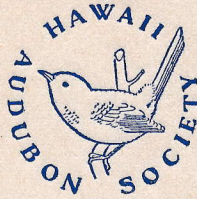


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SHORE BIRDS MIGRATING OVER OAHU A letter to the Hawaii Audubon Society

Dear Friends:

It may interest the members of the Society to learn, if they don't know already, that this year on the dates of August 24, 25, and 26 a large migration of birds, probably mostly ducks, arrived on this island.

Ever since the 25th of July, I had noticed occasional bird cries, or squawks, during the night, usually two or three answering each other as they flew over our house. I had noticed the same sort of cries over Kuapa Pond at Koko Head, but not realizing that they were migratory birds, not even the time of year made much of an impression on me there.

We now live at Waimanalo (southeastern coast of Oahu), about two blocks from the beach and close to Bellows Field. This location seems to be on one of the traffic lanes followed by the birds. From about 8:30 P. M. of August 24th through to about 3 A. M. on August 27th, large numbers of birds have passed over, all coming in from the sea, and from here they head almost due west.

They seemed to be flying fairly low, in groups that, judging by their cries, were never more than 20 or so, and sometimes only two or three. These groups came in at intervals of from ten minutes to an hour apart until I went to sleep, and several times during these three nights I was awakened by groups passing over. On the night of the 25th, I was awakened about midnight and from that time on till about 2 A. M. it seemed that every time I began drifting off another flock would pass over. At 3 A. M. I was awakened again, but this time did not stay awake. Several times during the day of the 26th I imagined I heard the cries, but could see nothing, and the day noises made it difficult to be sure. The early part of the night of the 26th seemed just as crowded with traffic as the previous night had been. But by midnight the intervals between flights were longer and the flocks were smaller. However, I was again wakened in the early morning hours by the excited cries--or you might even call it chattering--of the birds as they reached shore. On the evening of the 27th, there were several small flights. Once a small group passed over, giving the rhythmic call and response that I had come to know, followed a few minutes later by a single bird making a continuous and hurried squawking as it flew, like a child trying to catch up with its companions and calling, "Wait for me!" The last group I heard seemed to be only three in number. They came in from the sea as usual, but did not seem to know where to go. They flew around in circles for a while, then two headed west, leaving one bird flying around. The cries of this bird at last faded over toward the southeast, as nearly as I could tell.

The wind carried the cries of the birds inshore, so that, although we do not live right on the beach, I seemed to get the reactions of the birds as they reached the shore line. There was a definite rhythm to their **cries**: first a call, apparently by their leader, followed a second later by a jumble of responses, then the leader's call again, and so on. They didn't actually lose the rhythm as they came over the land, but the tempo increased and the intensity of their excitement was so great that their responses became a chatter, and some of their feeling transferred itself to me so that I too could feel their jubilation at the successful crossing of that vast expanse of water.

What puzzles me is that there were two distinct kinds of calls in almost every group: one a whistle, something like a typical male wolf call, and the other a squawk that at times sounded like the squalling of a cat but could easily be classed as a duck's cry. In the earlier groups the leader was invariably a whistler, while the responses were both squawks and whistles. Toward the end of the migration period an increasing number of the leaders squawked, and on the last night there were very few whistled responses. Do the males and females have different cries, or were there two different kinds of birds migrating together?

Yours sincerely,

Edith Greig Kemble

Mr. George C. Munro replied to Mrs. Kemble's letter and allows us to take excerpts from it. "The Hawaii Audubon Society is fortunate in having another enthusiastic bird-observer on our coast. We know so little of the movements of our migratory birds that every little item is valued."

"The birds you note might be sooty or noddy tern or wedge-tailed shearwaters from Manana Island (about 3 miles S. E.) where large numbers would be nesting at that time." It is indicated "that you are really situated near one of the flyways. On consulting maps I see that your location is in an almost direct line with Kodiak Island." In Elepaio, December 1950, Mr. Munro wrote about probable flyways and said that from the vicinity of Kodiak would be the most direct, though the longest--2500 miles--overseas flight without a stop.

"The difference in the calls is also very interesting as this confirms Henshaw's opinion that the wandering tattler arrives with the flocks of plover...natives told him that they arrive together."

"If we could find the landing place of these flights we could get a wonderful amount of information by banding. Would Bellows Field be a likely place? They would be likely to come to rest on the first piece of ground clear enough for safe landing."

"There is nothing known about any difference in the cries of our shore birds. We will be fortunate if you continue your residence in that locality and your excellent observations."

