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NOTES ON MAINLAND BIRDING

Part II

By Grenville Hatch

For a thoroughly delightful motor trip, I recommend travelling with Pettingill's "Guide to Bird Finding West of the Mississippi" - or "East of the Mississippi", no doubt, for that section. My companion and I steer our course by it. The book is extremely accurate - it even directs you to the tenth of a mile on the "dirt road to the left". Birds that can be seen at each locality are listed. In all honesty, I have never yet seen half of the list for any one point, but even had no birds been seen, the book is still a wonderful guide, for it leads one into by-paths and side roads which are a delight, and show one the countryside as the main highways never do.

I cannot even begin to tell of the beautiful sights which I have seen since my last note to the readers of the Elepaio. We have visited the National Parks - Olympic, Rainier, and Crater Lake. The alpine meadows in the first two were beautiful, and the wildlife in all of them entertaining. Deer have become a common sight, off the highways as well as in the Parks. I shall long remember the golden mantled squirrels and the chipmunks which take peanuts from the hand; the raccoons at Rainier which came out from under the steps at Longmire to beg for food; and the tiny black bear cub, no larger than a dog. One form of wildlife which I have met everywhere is still a bit startling, although now I am fairly well adjusted to the garter snakes which slither across the grass.

One of the most exciting of my birding experiences was at Orcas Island. I went by motor boat to a tiny rocky islet, Bare Island, where, among other species, tufted puffins nest. The nesting season was over, only the burrows remaining to show where their nests had been, but to my delight, a tufted puffin in full breeding plumage was swimming near the island. He is the most amazing creature imaginable - huge triangular red bill, shading into a yellowish plum color at the base, white cheeks, and a long yellow tuft streaming from each side of the head. The boatman obligingly circled round and round the bird, coming so close that we could see the red rims about the eyes, which had a vaguely apprehensive look. Many others were seen later, flying close to the island, the gay heads and red feet in sharp contrast to the black bodies, but the first puffin is imprinted indelibly on my memory.

Another particularly good morning was spent on a trail at Rainier National Park, where in a beautiful setting, three pileated woodpeckers were engaged in their housekeeping. The tree in which they were working was dead, but even so, the flying chips were amazingly large, and the holes increased in size at great speed with an accompanying noise that sounded like human wood chopping.

I have just spent four days in the Klamath area, visiting Upper Klamath Lake, Lower Klamath Lake, and the Tule Lake Refuges. These refuges are a birder's paradise. They not only contain lakes and marshes, but a wide variety of other habitats. Tule Lake, the largest of the four in this area, has 35,000 acres, less than half of which is water. In all, 231 species of birds have been recorded in the four refuges. My own list is humble, but the length is not commensurate with the vast amount of pleasure I derived from my four days of watching. Imagine the ponds covered with tens of thousands of ducks; imagine a flock in the air so vast that it darkened the sky; or think of seeing an American egret - a beautiful white bird standing motionless, its image reflected in the water; or a flock of white pelicans circling with effortless ease.

Since the refuges are located in farm lands, the administrators have planted several thousand acres of barley, to persuade the ducks to feed at home, rather than on the neighboring farms. Mr. Horn, the administrator at Tule Lake, told me that the pintail like nothing better than to take a drink, then reach for a bit of barley. He kindly marked the evening feeding grounds of the pintail, where he estimated that possibly a quarter of a million of them now gather to feed, and more later, since the migration is late this year. I would not question his estimate. As the flocks came in, at first I attempted a rough count, then gave up and spent an hour in wonder and amazement.

We stopped briefly at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, where the ducks have not yet come in, in such numbers as at the more northern refuges, but still we found wildlife to be most interesting. A pause inland, then we head toward the coast again, hoping for shorebirds, particularly.

TROPIC-BIRDS AND OTHER BIRDS AT ULUPAU HEAD? JULY 24, 1954
By Robert Pyle

A visit to Ulupau Head at Kaneohe is almost always highlighted by pleasant surprises among the birds seen and studied. Most of the seabirds occurring in the Islands can be seen here at close range and studied at leisure without straying more than a few yards from the car. Since it is a particularly fine spot for newcomers to learn to identify the waterbirds, we took Mr. and Mrs. O. M. Stultz, visitors from the mainland, to Ulupau on July 24 for a day's birding. Mrs. Stultz is Director of the Audubon Center of Southern California and the National Audubon Society's Wildlife Sanctuary on the San Gabriel River near Los Angeles. The Stultz' are both very enthusiastic bird-watchers, and as usual the birds at Ulupau performed very beautifully for us.

There were the usual number of Red-footed Boobies on the slopes, including many juveniles flying or nearly ready to fly. There were lesser numbers of almost full-grown youngsters in all stages of transition from white down to dark plumage. However, we only saw one small downy chick. We were particularly delighted with one dark young fellow who had a patch of white down on his crown and perfectly tremendous pale pink feet.

