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JAPANESE BUSH-WARBLER (UGUISU)

By Keisuke Kobayashi
Kobe, Japan

"Ume-ni-Uguisu" is a famous phrase in Japanese poems and literature and it is frequently used in the meaning of a harbinger of spring.

In typical Japanese gardens, Ume (plum trees) are indispensable. In Central Honshu, small white flowers cover the blossoming trees as early as the latter part of February or first part of March. Their sweet smelling fragrance floats on the breeze and permeates the garden. It is just about this season that the Uguisu begin to sing their spring songs. This is indeed one of the ideal landscapes of Japan.

Later when we really begin to enjoy the comfortable zephyrs of late spring, the song of the Uguisu fades out unnoticed from our garden. At this time, if we go out to hillsides where the flaming azalea is in full bloom, the most remarkable song of nature's chorus is this very song of the Uguisu. The Uguisu is one of the most common species in the lower mountainous region, the subalpine region, as well as in the shrub belt of the alpine region in Central Japan.

However, since it usually hides under bushes, it is not very easy to observe the bird, even though we enjoy its beautiful song everywhere on our hikes through the mountain.

The Uguisu usually make very fragile nests in the bushes and bamboo grass. The nests are built vertically in branches, with an entrance on the upperside. The principal materials of the nest are fallen bamboo-grass leaves; the height from the ground is one to three feet on the average. A set consists of four to six eggs - glossy dark brownish red, without markings. (18 X 14 mm)

It is well known that Uguisu are the most common foster parents of the Little Cuckoo, "Hototogisu" (Cuculus p. poliocephalus). Frequently we find a slightly larger egg (22 x 16 mm) but of similar color in the nest of the Uguisu. Needless to say this is the egg of the Little Cuckoo.

The nestling of Little Cuckoo which hatches earlier than Uguisu, pushes the unhatched Uguisu's eggs out of the nest and grows up by getting exclusive possession of the foods which Uguisu parents bring. It is not uncommon to see a nest fully occupied by a young Little Cuckoo, and sagging, unable to bear its weight. The fully opened mouth of the young cuckoo looks as if it were swallowing the whole head of its small foster parent feeding it.

If we hide silently near a nest, we can observe through a glass the food parents bring. These are green worms, flies, and other small insects. Actually the stomach contents of the collected birds are usually remains of small insects. However, the Uguisu often suck honey of plum flowers or camellia flowers during the winter.

Generally speaking, it is not easy to keep insect eating birds in cages. However, since ancient time we, Japanese, are so fond of Uguisu's beautiful song, that we have trained it in its cage. We feed it on a mixture of rice bran, dried powdered fish, rice powder, and greens. Furthermore, since ancient time, it is well studied that if the Uguisu is kept awake till late in the evening under lights, it starts to sing as early as New Year. While some are very good singers by nature, others are quite the contrary. Therefore, experienced bird lovers often capture male nestlings from nests and keep them near the cage of a prominent singer in order to let the young birds imitate its beautiful song.

They often hold contests of the Uguisu song to determine the champion singer.

Probably the readers will not quite believe, but it is true that Japanese Geisha girls used to wash their faces with the excrement of caged Uguisu. Even now, this custom remains in the country, I think. They hope by doing so to become smooth-skinned girls. Of course, this is nothing but a groundless superstition. However, if I stand up for them, I should say that as the main food of the caged Uguisu is rice bran, this cosmetic is not wholly without effect.

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Keisuke Kobayashi, writer of the above article, is no stranger to our pages, having contributed, several years ago, a series of article on Japanese birds. We have just received an examination copy of his fine new book on Japanese birds, a review of which will appear in our next issue.

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THE JAPANESE BUSH WARBLER IN HAWAII By Grace Gossard

Elusive, tantalizing, shy, teasing are frequent adjectives applied to the Japanese Bush Warbler in Hawaii. Such comments as this of Margaret Clark are found throughout our ELEPAIO notes on bird walks, "From the beginning of our walk the Japanese Bush Warbler kept us tantalized by his invisible nearness, calling constantly and wandering off into his shaky song from time to time." So it is somewhat comforting to learn from Mr. Kobayashi that it is not just in Hawaii the bush warbler hides in bushes and is hard to observe though its song is enjoyed everywhere in the mountains.

