

THE ELEPAIO

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*For the Better Protection
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HISTORY OF THE HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY By Grenville Hatch

In January 1939, following a series of letters to the paper, and editorials on the need for bird protection in the Islands, Charles M. Dunn issued a call for persons interested in forming a society for that purpose to meet at the Library of Hawaii. The first meeting was held in March, 1939. The new group called itself the Honolulu Audubon Society. J. d'Arcy Northwood was elected president, vice-presidents were Mrs. James R. Judd, Riley Allen, Raymond S. Coll and Kenneth Williams; secretary-treasurer, Charles M. Dunn; advisors, George C. Munro and E. H. Bryan, Jr. The new Society affiliated with the National Audubon Society, and dues were set at \$1.00 a year, with the junior membership dues 25 cents.

The little group went into action at once. The files show a concerted and successful effort to secure the protection of plover, other shorebirds and ducks.

Almost immediately (June 1939) negotiations were started to secure Kaelepulu Pond as a sanctuary. This effort continued periodically as the various leases expired, and in the early days seemed to promise success.

Monthly field trips were carried on from the beginning, led by Mr. Northwood and Mr. Dunn, to introduce members to the study of the native birds of Oahu. Monthly meetings were held in the auditorium of the Library of Hawaii, with speakers, and occasionally with slides. At this time, and until the Society became incorporated in 1954, all Society business was transacted at the monthly meetings. A library was started, and a librarian appointed to catalog and circulate the books.

In November 1939 the first Elepaio was issued. Mr. Northwood and Mr. Munro contributed most of the early articles. At first Mr. Dunn, later Mr. Northwood, cut the stencils. Those early Elepaios are interesting to examine.

Christmas counts were begun in 1939. The February 1958 issue of the Elepaio tells the story of our counts, so we shall not recapitulate here.

At the outbreak of the war, December 7, 1941, many of us wondered if our little Society would be a war casualty. Mr. Northwood was still president. Meetings at night were forbidden; field trips were continued on a greatly reduced scale; with very little allowance of gasoline, trips were necessarily short and close to town. Part of the time the birders were further handicapped by being encumbered by gas masks, in accordance with regulations.

Throughout this period attempts were made to protect the birds from unnecessary bombing, with some degree of success. Admiral Nimitz was much interested in birds, and gave orders that they should be protected wherever possible. Other officers and men

were interested, too, as the Elepaio throughout the war years bears witness in the many articles on bird life of strange places in the Pacific front.

The war had its effect upon us in other ways. Many of the men stationed here were interested in the ornithology of the islands. Dean Amadon was here, worked on the skins at the Bishop Museum, studied the birds in the field, wrote articles for the Elepaio, and went out with us a few times. Howard Cogswell, an indefatigable field man, taught us all a great deal. Harold Cantlin, an enthusiastic young sailor, was vice-president for one year. There are too many of them to mention all by name, but a number of them still are in touch with us.

In 1944 the Northwoods left for the mainland, where Mr. Northwood went into professional positions connected with bird protection.

In 1946 the name of the Society was changed to the Hawaii Audubon Society, hoping by that means to draw in larger numbers from the other islands, and particularly to compile more data on bird life of the other islands through notes and correspondence. This hope, regrettably, has not been realized to any extent.

From 1946 to 1951(?) much bird banding was done under a permit held by the Society. Chester Fennell, Ruth Dingus and David Woodside banded at Ulupau Head, and several persons banded at Midway. A group, some of whom were not active banders, met regularly at the home of Blanche Pedley, transferred Mr. Munro's banding records to cards, and made a file for all local and Midway bandings. Blanche Pedley bore most of this clerical work, and still searches the files for information from time to time on request.

About this time, also, the Society joined in the work started by the A.O.U. in sending bundles to distressed ornithologists in Europe, and many very interesting contacts were made through this activity.

Study groups were substituted for regular meetings in 1948, a program which continued intermittently through 1953. Part of these were held at the Bishop Museum, so that we might use the skins and mounted specimens. Paul Porter conducted the first rather technical studies; other members assumed the leadership of later classes. For some time Paul Porter wrote an interesting column on Hawaiian birds, which was published weekly in the Star-Bulletin.

In 1954, with the joint sponsorship of the Bishop Museum, we brought the Screen Tours to Hawaii. Margaret Titcomb acted as general chairman; everyone pitched in and worked, and we had the help of Dr. Frank Richardson, here for a year's research, and Paul Breese. The Screen Tours were something less than successful financially, due to the cost of transportation of the lecturers, but the group felt in honor bound to continue a second year, which was no more successful than the first.

The check card, which has been so useful both to ourselves and to strangers, was worked out by Bob Pyle, and published in 1955.

During the last five or six years we have redoubled our efforts to find a sanctuary site for waterfowl which we might be able to secure and to manage. The story is not to be told here. Our search still continues.

