

# THE ELEPAIO

Journal of the  
Hawaii Audubon Society



For the Better Protection  
of Wildlife in Hawaii

Volume 14, No 9

March 1954

## AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

As we go to press, the closing-in time for the second lecture-movie is at hand. We have had the pleasure of success with the first picture, with Laurel Reynolas, and now look forward to Bert Harwell and his "Canada West" - with zest. Reports of his movie given to the schools are enthusiastic.

Mr Harwell arrived several days ago, spent a couple of days in Honolulu, then went off to see old friends - Mr John Wosky and Mr. George Ruhle - at the Hawaii National Park. He "shot" some nene, and various other less advertised birds, and spent enough time on Maui to give two performances of his "Canada West". It makes us particularly happy to have other islands begin to enjoy these superb pictures.

We hope Mr. Harwell will take away as pleasant a picture of Hawaii as we have of him, a most gracious, friendly man.

Fran William Hall and his wife come in April, the moment not yet announced. We shall enjoy them, we know, and try to make their promised eight weeks here full of picture opportunities and happy acquaintances.

## NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF FRENCH FRIGATE SHOAL

Part I: General account of visit of  
October 1953. By Frank Richardson

French Frigate Shoal is a large shallow area some 500 miles west-northwest of Oahu and includes some twelve small, flat, coral sand islands, and one small, double volcanic remnant - La Perouse Pinnacle. This group of islands, although part of the Hawaiian Archipelago, is widely separated from other islands of the chain, being some 100 miles beyond Necker Island and about 150 miles this side of Gardner Pinnacle. Although the avifauna of French Frigate Shoal is similar in many ways to that of the rest of the so-called leeward islands of Hawaii, so little has been published and from so many years past that recent observations may be of interest or value.

Two trips to French Frigate Shoal were made in late 1953. My first trip was taken on the Japanese fishing boat Osprey, owned and piloted by Mr Shinsato. I was accompanied by Ivan Rainwater of the Department of Agriculture and our goal was a ten-day stay on Nihoa Island for ornithological and archaeological study. We were not able to land on Nihoa, due to rough seas and approaching darkness, and so two days later were dropped off Tern Island of French Frigate Shoal where we stayed from



October 26 to November 2, making side trips to a number of the other islands of the Shoal. Tern Island is the only inhabited island of the group for it has a Coast Guard Loran Station with some 13 men. The Coast Guard very kindly offered us living quarters during our stay - and movies and an occasional meal aquarer than we could prepare from our Nihoa rations!

Following are general accounts of observations on different French Frigate islands. Numbers of birds, except where small, are rough estimates. On Tern Island they represent the maximum number of a species seen any day.

Tern Island. - This island of the Shoal was leveled and extended to form a landing strip several years ago. A year ago (fall 1952) the Coast Guard Station with its various buildings was transferred from East Island, several miles away, to Tern. All bird nesting, especially of Sooty Terns, was then largely eliminated or discouraged so that right now only a few shearwaters seem to represent the sea bird residents. Wild and even well-fed house cats, of which there are four or five on this small (a little over half a mile long) island, further discourage bird nesting and have killed hundreds of Golden Plover. We found large accumulations of plover wings as sad testimony of this.

Plover, turnstone, and sanderlings often congregate on the plane runway and seem to prefer this hard open area for resting and also use rainwater pools for bathing and drinking. These species all forage in the low, sparse vegetation above the beaches. The most common insect they may be getting is a small moth.

Species of birds seen:

Wedge-tailed shearwater	4	Western Gull	1
Frigate Bird	2	Sanderling	10
Blue-faced Booby	2	Golden Plover	14
Pintail Duck	1	Ruddy Turnstone	8
Mallard Duck	6	Common Noddy Tern	2
White Tern	2		

Trig, Skate, and Whale Islands - October 28, 1-5 P.M. - These three islands are two to three miles east of Tern Island and are all very low, rather barren, small (3-5 acres), and rarely visited. Each has low vegetation scattered on the coarse coral sand and gravel - chiefly clumps of grass, Boerhaavia, Tribulus, and Portulaca. Two large sea turtles were sleeping on the beach of Trig and one dead, newly hatched turtle was found on Whale. A large (7-8 feet) Hawaiian Monk Seal was sleeping on the beach of Skate Island and allowed approach to within a few feet. It then lumbered quickly into the water but stayed a little way off shore.