This bird was released on Oahu in 1929 by the Board of Agriculture and Forestry and later by the Hui Manu and others. In George C. Munro's "Hawaiian Bird Survey, 1937-1938" he writes that the Japanese Bush Warbler seems to be doing fairly well but is not very well established. He mentioned hearing it in 1935 in the Waianae mountains, and on the Niu trail, indicating that it seemed to be at home in these drier forests.

The concensus now is that it is slowly extending its range and has found suitable habitat in wetter areas in the Koolaus, such as Poamoho, Kawailoa, Kipapa, Waiawa, Pupukea, and Kaunala. But it is still probably more common in the Waianae Mountains and particularly in the upper Pa Lehua section where it can usually be heard calling from the end of the road to the top of the ridge. At least one's chances of seeing the bird are somewhat enhanced in this area as the trail follows the ridge and it is possible to look down both sides into the ohia and other shrub-like bushes which this warbler favors.

It is almost a game to try to see the bush warbler, to stalk and observe it before it sees you and drops down into the undergrowth, only to utter its inimitable call twenty feet away, out of sight. On a rare occasion we have had fleeting glimpses of one sitting in a shrub singing, or feeding among the twigs of the bushes, or making a sudden dart into the air as though seeking insects, returning immediately to his hidden perch. It seems to be a solitary, non-gregarious, unaggressive bird. Usually as we proceed over the trails only one or two will be heard calling at a time leading to speculation as to whether both feeding and nesting territories are staked out by the birds.

The song of the bush warbler is a mysterious, thrilling, exceptionally low pitched note repeated or prolonged with a curious rolling effect, followed by a couple of musical phrases much higher in pitch, dying slowly away at the end. Unoyo Kojima wrote the song out in one of her reports as "ho-ho-hokekyo". In the months of March, April and May its singing is much more pronounced, trilling on and on as though to stop would foretell a doom. On one occasion at Pa Lehua we heard one that sang breathlessly on for 15 to 20 minutes, wound up like a music box.

This is a plain, inconspicuous bird for being such a beautiful songster. It is about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length with a body a little chunkier than the English Sparrow. Top of head and shoulders are greenish; upper parts brown and black; below yellow in varying shades. I know of only one nest being found in the Pa Lehua section, but unfortunately no account was recorded. With Mr. Kobayashi's description we now know where to look for nests and can plan on our trips next Spring to creep along the trail looking into the low bushes.

Of our exotic birds, there has been no evidence as yet that the Japanese Bush Warbler has brought harm or loss to our native island birds, although it lives among the apapane, elepaio and amakihi. If its status will stabilize at its present level, we probably need not fear its encroachment into the territories rightfully belonging to the native birds, for it is indeed a charming, enjoyable bird that has been added to our landscape.

A TRIP ON A SAMPAN By Joseph E. King

How many of our Audubon Society members know that here in Hawaii we have an important industry which is dependent upon birds--the sea-birds? Without birds the Hawaiian tuna fishermen would be unable to find the skipjack schools which provide them with a livelihood and the rest of us with about 12 million pounds of delicious high-protein food each year.

I thought it might be of interest to give a brief account of a 2-day trip made recently aboard a sampan or aku boat as it is known locally. We departed Kewalo Basin at 4 a.m. (the fisherman's life is a hard one) on May 22 and ran south from Honolulu. With the first light the crew posted a watch and as our visibility improved we began to see scattered birds and small flocks heading out to sea. The skipper observed the direction they were flying and changed course accordingly. After about a 4-hour run of approximately 40 miles we sighted the first concentration of feeding birds and headed for it. A "working" flock of birds in Hawaiian waters usually means a tuna school. The tunas feed on shoals of small fish which they crowd to the surface thus setting the table for the birds which are quite eager to take advantage of the situation. When the tunas are at the surface the birds work low over the water in a frenzy of diving, swooping and circling. In a few minutes the tuna may sound; the concentrated flock rises, spreads out and circles high watching for the school to resume feeding. The crewmen, fishing the tuna school with pole and line using live bait as chum, are able perhaps to land a ton or more of fish during the 10 or 12 minutes that the school is at the surface.

They believe that the birds can follow the movements of the fish even at considerable depth, so when the flock wheels and strikes out in a definite direction the sampan is not far behind. When the school surfaces again and the flock resumes feeding, the sampan soon arrives on the spot, live bait is again thrown out, fishing starts and in a few minutes another ton of fish is aboard. We caught 9,000 pounds of skipjack in this manner from three schools of fish in 41 minutes of actual fishing time. And it could not have been done without the birds.