During the past year a committee has worked upon a small handbook on Hawaiian birds, a badly needed project, as all books are now out-of-print. We are proud to announce that this is now in the hands of the printer, and will be ready for distribution about the first of March.

Names appear here and there in this account, but there are many who have contributed much, spent many hours in our service, and yet are not mentioned. One, we must speak of -- our good friend, George C. Munro, who has advised us, made friends for us, and

given largely of his time and resources. And we cannot end this without mentioning Blanche Pedley, who has acted as treasurer for eleven of our twenty years.

This sketchy account not only leaves many unmentioned, but it does not reveal the true significance of our Society. We believe that it has been an influence for conservation, and has served to stimulate an interest in Hawaii's birdlife. Certainly those of us who are active members know that we have learned much, and we hope, have added a little to the fund of available information about the birds of these islands.

Roster of Presidents:

1939-1944	J. d'Arcy Northwood	1953	Grenville Hatch
1945	Grenville Hatch	1954	Grace Gossard
1946	Gordon Pearsall	1955	Robert L. Pyle
1947	Grenville Hatch	1956-1957	Charles Hanson
1948-1951	H. Paul Porter	1958-1959	Joseph E. King
1952	Margaret Titcomb		

AN ACCOUNT OF A COLONY OF BLUE-GREY NODDIES AND A COLONY OF WHITE-THROATED STORM PETRELS

By M. D. Gallagher

A small Natural History Society was formed in September 1958 amongst members of the British Forces on Christmas Island. This large coral atoll was visited by J. E. King in 1953, and 1954, and he published a full and interesting account of the birds he saw. Since then nothing has been published about the Island's birds, so I hope this report will be of interest.

We had found it difficult to trace the nesting sites of the Blue-grey noddy (*Procelsterna cerulea cerulea*, F.D. Bennett), and the White Throated Storm Petrel (*Nesofregatta albigularis*, Finch). But on 20th September 1958 I found two large colonies of blue-grey noddies. They were on very small islets in the Manulu lagoon. Having no boat I swam out to them through the very briny water.

The larger islet, which is 150 yards from the deserted lagoon shore, is oval in shape, some fifty yards long and twenty yards at its broadest point, and covered with a dense growth of *lepturus repens* (bunch grass) over the greater part. The highest point is a foot above water level. About 200 birds were flying about as I approached and several came to inspect me closely as I swam. I found the birds had laid their eggs on almost every available patch of earth amongst the grass and it was impossible to walk into the grass to count them. Nearly all the birds had made full use of the cover the grass afforded, though a very few had laid in slightly more exposed positions and under overhanging coral slabs.

The other colony was on an islet about 30 feet in diameter. It was entirely barren of vegetation and covered with loose coral slabs and debris. I found about 30 pairs of blue-grey noddies nesting there. Each nest was in a position partly protected by one or more lumps of coral and had a surface of crumbled shells.

I was unable to revisit them until 23rd November, when I found that the latter islet had been inundated by the recent high tides and winds and there was no trace of the birds. On the larger islet I found many eggs but only after a prolonged search could I find any young. One blue-grey noddy chick was inside a clump of the grass and it dived further in as I approached; it was a dull grey colour and, like the adult, had black bill, black feet with pale webs, and a bright orange-red gape. Several birds

in immature plumage were flushed. The birds flew about for some time or rested on the shore, and then many settled into the grass again where I was unable to observe them.

On 11th January 1959 I found some new eggs, one chick and several immature birds, though there were fewer birds about than on my earlier visits.

This brings me to the subject of the White-throated storm petrel. Although reported by J. E. King in October 1953 we had no recent reports of this bird until August 1958 when one was seen flying low over the sea near the coast. On 2nd November 1958 one was found brooding an egg on Mota Tabu, an island bird sanctuary in the main lagoon. Several individuals were seen during November and December, mainly fluttering in over the coast at dusk. Their flight was erratic. They appeared to dislike flying across the wind, and fluttered into the wind for a short distance, glided with the wind and then turned into the wind a little further on. On 23rd November 1958 I had seen one over the Manulu Lagoon swooping down to the surface and, with wings outstretched, darting upwards with a kick upon the surface.

We could not locate any other nests, until on Christmas Day 1958 when I saw one bird alight on the larger islet I have described above. I swam out at once and found it on a neat layer of old grass under a coral ledge. I was anxious to obtain a photograph of it and as swimming made this impracticable, in the late morning of 11th January I went out in a home-made canoe, with two other members of the Society (R. Stafford and G. Payne). We were disappointed at first in finding no trace of the bird I had seen and contented ourselves in observing the common noddies with eggs or young (*Anous stolidus pileatus*, Scopoli) and one brooding Phoenix Petrel (*Pterodroma alba*, Gmelin). In searching the grass we were delighted to find not one but more than twelve white-throated storm petrels brooding their eggs. Many more were in the dark crevices in the coral.

