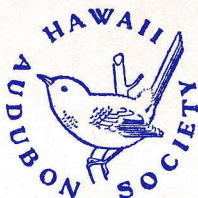


THE ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society



For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

JULY 1957

THE SITUATION ON MIDWAY By Karl W. Kenyon of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Midway, as you know, is soon to become an important link in the Air Early Warning organization or DEW line. For this reason a great deal of construction and other activity is in progress, particularly on Sand Island. Many acres of land are being plowed up for enlargement of facilities to handle aircraft and new buildings are being constructed. Of course, this means that a considerable number of birds are being displaced. It is unavoidable that the Laysan Albatross population on Sand Island will be reduced, since the birds now nest virtually everywhere on the Island. All of the birds on Eastern Island are being left completely undisturbed.

At present a destruction program is being conducted by the Navy in limited areas along the most used runway here. The Navy is anxious to reduce the possibility of plane damage and fatal accidents. We have agreed to this limited experimental reduction and are keeping careful track of the effect here. The bulk of the albatross population on this island will not be affected by this program and the total albatross population will be reduced by a small percent, by present calculations less than 4%. To those of us who are fond of birds even this is unfortunate. However, we realize that the number of birds that must be sacrificed in the interests of human safety and national security constitute a minor fraction of the populations in the Leeward Chain. Also it is recorded that before the ironwood trees and various shrubs were planted on Sand Island the Laysan albatrosses were very scarce here. We are making every effort to protect the interests of the birds and to extend protection to them in areas where they do not interfere with operations and construction. In order to gather facts on the movements of birds we have dyed birds in various areas with different colors and recorded observations. Our object is to learn where birds originate that fly over runways. This work was started by Dr. John W. Aldrich, Chan Robins and Dale Rice last December. We hear that the marked birds have caused some consternation and that several photographic enthusiasts have been delighted with the various red, violet and green "color phases" of the gooney birds.

Since we have been here the Navy has taken us on several flights during which we have had series of aerial photographs taken and made observations. Our eyes have become very tired counting albatrosses on these photos, but we are obtaining interesting information. These flights have taken us over Kure, Laysan, Lisianski, Pearl and Hermes Reef.

Before the young albatrosses leave their nesting islands, we expect to place numbered and colored bands on at least 5,000. These marked birds will constitute a valuable reservoir of known-age birds from which we will be able to gather important life history information in the future. We plan to do much of this work, as well as

other studies not directly related to the Bird Hazard to Aircraft problem, on Eastern Island, where the birds are practically undisturbed.

Navy squadrons, using Midway as a re-fueling stop, have been most cooperative in taking birds for us to distant locations and releasing them. We believe that our Laysan albatross that returned from Manila, about 4,120 land miles, made some kind of record for long distance in returning to its home. Others have done very well in returning from areas which we believe are quite out of their range. Only a few are still missing or unaccounted for.

The throngs of sooty terns are now assembling over both Sand Island and Eastern Island. Unfortunately those coming to Sand Island have nested, during past years, in the vicinity of one of the main runways and the flocks of birds that rise in front of fast moving aircraft have caused expensive and sometimes dangerous situations. With the helpful advice of Dr. Martin Moynihan, who recently visited here during a tour to study tern behavior, we are conducting a program directed toward frightening the terns away from their ancestral nesting ground. We hope we can make them move to Eastern Island or some unused area away from the runways. The birds have been kept off the ground through the use of fires on the ground and flares shot into the air. We are finding, that, as with other pelagic birds and mammals, the sooty terns have developed, through countless generations, an instinctive pattern that is almost impossible to disrupt. Gulls and terns nesting in regions where predators have disturbed them during the many years of their evolution have not become as rigid in their breeding cycle and disturbance of their colonies may cause them to move. We are finding that we are dealing with birds whose evolution has apparently greatly limited their flexibility or adaptability. New environmental conditions have almost never existed for them and they are unable to cope with new situations.