Brown Boobies were seen several times down near the water as they flew out for a few second from the cliffs facing Moku Manu. Also below us, the Common and Hawaiian Noddies were flying by, easily identified for our excited visitors by the contrasting light gray tail of the Hawaiian species, or the dark tail blending with the back of the Common species.

The main feature of this trip, however, was our excellent chance to observe Red-tailed Tropic birds. The Stultz' had seen one previously from the Lurline when about two days out of Honolulu, but for the rest of us it was an unexcelled opportunity to study this scarce species at leisure and to compare it with its white-tailed cousin.

From shortly before noon until our departure two hours later, we had red-tails in view a large part of the time. They always came along in pairs, circling around the

Head and between the Head and Moku Manu. We never saw more than one pair at a time, so it is probable that the same pair of individuals visited us more than once. But on one occasion, one bird was easily identifiable from all the others, so there were at least three individuals there for certain and possibly at least two pairs. This different individual had very dark plumage on the underside, from the lower abdomen to the under tail coverts, and may possibly have been an immature.

Several White-tailed Tropic birds flew by during the afternoon. One of them was kind enough to fly along with a red-tail for a moment, so that we had wonderful chances to compare the two species directly. By far the surest way to separate the two species in the field is to look for the brilliant crimson bill and red tail feathers of the red-tail; or the yellow bill and white tail feathers of the white-tail. One pair of red-tails flew close by below us so that their red bills and tail feathers showed brilliantly in the sunlight against the deep blue ocean: a truly unforgettable study in red, white and blue.

If the light is poor or the birds are not close enough to see the bill color, then look for black markings on the upper side of the wings. The adult red-tail is practically pure white, while the adult white-tail has prominent black wing markings. This is normally a very good field mark, although one is not always in a good position to see the upper side of the wings. It should be remembered, too, that the immatures of both species are apt to be marked with black at various places.

The two species seem to have quite different types of elongated tail feathers. In the red-tail, the feathers are stiff and very narrow like red sticks. Consequently, at medium distances they appear to be very dark, and at greater distances they become practically invisible. On the other hand, the white-tail has broad white tail feathers that tend to droop toward the tips, and which often flop around in the wind when the bird is turning. These fluttery bright white tail feathers can usually be picked out almost as far as the bird can be seen. But the red-tail at these greater distances appears not to have the elongated tail feathers at all.

There were numbers of Sooty Terns, including some dark juveniles, flying back and forth from Moku Manu. Down on the ponds there were some 30 coots, about 30 stilts, 2 tattlers and one turnstone.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

We are well launched in plans for our coming Audubon Screen Tour 1955 season. Again we are fortunate to have the co-sponsorship of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum. As we managed to keep our heads above water last year, the Screen Tour committee has decided to broaden our horizons by moving to Dillingham Hall on the Punahou Campus so that we will not have to turn people away at the door as we did last year. However, we are still faced with the problem of raising sufficient funds to meet the transportation costs of the lecturers and are seeking help from various foundations and trusts in the community. Through this means we will be able to reduce the cost of the lecture films to the schools, thus making it possible for the public schools as well as the private schools to participate in the program which they were not able to do last year due to the expense.

We need the help of all the Society members to advertise and spread the news about the screen tours. We want all of you to take a block of season tickets to sell. A little later this month we will also be calling on you to help us address envelopes for the mailing-out of the program folder to those on our recently revised mailing list.

All of the guest lecturers for the coming year are outstanding men. Robert C. Hermes, our first lecturer, whose pictures you have seen in the National Geographic Magazine, and Life magazine, will show his movie "Bonaventure Diary" on Wednesday,

January 26. Bonaventure is a little island tucked away off the Gaspé coast near the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River where live unusual colonies of sea birds and other wild-life.

Our second guest is Dr. Telford H. Work who will show his film "Arctic to the Tropics" on Wednesday, March 16. Starting only 700 miles from the North Pole Dr. Work takes one on a global tour from the arctic tundra to the British Isles, overseas to Canada and the United States, down to the Fiji Islands and New Zealand, revealing fascinating and unusual birds and other wildlife of the world.

Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., a nationally known ornithologist, will be our third guest on Wednesday, April 20, when he will show his film, "In the Hills of Gold", a colorful film story of a rich and colorful region - The Black Hills. Wild birds and animals in their native haunts are the lead players in this motion picture set in a unique and historic area.

The Society wishes to extend a special vote of thanks to Bob Pyle for the excellent work he did in compiling our new check card. We are extremely pleased to have this as it meets a need long felt by our members. The bibliography which he prepared in the course of his study and which was published in the October issue of the Elepaio is also very much appreciated. Thank you very much, Bob.