THE BRAVE YOUNG BIRDS OF WAKE ISLAND

It is a never-ending source of amazement that Mother Nature has so well endowed even her most fragile creatures with a hardiness and tenacity that ensures the perpetuation of life. During the typhoon which recently struck Wake Island and left

some 10 millions of dollars worth of damage in its wake, buildings were torn from their foundations and hurled for great distances. One entire quonset hut is reported to have blown from the Trans-Ocean Airlines area the full length of the runway and to have disappeared into the sea, a distance of about two miles. Yet, when the fury of the storm had abated, fledgling terns as yet unable to fly were found in almost undiminished numbers.

It might be expected that adult birds, unaccustomed to storm winds, might yield to the wind's force and fly with it, to find their way out and return after the typhoon's passing. Yet, the baby birds, somehow, held fast and weathered winds of velocities around 140 miles per hour, and seemed none the worse for wear. The aircraft that were caught on the ground were turned into the wind and were saved by taking advantage of the aerodynamic characteristics built into them. Perhaps the terns did the same thing. If so, Mother Nature is quite an aeronautical engineer!

H. Paul Porter

JOURNAL OF THE 1938 LINE ISLAND EXPEDITION

By Walter Donagho
(continued)

Exploration of the piles for petrel burrows disclosed nothing, so I left the area and started back to camp. Returning, I found everybody in the coral house where the Hawaiian colonists had boiled several sooty tern eggs. I tried one, and though it was slightly fishy, found it quite palatable.

July 27: Returned to Canton Island today. Mr. Munro asked me to visit some naupaka clumps somewhere on the southern end of the island. As soon as the boat put in at the dock, I set out along the lagoon shore. The island ran south a way then turned to the south. The lagoon shore was very beautiful, with clean, white, sandy, smooth surface. I noticed a few shells and obtained some nice specimens. I once crossed the island to look for shells among the coral slabs that formed the beach on the other side, but failed to meet with success.

After much walking, I approached a log that had been washed up on the beach and sat on it for a rest. A white tern flew close and seemed to be troubled about something. I glanced at the end of the log and found, right beside me, its egg. I moved about six feet away, and sat ready with a camera, hoping the bird would light. I sat so still that two hermit crabs crawled up to me and around my shoes, touching them with their feelers, but the bird did not alight.

Now and then I passed clumps of pemphis scrub, but for the most part the ground was barren. The island was very narrow now, and most of the surface covered with coral slabs.

The island seemed to stretch on for quite a distance, its appearance the same as the stretch I was now passing through, and no pemphis clumps in sight, so I turned back. I rounded one corner of the atoll, and the funnel and mast of the "Taney" appeared above the island across the lagoon. Going down the middle of the island I soon entered a stretch covered with pemphis, or brushwood. Two men of the "Taney" crew were cooking uhu, or parrot fish, along this stretch. The brushwood seemed to make excellent coals, and give off intense heat. They invited me to help myself. It didn't taste at all bad. The men related how they caught the fish, by driving them up onto the reef, where they were stranded. They also told of the strange coral-eating habits of these fish, and how they could feel them biting off chunks of coral.

Fish eaten, we started on, over the crest of the island and down to and out onto the wide reef. I turned over several slabs of coral and found choice specimens underneath. Crabs of several kinds were in abundance, also several shrimps, and one squillid, also a chiton on a rock, and a baby eel underneath a rock. An annelid, or sea centipede, was also obtained.

I turned inland again. Crossing the island I followed the lagoon shore. At one spot, I noticed two sand sharks, light cream colored, with black-tipped fins. As I neared the settlement, the orange hues of the sunset were becoming pale. I could see the forms of many Phoenix petrels as they wheeled and turned, like so many spirits of a departed world.

July 28: Passed Birnie Island this morning. The island was very small, and seemed similar to Howland; no trees.

Just after twelve, Hull Island came into view. It turned out to be a large, oblong atoll, consisting of a ring of small islets, mostly covered with a dry forest *Tournefortia* the principal tree. Coconuts grew here and there on the various islets a large grove on the southwestern end. Birds seemed to be abundant; there were clouds of terns in several places and boobies were in the foliage of the shrubbery.

The "Taney" passed along the north coast, toward the coconut plantation on the western end. Now and then the beautiful lagoon peeked through gaps between the islands. As we approached the northwestern end, the Union Jack came into view, flying near a large, thatch-roofed house. Not a soul did we see until we came to a stop directly opposite the house. A native, just a dark form, appeared, and ran back again into the depths of the grove. Then several others appeared, dragging a boat. Finally, the boat was dragged down to the water's edge and launched. I could make out, through glasses, the white-dressed form of a white man--the governor, or commissioner of the island, Mr. Jones.

The island was a beautiful sight from the bridge. The clean contour of the beach, its clean, white sand, the coconut palms, with their soft, yellow-green fronds, all made the picturesque scene of the typical South Sea island that I had long had in mind.

The Governor's boat pulled alongside presently and the Governor climbed aboard. He was shoeless. The men with him were brown Tokelau and Ellice Islanders of fine build. We found, to our surprise, that they understood Hawaiian, their own language being not too different. There were 31 Ploynesians on the island, all from the Ellice and Tokelau Islands.