Our studies here keep us very busy and we hope that the information we are assembling will contribute both to the preservation of our unique oceanic bird life and at the same time alleviate the problems of the human beings now competing with the birds for the limited dry land available.

April 25, 1957

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BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT MIDWAY ATOLL
By Karl W. Kenyon and Dale W. Rice

In the annotated list which follows we have omitted the Laysan and Black-footed albatrosses, since they are mainly the subjects of our discussion of the Bird Hazard to Aircraft Problem, and related construction work here.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater (Puffinus pacificus)

Newly-fledged young common until 13 December 1956. Adults first seen on 19 March 1957.

Black Shearwater¹ (Puffinus nativitatis)

Fairly common on Eastern Island. Arrived 22 March 1957.

Sooty Shearwater (Puffinus griseus)

One dead one washed up on beach on 29 March and two more on 10 April 1957.

Thick-billed Gadfly Petrel² (Pterodroma hypoleuca)

Extremely abundant on Sand Island ever since our arrival; nesting. Very rare on Eastern Island.

1. Also known as Christmas Island Shearwater

2. Also known as Bonin Island Petrel

Red-tailed Tropic-bird (Phaethon rubricauda)

Fairly common until early December. About a dozen around all winter. A great influx in late February. Now extremely abundant on both islands. On warm afternoons several hundred can be seen in the air at one time. Beginning to lay, and one newly-hatched young found on 1 April 1957.

White-tailed Tropic-bird (Phaethon lepturus)

One seen on 26 March 1957 by Dr. Martin Moynihan.

Red-footed Booby (Sula sula)

Common on Eastern Island; now nesting but no young yet. Seventy-six birds on nests were counted in the largest colony on 29 March 1957.

Brown Booby (Sula leucogaster)

Four pairs nesting on Eastern Island; at least two more pairs present.

Masked Booby (Sula dactylatra)

Two pairs now have young on Eastern Island. At least twelve of these boobies in Midway Atoll.

Great Frigate-bird (Fregata minor)

Common and nesting on Eastern Island. At the largest colony, 133 adult birds were counted on 29 March 1957.

Balpate (Anas americana)

One male on Sand Island on 26 November 1956. Pair observed on Eastern Island on 27 February and again on 1 March 1957.

Pintail (Anas acuta)

Hens only seen frequently as follows:

Sand Island -- 20 November 1956 (1)

28 November 1956 (1)

2 December 1956 (1)

3 December 1956 (1)

Eastern Island -- 29 November 1956 (1)

5 December 1956 (two flocks, six and four)

Redhead (Aythya americana)

A female diving duck which appeared to be this species was seen on 13 December 1956 on Sand Island.

Golden Plover (Pluvialis dominica)

Abundant on both islands ever since our arrival.

Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres)

Common on both islands ever since our arrival.

Whimbrel (Numenius phaeopus)

Single individuals seen on Sand Island on seven different occasions:

6 and 28 January 1957

1, 21 and 23 February 1957

28 March 1957

1 April 1957

Also, one on Rocky Island on 27 March 1957.

All were apparently of the Siberian race (N. p. variegatus), as they had dowitcher-like white patches on their lower backs. The voice is a rapid high-pitched "tu-tu-tu-tutu", much like that of the greater yellowlegs, and entirely unlike the voice of the bristle-thighed curlew.

Bristle-thighed Curlew (Numenius tahitiensis)

Fairly common during the entire period.

Wandering Tattler (Heteroscelus incanus)

Fairly common ever since our arrival.

Dunlin (Erolia alpina)

One observed in minute detail on Eastern Island on 29 November 1956.