The first bird was seen as a black shadow under densely matted dead *lepturus repens*. On parting the grass we at once noticed the white band on its rump. It was brooding an egg of similar size to that of the blue-grey noddy. It was white, with delicate chocolate-brown specks at the larger end. Another egg lay a few inches from the bird, but due to grass stalks it would have been impossible for the bird to sit on the egg and we concluded that it had laid a second one.

Examining the bird in the hand we noticed its very small size, not more than 8 inches in length. It regurgitated a reddy-brown fluid. The beak was no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, black, well hooked, and with the nostrils opening in a single tube. The head was flattened on the top, making the forehead prominent. Its general colour in the bright light was a dark brown, not black; with a white band running from one side of the neck to the other and a suspicion of a continuance of the band behind the neck. The lower breast and abdomen and the under wing coverts were white. The tail was long and forked, but when fanned out during flight it did not appear very forked. The long legs and three toes with large webs were dark brown and it was noticeable that the 'ankle' was jointed in an unusual way making it seemingly impossible for the bird to stand on its feet. Another bird had the white under parts flecked with dark brown, and this one also had an addled egg a few inches from it in an inaccessible position. Several other birds were found in the grass and more were seen in burrows below layers of coral. We did not disturb these, but we saw and examined one large chick which was in a damaged burrow. The chick still had much grey-brown down upon it; this was mainly on the head, where it stood up like a comic fur cap. We felt this to be a good climax to our search.

THE OLD-SQUAW DUCK ON MIDWAY ISLANDS

By E. H. Bryan, Jr.

When Dr. Hubert Frings, Professor of Zoology at Pennsylvania State University, and party returned from their stay on Midway Islands last December, they turned over to Bishop Museum well-made skins of two species of ducks which they had collected on

Midway. They thought that we should have these records for reference in Hawaii.

It was not difficult to identify one of the specimens as a female pintail, Anas acuta Linnaeus, from specimens in the Museum's bird collection. Pintails get around rather readily in the central and northern Pacific, and various records of them from islands along the Hawaiian chain are known, although this is the first specimen in Bishop Museum from Midway.

The other duck specimen was not so easy to identify. The neck and much of the head and lower parts are white; the breast is sooty-brown, becoming darker up to a blackish ring at the base of the white throat; the sides of the head have an irregular black spot with mottling over the back of the head. The wings, back and tail above are black, with a V of grayish feathers between the wings.

Our library had not yet received the third volume of Jean Delacour's grand work on Anatidae; I could find no pictures which matched up; and I had about decided to seek identification elsewhere when I found in my bird file a copy of Clarence Cottam's "Food Habits of North American Diving Ducks." In this on one of the plates, half hidden behind its more colorful mate, was a female Old-Squaw, which showed a marked resemblance to what I had in hand. With this lead, I tried the Museum Library again; found a good match for the pert little bill with its terminal shield and marginal serrations, in an ancient copy of Ridgway's Manual; and sufficiently good descriptions so that I thought I could attach the name Clangula hyemalis (Linnaeus).

Confirmation of this came when I showed the skin to Dr. Ernst Mayr and Dr. Carl Hubbs during their visit to Bishop Museum on January 6. They both agreed that the bird was female Old-Squaw. This makes a new record for Midway Islands, and so far as I am aware for the entire Hawaiian chain; but a logical one, for this species of diving duck is common along the Pacific coast of North America.

FIELD NOTES:

Field Trip, January 25, 1959, Shore BIRDS.

An early morning start, and off went two cars full of Audubon members and guests from British Columbia, to see what we'd find at Kaelepulu. The morning light was wonderful for showing up the iridescent colors of the many pintails, the occasional baldpate, and the flashy shovelers. The rains of the week before had provided fresh water, and the living looked good from the ducks' standpoint.

From our point of view, there were added bonuses besides the excellent lighting. There was the flock of ricebirds, several hundred of them; there was a lumbering black-crowned night heron, and stilts overhead, announcing us in raucous stilt terminology. Everywhere we looked were golden plovers.

Then right in front of our scope, foraging in the deep green grass, up went the head of the cackling goose - Branta canadensis minima - a first time sight for some of us. Obliging, the cackling goose did everything but cackle. It went on with its foraging until we had all had a good look at it; then it took off and sailed majestically along with the pintails, still within good range of our binoculars.

The temptation to stay longer was great; there just might be another rare migrant we were missing. But off we went to Kahuku where hundreds of shore birds were taking their noontime siesta. Ruddy turnstones and sanderlings shared the margins of a pool near the road, opposite were hundreds of pintails and plovers and stilts. Up went 88 pintails, swinging out across the ocean. We ate our lunch there by the sea, then paid a short Sunday afternoon call on the gallinules at Kahana Bay. We learned that the snow goose had left the fishponds at Haleiwa a week ago; destination unknown. We could but hope that somewhere in British Columbia come spring, our snow goose will find his own

flock again.