FIELD TRIPS

ULUPAU HEAD, October 10, 1954.

Five of us showed up for our first walk in October, including Mr. Earle Greene, a visiting ornithologist from Los Angeles. Also in the group were the Bob Pyles, Joseph King, and Grace Gossard. The day was wet and blustering, making for exceedingly poor birding. We estimated the Booby colony at Ulupau Head at about 300, apparently many of the adult birds being out at sea. Most of the nests used during the summer were scattered, but we did see one immature with some of its down, though it too had taken on the brown coloration. Many immatures were circling in the air. The bad weather seemed to bring the frigate birds towards land, and in one flock flying near the hills we estimated to have about two dozen birds. Not a duck was seen, although we had expected them to have arrived in numbers by this time, since single individuals have been seen for over a month.

The inclement weather must have caused most of the birds to remain under cover, for in the ponds at the right of the Kaneohe Station we saw only a few coot, a half dozen Hawaiian terns a dozen stilt, a couple of tattler, and a scattering of sanderlings. Even the Golden plover and turnstone usually seen in numbers on the pond shore and in the short grass, were reduced in number.

The high light of the day was two white tern flying low over the water below Ulupau Head, to finally be lost in the cliffs below. Joseph King believed that probably they were carried in to shore by the wind, for he reports seeing them frequently from boats just a few miles off Oahu.

Grace Gossard

AIEA TRAIL, October 24, 1954.

The past years the Aiea trail has gained, and held the dubious reputation of not being a good area in which to observe or count birds. Checking back to January 1945, I found that there are five bird walks recorded in the Elepaio. Mr. Cogswell, in that January 1945 issue reports 10 species seen and that the "Society enjoyed one of the most fruitful bird walks since the war." In June 1948 Unoyo Kojima reports seeing 8 species, including the Chinese thrush. Eight species were reported in July 1950 by Miss Hatch,

who comments that "Aiea has never been one of the best trails for birds, so we enjoyed the beauty of the vegetation and open vistas." Miss Titcombe, in April 1952, says that "birds were there in plenty," and she lists five species - doves, cardinals, white-eyes, liothrix and mynahs. In December 1953 Miss Hatch lists four species having been seen: Elepaio, cardinals, white-eyes and Amakihi.

On Sunday, October 24, 1954, a group of eight made the trip to Aiea and were rewarded not by seeing a great number of species, but by great numbers of a few species. The fact of the matter is that we simply stopped counting the Elepaio and Apapane heard or seen. We actually saw only four Amakihi, but we heard them all along the trail, above and beyond the fire fighting equipment storage house. (I wish that either elevation or mileage markers could be put on the trails.) We also heard Apapane long before we saw it, and the four note call we constantly heard raised the usual argument as to whether we were hearing Apapane or Liothrix. There is a definite difference in timbre and pitch between the calls of the two species, and as I was the one that was so sure it was Amakihi calling, it was with some relief on my part when Joseph King finally did spot one - when we were sitting, eating our lunch.

There is no point in describing the vegetation at different points along the trail, for Miss Hatch has done that well, in her report of the December 1953 bird walk which was led by Mr. Thomas McGuire. I should like to say, only that the lehua was beginning to bloom, and the eucalyptus citriodora was in full bloom, and the Apapane was greatly attracted to it. The Amakihi seemed interested in their usual diet of whatever it is they find so luscious on the branches of koa trees.

We stopped on the way to Aiea at the pond area at the Kamehameha Highway-Aiea junction to check on shorebirds. The tide was high, and there were few species to be seen.

COUNT: Pond Area: Golden plover 8; Night heron 2; Ruddy turnstone 2; stilt 6.

<u>Aiea Trail</u> :	Elepaio	Too many to count	Liothrix	2 seen
	Apapane	Too many to count	White-eye	Too many to count
	Amakihi	4 seen, many heard		

Priscilla G. Harpham

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Just a reminder about our Christmas bird count and the area you would like to cover. We will talk about this in detail at our December meeting, but would like for each of you to voice your choices.

Grace Gossard

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIPS: November 14 - We will again check on the shore and water birds, going first to the flats near Waipahu, then if there is sufficient time, to Kahuku. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 A.M., bringing lunch and water. Transportation 25¢; if Kahuku is included, 75¢.

November 28 - Weather permitting, we will go to Poamoho. Let us hope that we will not only hear but see the garraulux. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 A.M., bringing lunch and water. Transportation 50¢.

MEETING: November 15 - The regular meeting of the Society will be held at the new aquarium, ^{at 7:30 P.M.} Following a short business meeting we will show two moving pictures from the film collection of the Library of Hawaii. One is "Spring Comes to the Pond" and the second is on wood ducks. Mr. Tinker asks that we park our cars in front, rather than at the side of the building.

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