Species of birds seen:

Black-footed Albatross	75	Common Noddy Tern	250-350
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	85	Ruddy Turnstone	a few
Frigate Bird	500-700	Bristle-thighed Curlew	1
Blue-faced Booby	100-150		
Red-footed Booby	1		

East Island - October 31, 1:30 - 3 P.M. - There are many deserted buildings and a good deal of junk on this island. The species of birds seen were about the same as those on Trig, Skate and Whale. There were two curlews, some 30 albatrosses, and several hundred dead Common Noddy Terns, perhaps mostly full-grown young



deserted at the end of the past breeding season. A Tree Heliotrope about eight feet high, the only specimen of a tree or real bush in all of French Frigate Shoal (except a few small things now planted on Tern Island), is on this island. It was covered with nesting Red-footed Boobies, the only place where this species was found nesting..

La Perouse Pinnacle - October 31, 3:30 -4:30 P. M. - In spite of rough water, I was able to swim ashore and climb onto the west end of La Perouse without any trouble and then explore the cliff faces around its west end. I was not able to climb quite to the top without taking serious chances. It seems likely, though, that all the species of birds on the rock were seen and all nesting observed except perhaps of Frigate Birds. The occurrence here of three species (Hawaiian Noddy and White Terns, and Brown Boobies) and not on any of the coral islands of French Frigate Shoal is of much interest, as is the fact that they are all nesting now. Habitat preference is undoubtedly shown by the Hawaiian Terns with their predilection for cliffs. Perhaps the White Terns prefer rocky cliff ledges when trees are absent, as they are on the nearby coral islands. Why though has the ground-nesting Brown Booby come out to this great rock? Because of competition with Blue-faced Boobies or because of occasional molestation on other islands? Terns and Brown Boobies were nesting on almost the same rocky ledge habitat but the boobies on slightly larger ledges. The young shearwaters were also nearby but were more apt to choose cracks or holes.

The Golden Plovers seemed particularly out-of-place standing around on rocky or guano-covered ledges. It is hard to see what they could eat but they primarily may be resting. No vegetation was present on the parts of La Perouse I saw.

NA LAAU HAWAII  
(Plants belonging to Hawaii)  
By George C. Munro

Na Laau Hawaii has reached a stage when it can be said with confidence that it can, without great outlay, be made an ultimate success. In the making it will provide information of scientific value and furnish much pleasure to those interested. That is, if the little area is made secure as a "living museum" of the xerophytic or dryland plants of Hawaii; if the Hawaii Audubon Society can and is permitted to take a perpetual interest in it; if we continue to bring seed of native plants and to spread the seed of those already there and to eradicate foreign plants. It will take a long time to bring it to perfection but it will be an extremely interesting study as it proceeds. My work with nursery raised plants is not essential but furnishes experience and occasionally there may be results of some value from it. It may, perhaps sooner than the seed planting, provide something to show to attract interest in the project. Many people taking an interest in it will insure success. Without the friends who collected seed for it Na Laau Hawaii would not have made nearly the progress that it has.

Since the idea for this living museum was put into action on December 28, 1951 there has been a succession of droughts which has killed very old plants of several native species which were growing naturally on the side, but failed to destroy plants of wiliwili (Erythrina sandwicensis), seed of which was planted in 1950 and some in January 1951. The old native plants killed by the drought have seedlings growing by them. If these are killed, more seed, temporarily dormant in the ground, will germinate and the plants be established again on the spot. The natural cycle will work out if foreign plants are kept in check. Plants from seed of alaweo (Chenopodium sandwichium) that had been broadcasted grew well last wet season. The drought killed much of it but a great many fine plants remain and some will probably seed this year. Seed of plants that ripen on the area will be spread until plants are sufficiently established.



The heuhiuhi (Cassia gaudichaudii), nine feet high, nehe (Lipochaeta lobata var. albescens), about five feet high, and a pink morning glory, koali (Ipomoea conjesta insularis) with a stem half an inch in diameter, which was flowering in the top of an algeroba tree in 1950, all died with the two dry years, but, as stated before, the species are not exterminated on the site. Of the native grasses, the annual kakonakona (Panicum torridum) which formed such masses last year is probably also strong this year though it is hard to tell its proportion with other grasses at this stage. Emoloa (Eragrostis variabilis) stood the drought better than the pili (Heteropogon contortus) but both have made a good recovery. The fern (Doryopteris decora) brought from another part of Diamond Head has shown astonishing drought resistance. As much of it as possible without denuding other areas will be concentrated at Na Laau Hawaii. It is a very showy plant in the wet season but succumbs under regular watering in a garden.

Most of the nursery plants put out early last year died from various reasons but a new lot, mostly of different species, are growing now. These will stand a better chance of survival even if we do not get sufficient rain to soak the subsoil as they will be watered in the subsoil through bamboo tubes instead of on the surface.