Sanderling (Calidris alba)

Observed on a number of occasions, as follows:

Sand Island -- 28 November 1956 (6)

12 December 1956 (1)

29 December 1956 (6)

15 February 1957 (4)
 22 February 1957 (6)
 28 February 1957 (5)
 2 March 1957 (2)
 Rocky Island -- 14 January 1957 (2)
 27 March 1957 (3)

Herring Gull (Larus argentatus)

Immature gulls tentatively identified as herring gulls were seen on:

20 December 1956 (3)
 23 December 1956 (3)
 24 December 1956 (1)
 27 January 1957 (1)

Glaucous-winged Gull (Larus glaucescens)

An adult of this species was seen on 8, 20, and 23 December 1956; it was found dead on 7 March 1957, and sent to the U.S. National Museum.

An immature gull believed to be this species was seen on 5 January and 10 April 1957.

Glaucous Gull (Larus hyperboreus)

A subadult was seen on 28 November, 5 and 20 December 1956, and 5 and 24 January 1957.

Sight identifications of gulls are, of course, open to much doubt, and should be regarded as hypothetical.

Additional immature gulls, apparently either glaucous or glaucous-winged, were seen on 23 December 1956 and 1 January 1957.

Sooty Tern (Sterna fuscata)

First seen on 6 March 1957.

Up to 20 thousand over Sand Island in the evenings, and several thousand on Eastern Island.

Not yet nesting.

Gray-backed Tern (Sterna lunata)

First seen on 16 March 1957; on Eastern Island only.

About 30-40 birds in the colony, but no eggs as yet.

Brown Noddy (Anous stolidus)

Frequent on Sand Island, and rare on Eastern Island, ever since our arrival.

An estimated 40 and 25 pairs, respectively, in the two largest colonies on Sand Island.

Peak of hatching season around the first two weeks in December.

White-capped Noddy (Anous tenuirostris)

Several hundred pairs breeding on Sand Island.

Present, and nesting, continuously since our arrival.

Fairy Tern (Gygis alba)

Abundant on both islands and on Five Mile Reef.

Nesting ever since the first of January on Sand and Eastern Islands.

No eggs nor young found on Five Mile Reef.

Short-eared Owl (Asio flammeus)

One seen on Eastern Island on 29 November 1956, and one on Sand Island on 26 February and 29 March 1957.

Canary (Serinus canarius)

Thriving in the residential area of Sand Island; occasionally seen elsewhere on Sand Island.

Flocks of up to two dozen frequently seen feeding on the lawns.

Rock Dove (Columba livia)

Nesting commonly in buildings on Sand Island.

21 April 1957

A SALTON SEA TRIP
By Earle R. Greene¹ and Joseph E. King

After negotiating the intricate freeways of Los Angeles we breathed a sigh of relief when we finally reached open country and headed for the desert. It was November 1, 1956, and we had long been looking forward to this trip to the great Salton Sea to observe the bird life in that interesting area.

Arriving at Palm Springs about noon we took time out for lunch. Soon afterward at the outskirts of the "village" a short hike gave us a start on our list with Sparrow Hawk, Mourning Dove, Chinese Spotted Dove, Road Runner, Say's Phoebe, Raven, Crow, Verdin, Mockingbird, Loggerhead Shrike and Western Meadowlark.

We proceeded through Indio to Mecca where we picked-up a flock of Western Lark Sparrows. Then running southeast on Highway 111 we soon spotted the Salton Sea. Travelling down the east shore we stopped many times for observations, recording a number of Eared Grebe, Great Blue Heron, one lone Shoveller, a number of Ruddy Ducks, Western Red-tailed Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, numerous Coots, several Killdeer, a Spotted Sandpiper, Willet, Mourning Dove, Long-Billed Marsh Wren, Water Pipet, Audubon's Warbler, Meadowlark, and about 20 Redwings. Arriving at Brawley about 5 p.m. we checked into a good motel, and from the speedometer found that we had travelled about 228 miles since morning.

That evening we looked over the small amount of literature we had with us on the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge and learned that the Refuge consists of 36,927 acres, was established in 1930 and is primarily for the protection of geese, Fulvous Tree Ducks, ibises, ducks, shorebirds and terns. The Refuge Manager is Edward J. O'neil.

