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By Walter Donaggho
(continued)

July 30 (continued): Mr. Munro left me after a while to go around the atoll. I remained to do some collecting, the boys staying with me...(to collect) specimens of azure-tailed skink which were all about among the trash on the ground. They set to and caught four...I tried to get them to catch another lizard that I desired very much, a large, gold colored skink. But neither they nor I was successful in obtaining any... Once I peered into a rotten stump and pulled out a purple hermit crab.

The boys finally led me out of the forest into the village. I heard a blast from the "Taney's" whistle...yes, they were preparing to leave...we didn't get away until three...

July 31: Sun-up found us off the eastern end of the mountainous island of Tutuila, the main island of American Samoa. As the "Taney" drew closer to the island, I could see that it was well forested clear down to the sea. Coconut palms were common, growing well up the hillsides. Here and there along the shore were several coconut groves, under which were thatched houses, and an extremely large and out of place white stucco church.

We passed close to Cape Mutatula, passed by Aunuu Island, a small island with a small tuff cone and an extremely large church. Then we sailed down a beautiful coastline toward majestic Picoa, the rainmaker, rounded it and entered the scenic harbor of Pago Pago, guarded on both sides by the valiant sentinels, Picoa and Matafao, the highest peak of Tutuila, over 2000 feet in elevation. Nestled in the foothills of the latter peak, underneath giant radio towers, sprawled the Naval Station of Fagatogo. We slipped down the bay and anchored off the Naval pier. A boat put out for us, at the bow of which stood a Samoan clad in the uniform of that unique Samoan regiment, the Fita Fita Guard. He was clad in a white skivvy shirt and skirt, around which was wrapped, at the waist, a red sash. He wore no shoes.

The magnificent grandeur of the harbor of Pago Pago cannot be adequately described. It is landlocked, is of the deepest, brightest blue and is backed on the shore opposite the settlement by high cliffs covered with luxuriant verdure of the brightest green. Mt. Picoa, framed in steep crags of vivid green, stands guard at the entrance like a veritable Gibraltar. Though only 1700 feet high, its majestic appearance gives an impression of much greater height; it seems to tower above the bay.

The first boat went in at about one o'clock, and I prepared for an afternoon of collecting. There were two trails running up into the hills behind the town and I planned to go up them...I asked a Samoan where the start of the nearest trail was, and he guided me over to a large tank across the road, by which ran a trail. I left

my guide here and followed the trail up the hill. The place was rich in plants. Several Samoans lived here and their banana, papaia, breadfruit, mango, and other fruit trees grew profusely about. I immediately started collecting insects. First was a long legged fly and others appeared rapidly; several butterflies flew around, brown ones with white markings, orange and blue ones, the latter with a large white spot on the wings. Two small Samoan boys came up after a while, attracted by my collecting and watched me. I asked the older whether he could find any moo (lizards) for me...He led the way along the steep slopes. I heard a strange bird singing nearby, and, seeming easy to imitate, I attempted to do so and succeeded. The bird flew out in front of me, a large green bird with a white wattle. It was a honeysucker, known to the Samoans as iao. I went after some blue-tailed skinks, and the boy, seeing my efforts, said, "Those are not moo, those are pili." He led me further, through gardens of dry land taro, bananas and other plants. Again I heard an iao, and imitated its call. It immediately flew up, less than six feet away, hovered in the air, and then flew into a mango tree.

We came to a small empty house and upon looking inside saw a large gecko in a crack. The boy went around outside, I chased the lizard out and with the boy's help caught it. It was the largest gecko in Polynesia, unknown in Hawaii. Proceeding further, we reached a spot where a number of large black skinks were rustling through the trash on the ground. I finally caught one. Accustomed to the small skinks of Hawaii, it was quite a thrill to catch one of these. They were about eleven to fourteen inches in length, and a half inch or more in width. They looked and felt enormous.

