

# THE ELEPAIO

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## HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRD COUNT 1954

Tabulation of the bird count taken on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii by members of the Hawaii Audubon Society on December 26, 27, 1953 (Oahu) and January 1, 1954 (Hawaii):

	Kaneohe M.A.S.	Bellows Kuapa	Poamoho Wheeler	Resid. areas	Oahu total	Hawaii Nat'l.P.	Grand Total
Amakihi			8		8	62	70
Apapane			327		327	1270★	1597★
Booby, Brown	5				5		5
Booby, Red-footed	450				450★		450★
Cardinal, Brazilian	2	6		3	11		11
Cardinal, Kentucky	2	22		11	35	2	37
Coot, Hawaiian	30				30		30
Dove, Barred	46	22	5	68	141		141
Dove, Chinese	7	25	6		38	4	42
Duck, Pintail	58				58		58
Elepaio			7		7	39	46
Finch, House		11			11	47	58
Frigate bird	14				14		14
Gallinule		3			3		3
Hawk, Hawaiia n					0	1	1
Iiwi					0	50	50
Leiothrix		1		1	2	37	39
Mynah	6	17	20	91	134	45	179
Omau					0	9	9
Plover, Black-bellied		1			1		1
Plover, Pac. golden	38	24	4	5	71	20	91
Pheasant, Ringnecked						8	8
Quail, Calif.						4	4
Ricebird	69	20	120	30	239	3	242
Sanderling	2	24			26		26
Skylark, English			1		1	7	8
Sparrow, English	24	9	2	107	142	49	191
Stilt, Hawaiian	28				28		28
Tattler, Wandering	6	3			9		9
Tern, Hawn. noddy	1				1		1
Tern, Least	1				1		1
Tropicbird, White-tailed						3	3
Turnstone, Ruddy	29	37			66		66
White-eye	2	1	16	3	23	66	89
TOTAL	820	226	516	319	1882	1729	3608
Species	20	16	11	9	28	19	34

★ estimated



December 1953 Oahu Bird Count. (Ulupau Head, ponds inside Kaneohe Marine Air Station, Bellows Field, Kuapa Pond, Poamoho trail, Residential areas in Honolulu.)

Temperature: 60°-78°, wind N.E., 0-18 m.p.h. Clear (Dec. 26th) cloudy with light rains, (Dec. 27th.)

Time: 6:50 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Total hours in field, 11 hours, 40 minutes.

Total miles covered: 7 3/4 on foot.

Terrain: ponds and marshes, 15%; sandy beach, 4%; open country, 32%; upper forest, 17%; residential areas, 23%; coastal headland and adjacent crater, 9%.

Members present: 9 as follows: Irma Botsford, Grace Gossard, Mrs. Gossard, Grenville Hatch, Joseph King, Bernice M. Kuhns, Louetta M. Kuhns, Mace Norton, Blanche A. Pedley.

#### FIELD NOTES ON THE BIRD COUNT EXCURSIONS:

Kuapa, Kaelepulu, and the Nene.

The day after Christmas, Saturday, December 26, two cars with Grenville Hatch, Blanche Pedley, Irma Botsford, Grace Gossard, and her mother, Mrs. Gossard, visiting here for a couple of months, set out for Kuapa Pond and Bellows Field for the annual bird count. Just as light was breaking the party, with hopes high, detoured to visit the zoo, to see if any baby nene had hatched during the night. They peered through the "peep" holes into the enclosure and could see the gander standing rather dejectedly outside the shrubbery screening the next, but no signs of any activity. Later, they learned that none of the eggs hatched, and that the bright dream of Christmas nene had faded--no result.

The next stop was at Kuapa Pond. The end nearest the highway was not very rewarding, with only a few plover, so the party drove farther down and stopped again. There, with a backdrop of piggery stench and debris, they came upon a large flock of sanderlings, turnstones, and plover. The birds were so intent on their own business that the observers were able to come quite near, and no one minded the squashy mud or unpleasant aroma.

Leaving the pond, the party then went directly to Bellows Field. By this time the sun was up, there was little or no wind, and everything was set for a delightful morning. A section of ironwood trees brought to light cardinals linnets, and doves. No shore birds were seen here, so after eating lunch the group decided to leave. All had been riding in one car while in the field, so the one car with its load drove merrily past the guards out to the highway. Only then did Gracie remember that she had left a car parked somewhere behind her. The guard was very nice about readmitting the party, and also perhaps somewhat relieved when he viewed the final exit when the cars tallied with what had originally entered.