Early the next morning on the road out to the refuge we encountered a flock of 5,000 or more blackbirds which gave us considerable trouble. Since we could discern no white in the eyes of the males, we thought they might be the Rusty, but the distance was great and the flock kept on the move, so we were not able to make a positive identification.

The day was spent entirely in the refuge at the southern end of the sea. Mr. O'Neil very kindly took us on a tour of the area and pointed out many species which we would otherwise have overlooked. While riding in his truck and listening to his short-wave radio, we were greatly surprised to overhear conversation between government refuge men in the east, and were able to talk directly with the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge in Georgia, which was indeed a thrill. (Greene was formerly Refuge Manager at Okefenokee.)

Mr. O'Neil informed us that the water level of the sea was rising, possibly because of the inflow of irrigation water, and that the best areas of the refuge were being flooded to such depth that they soon would be of little value to water fowl. This is a serious situation since farmers and hunting clubs own all the land adjoining the refuge and it cannot change its boundaries to follow the advancing shore line.

Although our visit was actually too early in the season to catch the maximum numbers of water fowl, we did manage to see many interesting things. Our list for

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1. Editor's note: Mr. Greene, a resident of Los Angeles and a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society and the A.O.U., visited Hawaii a few years ago at which time he joined our Society. We're glad to hear from him.

the day included -- White Pelican, American Egret, Snowy Egret, Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, White-fronted Goose, Lesser Snow Goose, Green-winged Teal, Baldpate, Pintail, Shoveller, Cinnamon Teal, Lesser Scaup, Turkey Vulture, Gambel's Quail, Florida Gallinule, Snowy Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Greater Yellow-legs, Red-backed Sandpiper (?), Dowitcher, Western Sandpiper (?), Marbled Godwit, Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Western Burrowing Owl, Gila Woodpecker, Robin, Western Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Linnet, Abert's Towhee, and White-crowned Sparrow.

Back to Brawley for the night, checked in at a good lodge, had a fine swim in a heated pool and a dinner afterward in town. (This birding is really a rugged sport.)

We got an early start the next morning, drove northwest on Route 99 then turned west on Route 78 and crossed through a portion of the Anza Desert State Park. In this desert area we recorded the Sparrow Hawk, Road Runner, California Jay, and Rock Wren. In the neighborhood of Julian we saw the Red-shafted Flicker, Western Bluebird, Meadowlark, Common Cowbird, Green-backed Goldfinch, and Oregon Junco.

Finally reaching Carlsbad on Route 101 near the coast, we paid a short visit to the Maxton Brown Sanctuary. Although cut-through by highways and surrounded by dwellings, the sanctuary provides shelter and feeding grounds to a large number of water fowl. At close range we observed the Eared Grebe, White Pelican, Double Crested Cormorant, American Egret, Snowy Egret, American Bittern, Mallard (which we suspected were at least semi-domesticated), Green-winged Teal, Pintail, Shoveller, Cinnamon Teal, Greater Scaup (?), Ruddy Duck, Coot, Killdeer, Greater Yellow-legs, Dowitcher, Avocet, Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Forster's Tern, and Black Phoebe.

We arrived back in Los Angeles about 4 p.m. having covered 546 miles by car and quite a few on foot during the three days. Our trip list added up to about 75 species for the three days. Although we had seen nothing particularly rare or unusual we agreed that it had been a very pleasant trip.

February 11, 1957

A LAYSAN ALBATROSS, a species which rarely finds its way into the waters near Hawaii, was found off Oahu on March 27th. The bird died two days later, from unknown causes.

FIELD NOTES:

Field Trip to Waiawa Ditch Trail, May 26, 1957

"Birding in a botanist's paradise" is this malihini's description of the field trip to Waiawa Ditch Trail on Sunday, May 26. Nine species were observed, mostly by ear, especially the Leiothrix which scolded us loudly but kept themselves well hidden among the leaves.

Tom McGuire led the group which included 9 members and 3 visitors from the mainland.