Thus ended our pleasant Round the Island shore-bird tour, with a regulation stop at the pineapple stand, of course.

Mrs. M. W. MacClellan

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Field Trip, February 8, 1959, to Mauna Trail.

Because the National Guard was using the firing range at Schofield during February, we were unable to take our scheduled walk to Kalena. Instead, Tom McGuire suggested the Maunauna (Weary Mountain) trail which is in the Waianae Range behind Wheeler Field.

Our party of 9 arrived at the starting point at about 8:15 and started our walk up through the guava thickets to the forested area above. The trail was quite steep and soon we were resting at intervals to catch our breath. In the lower forest area we noticed a large amount of activity by the House Finches and many of the males were in brilliant plumage.

Also in evidence were many varieties of shrubs in flower and in berry. These included the Aalii, Pukiawi, Hawaiian Hawthorne, a variety of Passion Fruit with small ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch) blossom and fruit, and the Ie-ie. Several bushes of delicious Strawberry Guavas were found also and the fruit was enjoyed by many of the group.

As we progressed up the trail we found many of the native species such as 3 Apapane, 27 Elepaio and 13 Amakihi. Other birds seen and heard during the day were 13 American Cardinals, 3 Chinese Doves, 28 White-eyes, 7 Leiothrix, 1 Bush Warbler and many Rice-birds and Golden Plover.

Although we didn't find the Iiwi, the hike was on a beautiful trail and was otherwise very profitable.

Charles Hanson

One of our new members, Mrs. C. O. Buchanan, has kindly sent us a copy of a talk which she made before the Hui Manu o' Maui, on her recent 11,000 mile trip on the mainland to observe birds. Unfortunately we are not able to share it in its entirety, but are using some of the choice bits from her observations.

"Out of Denver, we drove to a small lake. There we found a wild mother Mallard with her little ducklings ... still in their semi-fluff feathers with pert little tails. She was taking them for a brisk morning swim, and we could see their little feet going fast trying to keep up with her.

"Up Quebec way, after leaving Ottawa, we rounded a curve in a highway and frightened a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds which flew to some reeds farther down. One of them lit on a last year's cat-tail and you know just what happened. He did not have his wings closed as yet, and his feathers were still apart when the burst of haze landed all over him. They are such neat birds, so he was busy 'preening out' the fluff.

"At the Tidal Bore at the Bay of Fundy we arrived in time to see the sea birds feeding in that huge basin, with its muddy bottom, appreciating the crustaceans left behind as the tide ebbed. ... Soon we heard a roar in the distance and the white-capped wave coming round the bend. The birds knew that sound, they hear it twice a day, and all rose into the air -- an interesting sight.

"In Oakland, at Lake Merritt, it was too early in the fall for migrating birds, but we found a bird hospital for cripples. The only one we heard about or saw 'along the miles'. Every type of cripple -- a wing half gone, a wing drooping, a leg, perhaps

shot away. ... -- one even looked scarred like an old battle-ax. What a humane place for our crippled feathered friends so they need not die away out some place alone -- and starving as they do so!"

HAWAIIAN BIRDS

The booklet "Hawaiian Birds" will be ready for distribution about March first. It is designed as a field guide, pocket size, of 64 pages. Sixty-five of the most common birds of the islands are included. Common and scientific names head each account, which covers such points as native home, date of introduction, where the bird may be found, description, and habits. Gene Young, a coming young artist, has done fifty-one handsome black and white illustrations. Orders and families are listed in the table of contents. We feel sure that you will be pleased with the book and find it useful, and perhaps be pleased with the modest price of \$1.00. An order blank is enclosed with this issue of the Elepaio.

MARCH ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIPS: AL LABRECQUE WILL LEAD THE TRIPS THIS MONTH.

March 8 - To Opaeula. This is a beautiful walk, along a stream, with ferns and interesting Hawaiian vegetation. The birding is usually best close to the start of the trail.

March 22 - To Kahuku for shore birds.

Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 a.m. for each trip.

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20th Anniversary dinner will replace our usual meeting.

March 16 - At the Evergreen Restaurant at 6:30 p.m. (1529 Kapiolani Blvd.)

We hope that many present and former members and their families will be able to attend.

A slip for your reservation is enclosed.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS:

President:	Joseph E. King
Vice-Presidents:	Charles Hanson
	Al Labrecque
Secretary:	Mrs. Ruth R. Rockafellow
Treasurer:	Mrs. Blanche A. Pedley

The ELEPAIO:	Editors:	Miss Grenville Hatch, Editor in Chief
		Miss Charlotta Hoskins
		Miss Euphie G.M. Shields

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