look up from our post by a beautiful little pool deep in a valley at Kokee, to see a lone pin-tail duck high in the air. We also saw our first plover of the season that day, August 23rd.
Grenville Hatch

JOURNAL OF THE 1938 LINE ISLAND EXPEDITION

By Walter Donagho
(continued)

July 25: continued. In another moment, we were off in the motor launch, headed for shore. We proceeded through a narrow channel, through which the water from the lagoon was racing out to sea. The shores of the channel were "shaley". White tern and two grey noddies were flying about and brown boobies were perched on the rocks. Coming out of the mill race at the inner end of the channel, we passed

into the quiescent, placid waters of the lagoon--a large inland lake surrounded by the narrow strips of land that comprise the three islets of Canton atoll.

The colony was near the shore just ahead, and of great interest to all was the sight of the flag of U. S. A. and the flag of Great Britain, flying in the breeze, side by side! Great Britain had first occupied the island, and the United States, having claims on the island, hoisted the Stars and Stripes over the island in 1937, when an eclipse expedition was sent to Canton by the National Geographic Society. There were no unfavorable comments from the Britishers, living then and still living on the island, knowing that the matter would have to be taken up between London and Washington. A short time ago it was agreed that both nations might use the island.

Birds proved to be considerably more scarce here than at Howland. The white tern only was very abundant, nesting on the shale along and just above the western shore, in the hear of the camp. Bo'son birds were also abundant, nesting under coral slabs that were strewn over the middle surface of the island. The remaining surface, extending to the lagoon shore, was flat, covered with bunch grass and low, crawling plants, such as Sesuvium, Boerhaavia, etc.

Upon landing, we set out to band bo'sun birds among the slabs of coral. As we approached the rock strewn ground where they nested, an "aloha" party of white terns came over to greet us. They hovered unusually close over our heads, grunting and squeaking their greeting. We banded 50 bo'sun birds, working all morning and into the afternoon. At one time I walked out over the rocky shale that made up the higher part of the island and approached a large boulder on the top of which a white tern was sitting. She flew off at my approach, leaving her speckled egg deposited right on the rock.

Several noddies nested among the rocks in the area where we were banding, and now and then we scared one off its nest. A Christmas Island shearwater flew in at one time during the morning and wheeled about over the rocks. Later I noticed two black, white-breasted petrels (Phoenix petrels) wheeling over the flat to our left, toward the lagoon. We approached the birds, hoping to find out where they nested. The petrels wheeled about, every now and then one--probably the male--flew after another, following close on its tail. The male often uttered a strange, shrill warble that ended with a low bubbling, gurgling sound.

Having finished banding bo'sun birds, Mr. Munro set on down the island to see what else could be banded. Every now and then I looked back to watch the petrels to see if they might not land, but they continued to wheel about. We approached a pool of algae-covered, brackishwater by the lagoon shore. I searched it for life, but failed to find any. I noticed large holes dug in the sand near the pool. Investigation disclosed large stone crabs.

We walked for some distance across the flat, making for a clump of kou that was conspicuous in the landscape. Several red-footed boobies flew out of the trees at our approach, but there were no nests. After lunch here, we started back to camp. I went along as far as the scene of the petrels. On the way I stopped to examine a frigate bird's nest. It was swarming with large, flat, greenish-black bird flies. Two pairs of petrels were wheeling about now, and I noticed one trying to land. It did not land, however, and I finally went on. It was almost time to go from the island. A transmitter was being moved from the landing to the Government house, and when done the launch pulled out for the "Taney".

Out in the lagoon, some boobies were diving for fish, diving like plummetts into the water after their prey.

July 26: Arrived at Enderbury Island this morning... At the north end was quite a patch of Tournafortia, with a cloud of birds over it, while south of the cam

were several patches of kou. In another moment, we were off in the launch for the shore. Bridled tern were very numerous, flying around overhead; boobies and frigate birds were all about. Landing, I helped pack Mr. Munro's luggage up to the coral house that was the headquarters of the colonists. A wooden building served as the government shack, housing the transmitter and meteorological instruments.

Enderbury proved very interesting. In the center was a large shallow, salt water lagoon. Portulaca grew along the edges, forming a mat, upon which nested colonies of grey-backed tern. The ground rose from the lagoon and then leveled off to make a flat which extended to the coastal ridge surrounding the island. At the south end were two other lagoons, one dry--which supported a large frigate bird colony--and the other, set in among patches of kou, contained water. Coconut palms, in a half-dead condition, grew on the west bank. North of the main lagoon was a forest of Tournafortia. Beyond was another large and dry lagoon which also supported colonies of frigate birds.

We started south, along the coastal ridge, covered with coral slabs and boulders. It was good bo'sun bird country, and the next three hours were spent in banding them. After a while birds became scarce, and we set out to look for new colonies. We came to the lagoon at the end of the island, crossed it, and started towards the kou. As usual, red-footed boobies were in the kou, in company with white-capped noddies. Several nests of the latter were here, and in one I found a half grown chick.

We passed from one clump to another, looking for birds to band. Several bo'-sun birds, nesting just under the outer edges of the kou clumps, were dragged out and banded. At one clump, I noted a white tern chick sitting on a horizontal limb which had been its nest. The parent bird had deposited the egg right on the limb, balanced in a slight depression, or knot hole. We put a band on its leg and went on.

(to be continued)

OCTOBER BIRD WALK AS OTHER SEE US:

To a layman, a bird walk by Audubon enthusiasts could easily be an amusing experience in watching, not birds, but those who watch them.