Bernice Tisdale
Editor, The Observer
Sacramento Audubon Society

Our most unusual experience was the observation of two strawberry finches which flew across the pineapple fields as we came down from the trail, not many miles from

the belt road. The crimson body was distinctly seen. Somewhat puzzling was white on or near the head and beak, but we agreed that the birds must have been the species mentioned.

The count for the day:

Elepaio.....	5	Ricebird.....	Flock
North American Cardinal	9	Bush Warbler.....	5
Barred Dove.....	2	(A first for this trail, we think)	
Leiothrix.....	23	White-eye.....	14
Linnet.....	5	Owl pellets on trail	

Grenville Hatch

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Field Trip to Peahinaia, June 9, 1957

Our first trip to Peahinaia, June 9, 1957, proved a delightful experience. The trail, which leads from Drum Road, goes up and down gentle hills, across grassy fields, and is shaded by ohia and other trees. The number of sandalwood trees was notable, several being of unusually large size. Very little ohia was in bloom, nevertheless, birds were there in abundance. The count gives very little idea of the numbers, as the dense foliage made it difficult to see them, although they were heard constantly.

Mace Norton led the group of seven members and two guests.

Grenville Hatch

FROM THE MAIL BAG:

Excerpts from a letter from Grace Gossard Gregg:

"Birding here (in Tucson) is fabulous! all except my garden birds, for there I get mostly house sparrows, an occasional house finch, a cardinal, and the white-winged and Inca doves.

"It is wonderful to be able to go birding at least twice a week; and Fred is becoming quite adept at it, particularly after he acquired a good pair of binoculars. Everything is dropped when a trip is suggested, and there are so many places to go, both near and far. On almost every walk, I have the thrill of adding a new bird to my list, which means reading about it when I get home ...

"We went on one walk (with the Audubon Society) April 13, to a farm not far from town, and of course, we were delighted with the birds we saw, as it was just one of those fabulous days -- the birds came so fast I could hardly keep up with all the new ones. On the way there we picked out cardinals (their coloring is extremely intensified, it seems to me), Brewer's and red-winged black birds, mourning and Inca doves, sparrow hawks, shrikes. One of the first things we saw at that farm was one of the prettiest birds I have ever seen, and since then, as they have grown more common, and have been within five feet of me, I still get an excited feeling -- this is the vermillion flycatcher. What brilliance there is in the red and black. When I later saw the redstart at Madera Canyon, I had the same impression that here was a bird of true art. But again at the farm, and practically standing at one place on the road we saw in quick succession my first white-winged dove, Lewis's woodpecker (which was rather out of place), Western, Cassin's and Couch's kingbirds, yellow-headed black-

birds, pyrruloxia, (I haven't seen enough of these for my satisfaction -- so keenly peer at all female cardinals), Bullock's oriole, red-winged hawk, Say's phoebe, Palmer's thrasher, cowbird, and Brewer's and vesper sparrows. Later on at a water hole we found cinnamon teal, killdeer, and some kind of swallow ...

"With my first phainopepla, I went into much extolling of the bird's merits, but you should hear me now -- oh, just another p--. I can't say this about the road runner though, for each one causes me to laugh, with their comical looks and behavior...

"I think to date, I've collected about 90 birds since coming to Arizona ..."
(And well we know you don't mean shot, Grace.)

Such wonderful birding helps us to reconcile ourselves to losing Grace.

JULY ACTIVITIES:

- FIELD TRIPS: July 14 - To Kaneohe Marine Air Station, to the booby colony. This will be a closed trip, open only to members and their invited guests. Too large a group results in unfortunate disturbance among the birds.
- July 28 - To Honouliuli fire break trail in the Waianae Mountains, weather permitting. We have not been on this interesting trail for some time. Mace Norton will lead.

Starting point for each trip: Punchbowl Street side of the Library of Hawaii, at 8:00 a.m.

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- MEETING: July 15 - At the Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. The program will be announced in the daily papers.

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