All being curious as to what was taking place at Kaelepulu Pond, a visit there was included in a roundabout way home. The worst fears were realized. The area has evidently been drained with an eye to housing or pasturage or both. There were only a couple of small trickles of water where, nevertheless, three gallinule and one lone stilt (?) were sighted. The aspect of the area was very depressing to those who remembered it as a shore bird refuge, and one wonders why so-called progress and conservation cannot learn how to team up.

Irma Botsford

#### POAMOHO AND ULUPAU HEAD.

As dawn broke on December 27, five of us stood in a mist like drizzle at Wheeler Field beginning our Christmas bird count census with the song of the skylark. A few plover and rice birds were seen as the sky lightened. At the beginning of the



turn off to Poamoho road we climbed into Mace Norton's jeep and decided that in spite of the mild discomfort of the cold and an occasional sprinkle birding by jeep has high merits. We saw rice birds, mynahs, Kentucky cardinals, barred and Chinese doves in the pineapple fields, but did not begin our actual count until we struck the Poamoho jeep road. The paper bark, eucalyptus tree area at the lower end of the road was alive with apapane, and it was here that we had our best count. Unfortunately the grayness of the day prevented us from seeing much of the flashing red, and many of the birds were identified either by shape or flight. A few elepaio and amakihi were spotted, though the latter were more often heard than seen. Further up on the trail we saw fewer birds, partly as a result of the advancing morning, partly because the lehua was only partially in bloom, and perhaps because of the rain. At one point two of us briefly heard the Garrulax, and though we waited sometime in hopes of seeing or even hearing it again, our wait was fruitless.

We left the area by mid morning to do the count at Ulupau Head and the Ponds at Kaneohe Marine Air Corp Station. The booby count was more of an estimate than usual as our approach seemed to arouse the birds unduly, in spite of our caution. We saw an unusual number of immatures flying around and wondered if they had come over from Moku Manu. After a cold wait on the cliff with the wind sweeping around us, we spotted several brown boobies flying out from the cliff walls. I had hoped to see Hawaiian terns and was disappointed to learn that they are not seen at this time of the year and that it is not known where they go. A few frigate birds were about and were up to their usual antics of chasing the boobies.

The count at the Kaneohe Ponds seems small compared to our observations earlier in the fall. There were surprisingly few pintails, a lesser number of stilt and no shovellers. Pacific golden plover, ruddy turnstones and sanderlings were also observed in lesser numbers but the doves seemed to be about the same. We were pleased to see the least tern again. It is a pretty little bird readily recognized by its erratic, rapid flight, deep sharp dives towards the water but barely touching the surface, then up again around and around the area. Its most distinguishing mark is the black leading edge of the wing which stands out against its grayish white body in flight. I hope we have the opportunity to see it in its breeding plumage before it migrates.

Grace Gossard

Residential. A very pleasant morning it was, (December 27, 1954) when we two journeyed forth on the Christmas bird count, through the same residential area which we have covered for at least four years.

Times have changed, in that many homes, as well as the Robert Louis Stevenson School, have been constructed along the route we have usually travelled. Why speak of these buildings? It is because the bird haunts have been molested or taken away, especially on the former hillside, west of Stevenson, which was covered with bushes and tall grass where many feathered creatures flocked in large numbers. There was a decided decrease in the bird population in the Prospect-Nehoa-Makiki district.

Over three years , our count has been as follows:

	1951	1952	1953	
Barred doves	143	95	68	
Chinese doves	9	13	0	
Plover, Pac. Golden	8	2	5	
Brazilian Cardinal	5	2	3	
Kentucky Cardinal	16	8	11	
Mynah	108	86	91	Bernice M. Kuhns
Rice birds	184	105	30	Louetta M. Kuhns
English sparrow	62	51	107	



Hawaii National Park (Kilauea section), Hawaii. (Bird Park, golf course, Aina-hau Road to Ruttles Farm, Thurston Lava Tube trail and portions of Kilauea-iki trail, Byron Ledge trail and portions of side trails, old CCC camp, Park Headquarters area, Wright Road to its end; fern-ohia forest 40%, open ohia-manele-manin-koa forest 25%, open ohia woodland 20%, grassland 10%, bare volcanic lava and craters 5%). -Jan.1; 6:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Low overcast with occasional sprinkles in afternoon; temp. 62° to 68°; wind light. Six observers in 1 to 3 parties. Total party-hours, 17½ (13 on foot, 4½ by car); total party-miles, 66 (7 on foot, 59 by car). White-tailed tropic-bird, 3; Io (Hawaiian Hawk), 1; California Quail, 4; Ring-necked Pheasant (including Japanese Blue Pheasant), 8; Golden Plover, 20; Chinese spotted dove, 4; Skylark, 7; Leiothrix, 37; Omau, 9; Elepaio, 39; Mynah, 45; White-eye, 66; Iiwi, 50; Apapane, 1270 (partly est.); Amakihi, 62; Ricebird, 3; English sparrow, 49; North American cardinal, 2; House finch, 47. Total, 19 species; 1726 individuals.- Helen and Robert Baldwin, Julius Koshover, Suzanne and William Ohmstede, Robert Pyle.