Well satisfied with my collection of lizards, I returned to the Station, with my guide. My specimens attracted the attention of a group of Samoan boys playing about near Kneubuhl's store. Boys dress in a lavalava, or loin-cloth, only, and often jump into the water and swim a while as they walk along the shore roads.

The parade ground of Fagatogo is a spacious park, faced on the south by the buildings of the Naval Station. On the beach is the pavilion which, on specified days, is the market place for the whole island. Samoans come long distances, from all over the island, some villages on the other side of the mountains accessible only by a narrow trail. Also facing the park is the jail, famous for the informality with which it looks up prisoners. They come and go, about as they please, except at night, when they do stay in jail. Many prisoners actually prefer to live in jail than at home!

My guide saw two friends who became inquisitive and accompanied me to the hills behind the town. We turned off the main street and followed an alley-way leading up to a small valley just in back of the station. The road led past Samoan homes and their gardens, and climbed a hill, finally coming to a sluiceway and a small powerhouse. Here I stopped to collect butterflies. The boys were eager to participate, and most of the time they had my net and were swinging it about to catch insects, or dashing about for a butterfly. They were great help, especially in my bird study, as they identified the birds I saw and pointed out others.

The little valley yielded quite a number of insects. About the reservoir were dragonflies, also several kinds of butterflies, including a brown one with white spots and a beautiful chequered blue and black. Farther up the stream, in a dark foliage nook I collected a large brown butterfly.

Birds were common in the valley. Fruit doves boomed and now and then flew overhead. Many tiny swiftlets (peapea) wheeled and turned above the grassy slopes. Iao sang, and fua, a native starling, called. Several times, while proceeding along the boggy meadows at the bottom of the valley, a tiotala (Tutuila kingfisher) flew out of a banana tree with a grating cry. Once I had an excellent view of this bird, my first kingfisher; it was white breasted, with a brilliant metallic blue back and wings.

We followed the trail out of the valley, zigzagged up the grassy slopes, and entered a bit of the original forest, which was quite luxuriant. Time forbade going far, so we turned back after reaching the top of the slope.

August 1: Caught the first boat going ashore from the "Taney" and soon boarded an ancient bus going to Leone, down toward the west end of the island. The driver was a Samoan youth of about twenty. The bus chugged along a dirt road, past the Governor's residence and out into the country. The road hugged the shoreline, passing through stretches of verdure. At a small store, surrounded by Samoan houses, there was a distribution of mail and other odds and ends, and we were off again. The road went up along a hill and rounded a point, off which was a perfectly round rock with steep cliffs, the top covered with verdure. This was the "Flower-pot." I noticed several grey noddies flying about it. We now passed through cool, dense jungle growth, rich in the number of plants. Stopping at one spot, I could hear the forest ringing with the notes of iao and fruit doves. Farther on, the road passed along steep cliffs, about 150 feet above the surf. Here, the scenery was very beautiful: steep, precipitous cliffs, several hundred feet high, clothed with luxuriant verdure of brilliant green, backed by the green, forested hills, had creamy white surf at their feet and the sapphire blue ocean. In the distance were plains with groves of coconut trees, and back of them a battalion of jungle-clad mountains.

The bus crossed the estuary of a deep valley at the head of which rose the needle-sharp peak of Matafao, then skirted more cliffs and motored out onto the plain. After going through a more open, drier forest, we reached the village of Nuuli. Here, on a dazzling white open space, were groves of coconut and breadfruit trees, Samoan houses nestling underneath. The bus stopped at the store and post office, as usual, then went on.

Again the road led through a dry forest, winding in and out among the high trees festooned with vines. Next were coconut and banana plantations and cow pastures, and finally more Samoan houses, with their breadfruit, banana, mango and other trees. Finally we came to the village of Maupasaga.