The following is a list of dryland plants already on the side, seed of which is not needed from the outside:

<u>Erythrina sandwicensis</u>	Wiliwili
<u>Cassia gaudichaudii</u>	Heuhiuhi
<u>Lipochaeta lobata</u> var <u>albescens</u>	nehe
<u>Sida fallax</u>	Ilima
<u>Abutilon incanum</u>	Mao
<u>Tephrosia purpurea</u>	Ahuhu
<u>Eragrostis variabilis</u>	Emoloa
<u>Heteropogon contortus</u>	Pili
<u>Panicum torridum</u>	Kakonakona
<u>Chenopodium sandwichium</u>	Alaweo
<u>Portulaca oleracea</u>	Akulikuli laulia
<u>Boerhavia diffusa</u> var <u>tetrandra</u>	Alena
<u>Waltheria americana</u>	Hialoa

Other plants of which no help is needed in collecting seed are:

<u>Morinda citrifolia</u>	Noni
<u>Pandanus odoratissimus</u>	Hala
<u>Thespisia populnea</u>	Milo
<u>Callophyllum inophyllum</u>	Kamani
<u>Gossypium tomentosa</u>	Native cotton, Huluhulu
<u>Portulaca lutea</u>	Seaside perennial portulaca
<u>Sesuvium portulacastrum</u>	Akulikuli
<u>Tribulus cistoides</u>	Nohu
<u>Heliotropium anomalum</u>	Hinahina
<u>Cuscuta sanwichiana</u>	Popolo

Though seed of about 100 other plants have been planted or broadcasted more seed of these can be used as seed from different trees are often in a different stage, making germination more favorable. There are also many other plants from which seed has not been obtained. Those of the small plants and native grasses of the kula or open country are especially needed. I doubt if the full list of plants is known which constituted the dryland forest; some we associate with the rain forests may



have susisted there. On Lanai there are ohia, kukui, sugar cane, ti and maile growing on very dry land, and on Molokai sugar cane, ti and others on similar dry country. If anyone who wishes to help should come across ripe seed of native plants other than those in the two lists given above and sends some to me they will be put to good use in the cause.

-----000000-----

# REVIEW

Birds versus Fishing, by Ray Coll, Jr (Honolulu Advertiser, Jan 16, 1954)

Mr. Coll speaks of a letter to him from Capt. Bill Anderson, a man known to many of us, a fine seaman, captain of this boat and that during much of his life, born on an island of the Pacific, at home on the sea. The relationship of schools of aku (tuna) and flocks of seabirds is one topic of his letter, and the point is made that seabirds follow schools of tuna not because there is war between them but because the tuna scare up schools of smaller fish - their own food - to the surface, and the birds take advantage of the opportunity and feed on the smaller fish too.

Capt. Anderson's belief is that the birds return to land at night. "There are no nocturnal seabirds that I know of in all the Pacific ocean. Yes, you hear sooty terns at all hours but they are on their way home, (not resting on the ~~sea~~). This bird is the only species of migratory bird that feeds over aku schools. One can easily determine the kind of food the aku is after by the antics of this bird. If the food is squid, they go wild and seem to swarm over the aku school. If only small fish they are not so enthused.

"The two types of albatross are lone wolves. They do not depend on food brought to the surface by aku or ahi. Therefore, they are never seen to participate with other birds over schools of bigger fish.

"The scarcity of aku, ahi, etc. during the months between late September and late May is a well known fact, and is not due to lack of markers - birds, that is, claims Skipper Bill. And here's a list of migratory (sea) birds found in the Hawaiian Islands during breeding seasons: Laysan Island Albatross, Black-foot (albatross) Sooty Tern, non-migratory, Noddy Tern, Hawaiian Tern, Redfoot Booby, Common Booby, Blue-faced Booby, Man-of-War Hawk, White Love Bird, Christmas Island Shearwater, Petrel, Northwest Shearwater, Whitebreast Shearwater, Noio, or Ngoio (Gilbertese spelling) and Laehina."

-----000000-----

# CLIPPING, Newspaper.

On January 11th, the Honolulu Advertiser gave an account of "Protection of Wildlife to be Undertaken". We quote:

Marine personnel at marine corps air station, Kaneohe, and conservationists of the territorial division of fish and game have entered into a unique partnership aimed at protecting wildlife on the spreading military reservation.

Commissioned Warrant Officer, L M. Hill, station game warden, and John R. Woodworth of the fish and game division recently released 13 cocks and 13 hens of California valley quail on the station. At a later date a number of Chukar partridges also will be released in the Ft. Hase area, where three miles of food strips have been planted for the benefit of the quail.

The quail were trapped on the Pohakuloa game management range on the Big Island and brought to Oahu.

"Under the terms of our agreement," explained CWO Hill, "the division of fish and game will furnish stock and will offer technical advice. We of the marine corps



will do all the development work."

"The game conservation plan is actually part of an experimental program aimed at determining what type of management will increase wildlife most efficiently." Mr Woodward explains further.