(Note: it gives us such a pleasant, fraternal feeling when we receive this other island bird count.- Editor).

#### ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES, MIDWAY ISLAND, 1940

by  
Walter Donaghho  
(continued)

June 23, 1941: Death is now wandering among the colonies of young black goonies near the shore, now and then striking down with its club some poor, starved bird. Adult birds that landed to feed their young were met on all sides by the hungry cries of starved youngsters, frantic in their intense eagerness for a life-sustaining morsel. Death is dealing its blows also among the young Bonin petrel, miserable birds that Mother Nature has treated cruelly, for they have not been able to escape the fate of being born too late!

Noted a noddy tern on its egg - just one, though several more terns were seen nearby. One black goony ran along the ground, flew into the air and came down again in a perfect landing.

July 12: On a visit to Eas tern Island, noted that the young of the frigate bird are about half grown or approaching it.

One black-bellied plover noted among a flock of 50 golden plover.

Bulwer's petrel and noddy terns have apparently not laid eggs yet. A bridled tern seemed to be about three-quarters grown.

The young of sooty terns in the oldest colonies have wing coverts and secondary feathers are developing.

July 18: I have been with the birds on Midway for a year now (landed July 15th, 1940), watching them through all the cycles. Comparing this year with last, on July 15th, it seems that the sooty terns have been more uniform in their laying dates this year. There are no half-grown chicks.

The grey-backed tern young are in two stages; young ready to fly, and young only a few days old. Several terns are on eggs; it is unlikely that these will hatch.

The white tern, this year and last, are in all stages of growth on this date, from young, flying, back to the egg.

The greater noddy is now on eggs, for the most part, though there are some that have not laid eggs yet.

Wedge-tailed shearwaters are all on eggs. I haven't noticed much burrow digging, as I did last year. The Christmas shearwater are on eggs, though some are



still mating. It is probable that a few parent birds are caring for young. Of last year, I know nothing. I saw one shearwater in the air over Eastern Island last July, but, unfamiliar with that island at the time, I probably missed any that were on the ground.

The Bulwer's petrel is just starting to lay. Two eggs are all that I have come across on Sand Island, where they are rare. I have not seen any on Eastern Island, but have no doubt that several there are sitting. No notes from last July. Last September, I found one three-quarters grown in reeds on Sand Island (September 2nd).

The Bonin petrel is just about all gone.

The bosun bird is nursing chicks of all stages, from "just hatched" to almost ready to fly. Many are yet on eggs.

The rail is nursing chicks of all stages. Several are grown. I haven't found any eggs lately, though on July 26th of last year, I found fresh eggs.

The black gooney is almost gone. Several young still remain on the beaches. The Laysan gooney still comes in to feed young, though they are not common. Dancing is now rare.

Saw several flocks of plover and turnstones on Eastern Island; one flock of turnstones of about 80. It is probable that these are new arrivals from the north, bound for the south seas and New Zealand.

One more pectoral sandpiper noted there.

July 20: Several plover about the Cable Station--returned residents?

July 28: The black gooneys are about gone; just a scant number remains.

July 29: One black-bellied plover noted among a small flock of golden plovers and turnstones on the east beach of Sand Island.

August 3: Young terns are growing fast. There are several in the colonies of Eastern Island and the oldest colonies of Sand Island are full-fledged and ready to fly.

Noted a large flock of about 200 plover and turnstones resting on the runways on Eastern Island.

August 4: Laysan albatross about the hotel area are thinning out. One by one, the birds learn the mastery of the air and leave. More than half of the former population has disappeared.

August 13: Noted a young sooty tern leave the ground and take to the air on Eastern Island. The terns' breeding season is now on the wane...Quite a few eggs have been deserted, being infertile.

The season for the frigate birds and red-footed booby is drawing to a close. No young of either species is less than half grown; most of them are in the air. The blue-faced booby has finished its breeding season, and the brown booby is just about through.

Found two half-grown chicks of the Christmas Island shearwater.