Here I got out. I intended to follow a trail which led up over the mountains to the village of Fagasa on the other side, from which I would then cross over the pass into Pago Pago valley to the town. I hailed a Samoan youth to ask him where the trail started and he invited me into his house, nearby, where his mother, and several brothers and sisters were seated on the floor. The lady immediately offered me cooked green breadfruit. I ate some, dipping it into a coconut sauce, and found it good. (I had been accustomed to eating breadfruit ripe in Hawaii. Breadfruit seemed to be the Samoan's staff of life.) She then offered me some cooked bananas, but I did not care for them much.

I set out again with the boy and his brother, walking down the road in the direction from which we had come. We passed through open glades between the large trees smothered with vines. Butterflies flocked about their tiny white flowers. Swiftlets wheeled and turned in and out among the trees, fruit pigeons cooed, iao and fuia sang and called. The morning seemed quite bright indeed. At one time, a large flying fox, or fruit bat, flew about above the forested hillsides above. We reached, and turned into a large coconut grove, also used as a pasture, which extended on up the valley. Small, beautiful birds among the blossoms of the coconut palms the boys identified as sega. They were jet black, with brilliant red breasts, and were honeyeaters.

(to be continued)

IMPROMPTU BIRD WALK, January 18th, 1953 (delayed report)

The first stop, 7:30 a.m., at Kuapa Pond indicated a fairly large number of pintails, shovellers, and a surprising number of Hawaiian stilts, 71 in fact.

Manana Island, through the binoculars, appeared devoid of bird life.

Ponds at the entrance to Kaneohe Marine Air Base were rewarding: pintails, coots, frigate birds, Hawaiian terns and stilts.

Many boobies were perching at Ulupau Head and many frigate birds were in the air. Moku Manu, through the binoculars, showed much bird life, including a group of five frigate birds with gular pouches. The greatest delight, however, was the sight of brown boobies. We also sighted a whale--not flying!

A trip is not complete without a stop at Kaelepulu Pond. Our visiting birder from Denmark identified there a female canvas-back duck, truly a find!

In beautiful Kanaha Bay we saw six Hawaiian gallinules. They appeared to be in pairs and, while book information indicated that the sexes are alike, we all agreed that the twosomes were made up of one yellow-legged bird and a green-legged bird.

A checklist showed the following species seen during the trip: stilt, brown booby (*Sula leucogaster* Plotus), Booby (*Sula sula rubripes*), pintail duck, shoveler duck, canvas-back duck, coot, frigate bird, turnstone, sanderling, Hawaiian tern, plover, tattler, Hawaiian gallinule.

But, awe! no owl.

Signed by "Beautiful Day"

NOTE

A cheery contribution from the gentlemen at Kilauea is always welcome. Staff member V. R. Bender, Jr., of the Hawaii Natural History Association, writes that "You may be interested to know that on January 15 I again saw an English sparrow trying to become a Drepanid--he was eating nectar from the lehuas! That is the third time I've observed them. Roy H. Finch, former director of the Hawaii Volcano Observatory, reported seeing them feed on nectar in February 1949. It is a peculiar adaptation. Maybe we should inform Nature that English sparrows are strictly seed eaters."

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Hannah Lou Bonsey writes that she and her husband, Derwent, took several bird hikes in Delaware at Christmas time and went on the Bird Census hike, "always a thrilling thing." At Oberlin, she will be laboratory assistant and field guide for the ornithology class. Hoping to procure a banding permit she aims to band the chimney swifts, purple martins and white-throated sparrows in the vicinity.

BOOK REVIEWS:

From the heart of the Rockies the Denver Museum of Natural History has reached out into the Pacific. Three interesting "Museum Pictorial" issues have been published there which are of great interest to Pacific dwellers:

"Stepping Stones across the Pacific", by Alfred M. Bailey and Robert J. Niedrach (No. 3, 1951)

"Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses", by Alfred M. Bailey (No. 6, 1952)

"The Hawaiian Monk Seal", by Alfred M. Bailey (No. 7, 1949)