The men returned to the island with gifts we had given them, and came back with a live green turtle! Then they performed for us a dance, accompanied by a chant. It sent cold shivers along my spine. I could picture the dance performed in the center of an open space, surrounded by coconut palms, natives surrounding the dancers, shouting yelling and clapping hands, the pulsating rhythm of drums intoxicating the cool, moon-flooded air. This performance had all the wildness of a savage ritual. They sang, shouted, stamped on the deck, wheeled and turned...

One of the "Taney's" boats was lowered and brought alongside the gangway. The natives got in and the boat took them ashore. It soon returned, loaded with natives, their arms filled with articles for trade. As soon as they clambered aboard, trading began. We were all gripped by that strange disease which frequently grips visitors to these South Sea islands--traderitis! Cigarettes, soap, and clothing went for mats, strings of beads and shells, fans, calabashes, etc. After a pleasant afternoon, we bid them "aloha" and sailed onward.

July 29: Sighted Atafu at one thirty today. It was a beautiful atoll, with a chain of islets covered with coconut palms, and in the center a most exquisite lagoon, of a gorgeous sapphire blue, with tints of various shades of delicate greens and yellows. On the nearest islet were several thatched houses visible through the

trees. People could be seen walking along the sandy beach. In the distance, one on the lagoon and the other just outside the reef, were two outrigger canoes with their triangular sails, the tip of the sail attached to the canoe. Soon the village proper came into sight. It was just such a village as I had seen pictured--huts, thatched, scattered among the palm trees, half naked people walking about, canoes full of natives with articles to trade, a steady stream of them, from a cove hidden in the reef all the way out to the ship... "Traderitis" struck the "Taney" very seriously. I myself couldn't resist the temptation--got a bowl for two cakes of soap; one native gave me a shell lei for a nickel, after demanding an English pound for it! It was an eventful afternoon, a red letter day. Finally the natives were driven off the ship and the "Taney" set sail for the next stop, Swain's Island.

July 30: Arrived at Swain's Island about eight thirty this morning. From the deck the island appeared as a grove of coconut trees, with an undergrowth of Tournefortia. A boat was put over and we rowed ashore. The villagers were a colony of Samoans and were down at the beach to see us in, some remaining about the council house--a large thatched house a little way inland. Here the chief of the island sat, waiting to receive our party. The village was a prosperous one. The houses were thatched roofs (upheld by posts), and without walls, the single room open to the outside. Houses were scattered here and there beneath the trees. In an open space stood the warehouse for copra and a small church. The manager of the island, a half-white, lived about a mile down the beach.

The Samoans about the council house had articles which they sold to the men of our party, American money acceptable, as this was an American possession. I noticed in particular several leis of Foraminifera shells...

I walked around the village. Life seemed to be happy and carefree. Food was in abundance, coconut, papaia and banana trees growing about, pigs and chickens ran around everywhere, as well as many dogs. A small girl invited me over to have a look at her house. Her family were sitting on the floor, which was covered with mats... The girl opened a coconut and offered me a drink. I was surprised at its sweetness, much sweeter than Hawaiian coconut milk.

Mr. Munro called me, and I joined him on a hunt for birds in the interior of the island. Two small boys acted as our guides. The luxuriance of the forest we went through surprised me greatly. It was a vivid green, and underneath the coconut palms grew many other trees; kamani, hala, Tournefortia, naupaka, noni, and others. Ferns grew in abundance, and I was surprised at the great numbers of bird nest ferns, also their size. There was an abundance of moss. Everything was green and well watered. The ground was covered with algae, liverworts and moss, and was damp.

Birds were not very common. Noddy terns flew overhead now and then. They nested in the coconut palms, which the boys called logo. In larger numbers were the fairy terns, which flew about amongst the foliage. Plover flew up as we wandered along the paths. The boys took us up one path and down another, finally to the lagoon. It was magnificent, a beautiful lake of many shades of delicate greens and blues, surrounded by the soft greens of the coconut palms.

On returning to the depths of the forest, I saw a cuckoo, a New Zealand cuckoo that winters in various South Sea islands each winter. It was gone in an instant. This was my first cuckoo. Try as I would, I didn't get another glimpse of one.

(to be continued)

LATE SUMMER BIRD NOTES, WINDWARD OAHU

(Notes sent to Miss Grenville Hatch by a friend reluctant to have her name appear.)

Pacific Golden Plover. August 19, heard a few calls, followed them and saw two first-comers, looking as though they were habitués of the green (golf course). Next seen August 22, then more, day by day, a larger proportion in varying degrees of summer plumage. Then they came more plentifully, but none in summer plumage until September 1, when most had summer feathers. Either the birds shifted feeding grounds or these were later migrants in summer plumage.