The marine corps conservation enthusiasts at the air station are planning a mongoose control campaign to keep the rodents from destroying nests and young birds, it was indicated.

Trapping and banding of waterfowl by marines as an aid to the fish and game division's waterfowl research program under the guidance of CWO Hill is a regular feature of the program on the station.

Col. Frank G. Dailey, station commanding officer, has promised the territorial agency full cooperation in future ~~undertakings of~~ this nature.

-----000000-----

#### FIELD TRIPS

The scheduled, 7 A.M. bird walk for the month of January was taken over the Pohakea trail which is in the Kunia district of the Waianae mountains. It was a beautiful, sunny day, but the birading was not as good as it was expected it would be. We were able to see most of the species we could expect to see in this type of forest area, but only after careful listening and watchful searching.

At the gate, at the beginning of the trail, a bush warbler called out, and three of the party went off on a secondary trail to seek out the elusive One. With the usual results.

Elepaio were heard and seen all along the trail, and was the only specie very much in evidence. A group of amakihi, along with the similar colored mejiros were seen feeding in a small grove of koa.

While eating lunch the group discussed a number of things a propos birading in Hawaii, and one of the subjects batted back and forth was the idea of having a chart printed, card size, showing times of the year for bird observations in specific forest and shore areas, in relationship to the vegetation. The writer of this report hopes that something tangible is done about it.

Those taking the trip were Grenville Hatch, Ruth Rockafellow, Priscilla Harpham, Mr Rigor, Robert Pyle, Mace Norton, and Miss Argebright, of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The count for the day:

Bush warbler	1 (heard)	Leiiothrix	10
Kentucky cardinal	8	Elepaio	30
Barred dove	1	Linnet	3
Chinese dove	2	Amakihi	5
Mejiro	14		

Priscilla Harpham

January 10, 1954. The twelve members who assembled at the Library at 8:30 were apportioned to three cars and wet out for Makua, on the Waianae coast, under the leadership of Tom McGuire, accompanied by Mrs McGuire. Miss Hatch's car made a short stop at Waipahu to fulfill a promise she had made to Miss Argabright, a visitor from Kalamazoo, Michigan, to show her a Pacific golden plover. This promise was fulfilled five-fold, and a few rice birds, stilts, and forty or fifty turnstones



were thrown in for good measure.

Although it was January, we were favored with "a day in June", sunny and warm. The countryside was fresh and green after the recent rains.

Cars were parked near the cave at the Makua shore and we walked a mile or so farther, stopping for lunch on the rocky shore, with its pot-holes and pools gouged out of the solid basalt. In these pools were crabs, snails, sea slugs, coral and two or three species of minnows, one of which leaps from pool to pool. A few minnows were caught for Miss Hatch's half-grown fairy tern, after which we started back to the cars.

Interesting roadside plants were the Hawaiian sandburr, with its bright, inch-wide, yellow flowers, ilima, with unusually large blossoms, beach sandalwood, and Australian saltbush, with its tiny red berries. Grace Gossard's mother and Miss Smith spotted an eight-foot shrub with gray-green leaves and tubular yellow blossoms a member of the tobacco family, which is common along the roadsides in southern California and Mexico. The Mexican name for it is "magli". (Probably wild tobacco, called tree tobacco, or makahala, or paka, Hawaiian names, or Nicotiana glauca. Ed.)

Very few birds were seen along the old O.R. and L. right-of-way, but another stop at Waipahu produced the usual plovers, turnstones, coots, stilts and two night herons. The high tide deterred close approach to the water and the westering sun discouraged prolonged gazing. Opinion was voiced by members of the group that this would be a good spot to come on a morning when there was a low tide - equipped with hip boots, something to sit on, and portable blind.

Al Labreque

#### MARCH ACTIVITIES FIELD TRIPS

March 14th. To Kapalama trail under the leadership of Mr. Thomas R. L. McGuire. This is the trail starting from Kamehameha Schools. It was burned over several months ago, and it will be interesting to see the condition of the trail and the effects on bird life. The upper stretches of the trail afford good birding. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 A M

March 28th. To Kipapa trail. It has been several years since any of us have been on this trail since the approach road has become almost impassable for passenger cars. We await this trip eagerly to see what birds, and how many we find. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 A.M.

MEETING, March 15th at 7:30 P M. in the Community Board Room, upstairs at the WYCA. Since we had the opportunity last time, unexpectedly, to see a motion picture on wild life, the program for February was moved up to March. Miss Margaret Newman will lead the discussion on the bristle-thighed curlew.

---00000---

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

EDITOR, THE ELEPAIO: Miss Margaret Titcomb

MAILING ADDRESS: P O. Box 5032, Honolulu 14, Hawaii.