No. 7 is not a bird! But the Hawaiian monk seal, which has found precarious shelter much of the time on the far-flung islands of the Hawaiian chain, is a rare animal. It is interesting to know that his booklet has done such a good work in collecting and summarizing the data about the Hawaiian seal, and has added stories and reports of stops by various scientists. Dr. Bailey himself visited the islands in 1912, 1913, and in 1949. The seal was evidently plentiful in 1824, for a "sealing expedition" took many; another such expedition occurred in 1859, starting the seal on its way to "rare" status. Scientists' visits began in 1891, and others are recorded for 1896, 1912, 1913, 1923, 1930, 1936, 1941, 1949, and 1951. The seal is not sure to be found, but may be found in Lisiansky, Pearl and Hermes Reef, Laysan, Midway. All these visits have been valuable to the scientific record, but it is still true, according to Dr. Bailey, that "Unfortunately, we know practically nothing of the life history of these seals, the little information available on their habits being the result of casual observation by the few privileged to study the animals in their haunts." It is somewhat cheerful to note that the last visit, that of the George Vanderbilt Pacific Equatorial Expedition, could record seeing 407 seals on six islands, according to the report of Vernon E. Brock.

No. 3 is a valuable compilation of facts difficult to come by about the various islands of the Hawaiian chain. Dr. Bailey could not stop at the lonely islands, but was able to persuade the aviator to fly low enough to make observations on the state of vegetation on these once rabbit-ridden islands. They are now healthily verdant. Stops were made at Midway and Wake Islands and the bird colonies reported on extensively.

No. 6 is of the greatest interest to Elepaio readers. This is a full presentation of the facts known about the Laysan and Black-footed albatrosses. The secret part of their lives is spent away from the islands, many months each year, and perhaps many of them skip the nesting season back at the islands for a year. The "Review of Field Work" is followed by a "Narrative" of Dr. Bailey's own visits in 1912, 1913, and 1949. Then follows a thorough study of all that is known of these birds, patterned after Richdale's study of albatrosses in the southern hemisphere. The tale is a fascinating one. The statement, popularly written, the excellent and numerous pictures, the summary and bibliography extend to 79 pages. Ornithologists and bird lovers are indebted to Dr. Bailey for this thorough study.

DUCKS AT THE ZOO

Ducks suffering from botulism contracted at Kaelepulu Pond are recuperating in a small pond at the Zoo. Shovellers, pintails, one green winged teal, which is a very beautiful small duck, are in the enclosure, with coot and one Canada goose. This is an excellent opportunity to observe them close at hand, both for identification purposes, and to watch their behavior. The pool is very popular, always surrounded by a group of onlookers.

AN ARTICLE ON BIRDS IN JAPAN

Members who knew Chester Fennell, and those who have enjoyed his delightful articles on Korean and Japanese birds which have appeared in the ELEPAIO, will be interested in reading his account of a night and parts of two days spent on an offshore island of Japan, Kaikaku, on which nest many species of birds. This account appears in the Jan-Feb. CONDOR.

MARCH ACTIVITIES

FIELD TRIPS:

March 8th. We have been given permission to go on the trail back of Kamehameha School. This area was extensively planted many years ago. It will be interesting to see the plant life as well as to see what birds we find in a place we usually cannot enter. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Thomas McGuire, leader.

March 28th.(Saturday). To Palehua. This is dry land country, with skylarks on the lower section, and a strange bird call to intrigue us. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 a.m. Mr. Mace Norton, leader.

MEETING:

March 16, at the home of Mrs. Blanche Pedley, 3431 Paty Drive, in Woodlawn. Elepaio and liothrix haunt her yard. Members will gather about 5:00 p.m., bringing picnic supper. We will observe birds in the neighborhood until dusk, then supper, followed by the regular meeting. Those present at the last meeting felt that the study of the elepaio was worth while. This time we shall take up the apapane, with all participating as much as possible.

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

EDITOR, THE ELEPAIO: Miss Margaret Titcomb.

ADDRESS ALL MAIL TO P. O. BOX 5032, PAWAA STATION, HONOLULU 14, HAWAII.