Killdeer. August 24th, one killdeer among golden plovers; remained when they flew. The wide, yokelike collar of white at back of the neck seems to weigh down the killdeer. I was too astonished by seeing it to look for the double black band on the chest, but the bird looked as familiar to me at this moment as it used to in my school days. It was then my habit to go out and walk after the killdeer which frequented a small part of an otherwise built-up tract. They ran ahead much like a sandpiper, seldom taking wing or crying, and were usually still feeding when I left them for 6:30 supper. I have tried to inspect all the individuals in the flocks to see if the killdeer is still with them. No luck, but I saw two sandpiper species. Didn't I?

Bristle-thighed curlew. After three years of seeing none, I saw a pair and their two young, possibly ten other curlews on and near fairways. I hope to see them again.

Wandering tattler. Throughout the summer one or two on view most days, until the ponds dried. Last year about 18 to 20 tattlers came with the migrants to the Pond, but this year tattlers disappeared when new birds came in.

Ruddy turnstone. All summer there have been six, sometimes less, to be seen on grass or wet sand. A flock of at least 20 showed up at the pond on August 9th, ahead of the plovers. September 1st, very early in the morning, about 40 to 50 were feeding on the grass, separated into several groups. A few turnstones at pond daily.

Sanderling. On August 14th two were seen by a friend who goes early to the beach (while I have gone only inland). On August 31st she saw 5 towards evening.

Hawaiian stilt. As reported earlier, I watched a pair and their 5 young at the pond. Later, I believe they raised another brood, though I did not see them. They kept within the Batis growth, where the ground stays very damp. At times, I could hear the birds arise and give their distress cries. All summer I kept hearing and seeing from one to a dozen stilts in flight. On August 17th saw one on grass near turnstones. I have not seen a stilt run "like the dickens" this summer, but I believe it was a stilt that ran that way last year when I startled it from a distance.

Terns. Towards the swamp I have seen several small flocks of terns in the early mornings. They are dark, perhaps noddies or Hawaiian noddies.

Ducks. After the plovers arrived, I saw 2 flocks of about 80, dark colored, rather high, flying towards Kaneohe, and a smaller flock of lighter color. They were too small for pintails.

Black crowned night heron. Almost every day one or more were seen flying mauka. Their cries had been heard earlier in the month. A friend reports seeing them at pond in numbers, before full daylight. I saw one, evidently young, perching on a bare tree in mid-morning. Its breast had a rufous tinge.

Frigate bird. Almost daily I see them over the beach, and later over the land, single or in groups; once four were in a noisy dog-fight.

Tropic bird. Reported to me a few weeks ago, over the water.

Gull. Either Franklin's or Bonaparte's. On September 1st I sat, very early, trying to scrutinize all the individuals in the 200 or so birds feeding on the grass

--the most I've seen at one time. When I turned to the north, a graceful bird with white underwings flew in and almost immediately arose, though there seemed nothing to disturb it, and flew about 150 yards directly toward me. Its head, above mid-neck, was entirely black. There was a narrow cross-band of white towards the tips of wings. At first I wondered if it was some tern of which I have not read. It seemed to be about the size of the white tern, and almost as attractive. It tries to strike a note of memory, illusively. Perhaps I saw it in California, years ago.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

The "Museum News" of October 15th reports the purchase of a new headquarters at 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York City, to be called "Audubon House". Exhibits will be installed, chiefly to illustrate the society's work toward conservation. The educational work of the society will be expanded.

NOVEMBER MEETING

At the suggestion of Miss Grenville Hatch, the society decided to explore or revisit more trails during the next year. Not only birds will be observed. It is hoped that a greater familiarity with plants may be gained. To this end Mr. Thomas McGuire offered to join us when possible, and Mr. Colin Lennox, head of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, has graciously allowed Mr. McGuire to fit his schedule into the plan. We are delighted with this great good luck and shall take advantage of it. Science teachers and any others interested in birds and plants are welcome to join us.

JANUARY FIELD TRIP

To Keawalua Trail, January 11th. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 a.m. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME. This is a new trail for most of us. It is past Makua in the Waianae. An interesting valley, dry land plants, sandy beach, and Mr. McGuire to lead us should make it a day to be remembered. Bring pencils for your notes!

JANUARY MEETING

January 18th, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Miss Titcomb, 1523 Thurston Ave. Those who took the field trip will bring their notes and specimens and we will try to pool our observations. We think all will enjoy the evening, whether you made the trip or not. Telephone Miss Titcomb, Bishop Museum - 86438, or home - 65717, if you need instructions to find your way.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS: President, Miss Grenville Hatch; Vice-Presidents, Mr. Mace Norton, Miss Margaret Titcomb; Secretary, Mrs. Ruth R. Rockafellow; Treasurer, Mrs. Blanche A. Pedley.

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