That night at about 10 p.m. we returned to Kewalo Basin, unloaded our catch and tied-up in the harbor for some sleep before trying it again the next day. We departed before daybreak and this time ran west along the coast. A cloudy sunrise over the mountains was an impressive sight from off the Waianae coast. During the day we searched a large area of the channel west of Oahu but without success--such is fishermen's luck. A number of schools located through working bird flocks were passed-up, because the fish were too small according to the fishermen. It was late that night when we returned to harbor.

Supposedly, the size of the school, the size of fish in the school, and the depth at which they are moving can be pretty accurately judged from the number and behavior of the birds--if one knows what to look for. Certain species of birds behaving in a certain manner spell out a mahi-mahi (dolphin) school to the experienced fisherman; other behavior may indicate a school of large yellowfin tuna.

The Territory Division of Fish and Game is fully aware of the importance of the sea-birds to the local fishery. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to obtain a pass to go ashore at Rabbit Island, Moku Manu and the other bird islands off our coasts.

For the record, the following species were sighted on May 22-23, south and west of Oahu within 50 miles of shore:

Black-footed Albatross	Red-footed Booby
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Pomarine Jaeger
Christmas Island Shearwater	Sooty Tern
Audubon's - Newell's - Dusky Shearwater (?)	Common Noddy
Bulwer's Petrel	Hawaiian Noddy
Great Frigate Bird	

The flocks working over the tuna schools varied in size from 10 to 100 birds and were mainly composed of the Common Noddy and Wedge-tailed Shearwater. In addition there were sometimes a few Hawaiian Noddy, Red-footed Booby and Bulwer's Petrel. Several of the flocks contained 2 or 3 shearwaters which I could not identify with certainty. Their smaller size, peculiar flight and color pattern distinguished them from the Wedge-tailed Shearwater, and although I felt sure they were one of the Audubon's - Newell's - Dusky complex, I could not pin them down.

Some of the flocks were accompanied by frigate birds. The albatross usually occurred singly and not directly associated with the other birds. I was rather surprised to see the jaeger, which when sighted was pursuing a flock of terns about 20 miles west of Kaena Point. They occur in local waters in considerable numbers, of course, during the winter months, but since they breed in the subarctic, one wouldn't expect to see them in Hawaii at this time of year. The main flock was gone from their usual feeding ground at the sewer outlet off Honolulu, but this one bird had stayed on for some reason.

May 31, 1956

ALFRED NEWTON: ORNITHOLOGIST
By Charlotta Hoskins

Zoogeography is a term which appears with growing frequency in modern usage. The study or description of the geographical distribution of animals; especially the determination of the land and marine areas characterized by special groups of animals and the study of the causes and significance of such groups has an important bearing on evolution, variation, and other biological studies of this day.

Yet, Professor ALFRED NEWTON (1829-1907), as early as 1854, was concerned with zoogeography, and particularly with ornithology.

Born in Geneva on June 11, 1829, to an old East Anglian family, the fifth son, Newton was educated privately, but eventually entered Magdalene College, Cambridge, as an undergraduate and took his B.A. degree in 1853. In 1852 and 1853 he gained the English essay prize at Cambridge and in 1854 he was elected to a travelling fellowship at his college, which he held until 1863. During this time he visited Lapland, Iceland, the West Indies, and North America, and in 1864 he accompanied Sir Edward Birkbeck to Spitsbergen, then but little known zoologically. To these travels may in all probability be attributed a large proportion of his unrivalled knowledge of the distribution and habitats of European birds. To his enthusiasm also may be attributed the inspiration of many of his pupils, notably Scott Barchard Wilson and Henry Evans, who travelled to Hawaii in 1887 and whose The Birds of the Sandwich Islands added not inconsiderably to the knowledge of birds in this area.

At a later period, during a visit to Heligoland, Newton sustained an injury in landing from a boat which seriously increased a lameness possibly due to a childhood accident. His ornithological observations, however, continued for many years subsequently during summer yachting cruises undertaken in company with Henry Evans on the west coast of Scotland and elsewhere, and his scientific writing flourished prolifically.