For the intensity of Audubon concentration is equalled only by that of the swivel necked tennis fan, whose Latin name I unfortunately have forgotten.

At the beginning of the Poamoho trip October 12, I was very much on guard against adopting any such attitude toward my hosts. This, of course, was the only conduct becoming a gentleman, and though it was difficult to resist the temptation to use my camera to picture the straining necks of Audubon enthusiasts as eyes and ears came alert for sights and sounds of the elusive songsters, resist I did.

For a while, my whole attention was directed to the natural photographic opportunities along the way, but I found myself gradually being drawn into the attentive net and before I knew it, I was eagerly pointing out flapping wings to my companions.

Being unable to tell a common YWCA sparrow from a St. Louis Cardinal (somehow I seem to have slipped here into another form of entertainment), I'd have to leave it to the experts to identify these fleet winged songsters.

But by dint of ceaseless vigilance, I think I have learned to distinguish an elepaio from a mynah, and feel that in itself is an achievement for the first time out.

However, the impression that I'll probably carry with me longest is a completely erroneous one based either on my failure to hear aright, or an Auduboner's slurring pronunciation.

Some of the birds stirred up in a ploughed pineapple field were identified for me as "killdeer". I thought she said "kildare" and now, every time I hear "Calling Dr. Kildare" on the family radio, I'll picture him as a bird-like creature defying identification in a ploughed field.

Don't get the idea from this that I regard the dedicated intensity of bird watchers with unseemly levity. To the contrary, I was much impressed with your accomplishments in a most difficult--to me--business.

But more, I was impressed by the good-natured friendliness with which you took an outsider in and, though he professed and still professes no great interest in distinguishing an apapane from a white-eye, gave him an enjoyable day in the open, an opportunity to add a few pictures to his collection, and the starting point for some new friendships.

It seems the closer people get to nature, the better they treat people.

Urban M. Allen

ADDED NOTES:

On our part, we count on luring Mr. Allen further into the bird net, and finally entrapping him as an Audubon Society member. We enjoyed his society and we appreciate his friendly letter.

It was a good hike, along one of our favorite trails--Poamoho. (The name comes from the poamoho fern that grows here and there on the trail) With strong sun and clear skies at our backs, and the dark, rain clouds of the ridge facing us, we kept wondering how wet we would get if we struck deep into the ridge country. Just light mists occasionally. For us who know little, it was a great joy to listen and learn from our learned ones, Grenville Hatch and Ruth Rockafellow. Hawaiian birds are shy and the calls from the dense wooded ravines and ridges are often the only evidence of their presence. So it seemed on this day. The contrast between the area around Kilauea and this area was marked, too, by those who lately had been to Hawaii. In Kilauea region the birds are blessedly numerous; here there are so many less that each bird is observable. Only the little flocks of rice birds occasionally defy correct count. The bird counters stopped frequently to make the record. As we paused for lunch some elepaio--four, to be exact--came into the trees near us in dense forest, lured by Grenville Hatch's whistle. Gloating over our good luck, when we joined the others at their roosting spot for lunch, we were greeted by, "Yes, we sent them down to you".

The full count for the day was: 23 rice birds; 2 skylarks (Wheeler Field); 11 barred doves; 15 plover (and some uncounted); 18 turnstones; 3 Chinese doves; 18 white-eyes; 9 Lyothrix; 6 elepaio; 32 apapane; 10 amakihi; 1 linnet. Grenville Hatch was able to add: "on the way homw we stopped at the ponds on the Damon estate, close to the airport...their erstwhile beauty is gone, along with the abundant bird life which frequented them. A pintail circled about several times, probably deterred from landing by our presence. Three gallinule slipped in and out among the reeds, two coot were seen, and one wandering tattler stood in the shallow water."

The full count of those present was: Hans Meinhardt; Urban Allen; Rev. Barber Katherine Eastman; Grenville Hatch; Irma Mann; Ruth Rockafellow and the undersigned.

Margaret Titcomb

DAWN COUNT

A dawn count was requested by Noble Rollin, for September 21st, and Grenville Hatch and Blanche Pedley responded, as follows:

Hatch calls, dawn	Pedley calls
6:00 Chinese dove	5:55 Barred dove (also at 5:59;
6:05 Barred dove	6:01)
6:10 Sparrow	6:01 mynah
6:11 White-eye	6:02 Barred dove and Liothrix
6:12 Mynah	6:04 Liothrix (song); mynah
6:45 Kentucky cardinal	The two kept calling during ob-
	servation, until 6:12.

songs:

6:20 White-eye

6:12 Mynah

THE OWL AND THE PLOVER...

The first plover heard by Margaret Porter was on August 20th and "the following afternoon a flight of at least 50 birds flying toward Kaneohe along the shore".

Priscilla Harpham saw an owl at the Makiki Heights and Tantalus Road intersection at 6:20 p.m. on October 2nd, 1952. "One owl; no wind."

NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP:

To Kaneohe Marine Station, on November 9th. This is a good spot for shore birds, ducks and terns. We shall also visit the booby colony at Ulupau Head. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 A. M., or outside the Marine Station at 9:00.

NOVEMBER MEETING:

In the staff work room of the Library of Hawaii, on the ewa side, downstairs, Monday, November 17th, at 7:30 p.m. We shall discuss trails, and hope to have a trail expert with us.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS: President, Miss Margaret Titcomb; Vice-President, Mr. Ray H. Greenfield; Secretary, Miss Grenville Hatch; Treasurer, Mrs. Blanche A. Pedley.

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