Few, if any, fairy terns and bosun birds are on eggs, though I have seen chicks a few days old.

August 16: Noted an immature sooty tern flying over the water off the Cable Station, first one noted actually flying.



August 17: Noted a sandpiper in the garbage pit. I took it to be a lesser yellow legs. It was much smaller than the bird seen on June 15th, which I identified as a greater yellow legs. Today's bird was only a head higher than the golden plover; the other sandpiper was midway between the height of a plover and a curlew. The bill was straight; the bill of the greater yellow legs is slightly upturned. The cry of the bird as it took wing was a high, shrill note, not the loud "chew to" of the larger species. This record is interesting as this species has never been recorded before in the islands.

Many frigate birds hovering above the line of dunes extending from the south-east point of Sand Island to the south point, strung out in a long line, very likely forming for their departure from Midway. This observation is from Mr. F. C. Hadden, who says that the frigate bird is known to arrive and leave in formation. (I myself have seen these migrations on Oahu.) On a later visit to Eastern Island (August 25th), the decrease in number of frigate birds seemed to bear out the theory.

August 24: Bonin petrels are starting to stream in now; quite a few in the air this evening.

August 25: Noted a noddy tern on a chick about three days old, on Eastern Island. The fairy terns are not as evident as formerly; their young are flying now, and I noted just one chick as young as about a week. Bosun birds are also starting to thin out.

August 29: Many Bonin petrels have landed, and are beginning courtship activities, one digging a burrow. But they are not yet as numerous as they will be.

September 4: Much unrest among the sooty terns this evening, evidently preparing to leave. One flock from the colonies south of the camp, was wheeling above the camp. Birds were calling back and forth while wheeling higher and higher until scarcely visible....A large flock was forming and wheeling over the ironwood grove. Slight decrease of population in the colony just south of the road was noticeable. In fact, it seemed that the whole colony was massed together at the edge of the site on the sand, while the breeding area was nearly deserted. The calls seemed to have an unusual note; most of the young are ready to fly away.

September 5: Many groups of sooties were wheeling in the air above large colonies south of the camp. Noted a great decrease of numbers in several spots where, only yesterday, there were hundreds.

September 6: This evening Bonin petrels came in by the thousands to fill the evening sky--the first large invasion. The still evening air was filled with their growls and squeals, the din closely resembling the wind through pine trees.

September 9: The average noddy chick is full-fledged. Noted many dead, immature sooty terns in the colonies south of the camp. It is most likely that these died of exposure during the rains that drenched the island recently. According to Hadden, birds are susceptible to a kind of bird pneumonia. While banding among them this evening, I came across two young terns that, when lying on their backs on the ground, were too weak to turn over.

September 22: Date of departure from Midway Island, ending an eventful and successful year among its abundant bird life.

(concluded)



## AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS PROJECT

The Committee is happy to report that the first movie-lecture, "Western Discovery" by Mrs. Laurel Reynolds, was well received and few seats were unoccupied. Mrs. Reynolds wit and the beauty and value of her films, truly carried away the audience. All left with the glow that means, "I have been in another world".

The inauguration of the movies for the schools was also successful, five schools participating, and the reports were excellent.

We are most happy to have had as delightful, competent and gaily friendly person as starter in this program, and thank Mrs. Reynolds for her thoughtfulness in many ways.

Now we look forward to our second movie and lecturer, "Canada West", by Bert Harwell, on February 19th.

Don't miss it.

The Committee

## FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

## FIELD TRIPS

February 14th. To Manoa Cliffs Trail, under the leadership of Mr. Thomas R. L. McGuire. We have not been on this trail, which is rich in native plants, for some time. It is a good opportunity to refresh our memories on the names and uses of these plants. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 a.m.

February 28th. To Waipahu, for shore birds. This is the best area for studying the shore birds, which we have also been studying at the meetings. Not much walking, but you may get your feet wet. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 a.m.

## MEETING

February 15th, at the home of Mrs. Ruth R. Rockafellow, 2238 B Kalia Road at 7:30 p.m. February is the month in which we will have to decide whether to take the Audubon Screen tours another year, hence this will probably consum much of the evening. Miss Margaret Newman will lead the group in the study of the bristled-thighed curlew.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS: President, Miss Grace Gossard; Vice-Presidents, Mrs. Blanche A. Pedley, Miss Margaret Titcomb; Secretary, Miss Irma Botsford; Treasurer, Miss Margaret Newma n.

EDITOR, THE ELEPAIO: Miss Margaret Titcomb

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 5032, Honolulu 14, Hawaii. All officers have telephones listed under their names.