Newton considered the most important event in his life to have occurred in 1866 when he was elected to the then newly-established professorship of zoology and comparative anatomy at Cambridge, a somewhat poorly paid office which he held until his death on June 7, 1907. He was elected to many scientific societies and collected many honors, among them a Royal medal awarded him by the Royal Society in 1900 for his services to ornithology and zoogeography.

In 1868 he brought before the British Association the subject of the protection of birds; and he was subsequently for several years chairman of the close-time committee, during which time the first three Acts devoted to bird-protection were passed by Parliament. As the British Government was the first to move in this matter, Newton may also be regarded as the father of bird-protection throughout the world, and indeed of all legislation of this nature which had its origin in his early efforts. His endeavors to check the collecting of osprey plumes form another of his many claims to the gratitude of posterity. The establishment and maintenance of stations for observing the migration of birds also claimed a large share of his time and attention, and he was for many years chairman of the British Association's Migration of Birds Committee.

The scientific writings of Newton, which relate chiefly to ornithology, are remarkable for their finished and scholarly style as well as for their extreme accuracy. His earliest recorded paper appears to be one on the cedar-bird, published in "The Zoologist" for 1852; this being followed in the next year's issue of the same journal by one on the habits of the Kiwi. After visiting the West Indies he wrote a paper on the birds of those islands which appeared in the first issue of "The Ibis". He took a prominent part in the founding of "The Ibis", of which he edited the second series (1865-1870). He also took an active share in the founding of "The Record of Zoological Literature" (now Zoological Record), a publication without which the study of zoology would now be practically impossible.

Newton's brother, Edward, also interested in birds, was auditor-general of Mauritius, and later governor. Perhaps he directed Newton's attention to living and extinct birds of the Mascarene Islands, during the 1860's while he was incumbent there. In 1868 he and his brother did an important paper on the remains of a dodo-like bird from Rodriguez commonly known as the solitaire; and later another paper on other extinct birds of Rodriguez.

At an early period in his career, Newton contributed to "The Ibis" an epitome of John Wolley's investigations into the history of the extermination of the great auk, or garefowl; and from that time to his death the story of that bird was a subject to which his attention was constantly devoted.

Another early paper was his "Suggestions for Forming Collections of Birds' Eggs", published in 1860, and from that time onward the study of eggs attracted a large share of his attention. He came into the collection of John Wolley's magnificent egg collection on condition, it is believed, that he would write a descriptive catalogue embodying the collector's notes. Ootheca Wolleyana is one of Newton's major writings. For a long time he believed that eggs might afford important clues to many vexing questions connected with avian relations; but this hope he was reluctantly compelled in the main to abandon.

To the public he is perhaps best known as the editor of the first two volumes of the revised and enlarged fourth edition of Yarrell's British Birds, the first part of which appeared in 1871, though the second was not completed until 1882.

He contributed to the 9th edition of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" a large series of articles on different groups and species of birds, and the article, "Ornithology"; the article, "Birds" being the joint work of Newton and Professor W. K. Parker. With the assistance of Professor Hans Gadow, these articles were subsequently combined by their author to form the well-known Dictionary of Birds (1893-1896) which forms a perfect mine of information on ornithological subjects.

Enthusiastic student of zoological distribution as he was, he did not confine his interest to ornithology alone. He wrote also a text called Zoology (1872) and Zoology of Ancient Europe (1862).

Although he was essentially conservative in all matters connected with natural history, he was not bigoted, and could readily modify or change his views. He was an early convert to the theory of evolution, and published a pamphlet on "Early Days of Darwinism".

At his death Newton was mourned as "a distinguished professor and working zoologist, a great benefactor to Cambridge's zoological museum, and a social figure whose place cannot be filled". (Nature. v76 #1964, June 20, 1907)

JULY ACTIVITIES:

- FIELD TRIPS: July 8 - To Poamoho. Our old favorite, which we have rather neglected of late. Meet in front of the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 a.m.
- July 22 - To St. Louis Trail. This is a new trail for our group, reported to be not difficult. It will be interesting to see what birds we find in the area. Meet at Library at 8:00 am.
- MEETING: July 16 - At the Aquarium auditorium at 7:30 p.m. A Disney film "Nature's Half Acre" will be shown. This is considered by many to have been one of the best of the Disney Nature films, so a treat is in store for us.

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