

THE ELEPAIO

Official organ of the HONOLULU AUDUBON SOCIETY
Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.

For the Better Protection of Wild Life in Hawaii

Volume 2 Number 10

April 1942

BIRDS OF HAWAII and Adventures in Bird Study

An Ocean Cruise
By George C. Munro
No. 6

June 5, 1891. The anchor was hauled aboard in the afternoon and bidding farewell to the French Frigate Shoal we headed for Gardner Island which we had particular orders to visit. Palmer was perturbed at failing to visit Nihoa and Necker and wanted to be sure of Gardner; so the captain promised him he would lie round it for several days to try and effect a landing.

Through a miscalculation on the part of one of the officers we lost time in reaching the island. And when we passed close to it it looked even more forbidding than the others we had passed and we gave up hopes of landing on it. According to the "North Pacific Pilot" it is one mile in circumference and 200 feet high with a submerged bank extending 15 or 20 miles around it. Dr. Alexander Wetmore in an account published in the National Geographic Magazine of the visit of the Whitney Expedition in 1923 says: "Beyond lies Gardner Island, an inaccessible rock, according to the United States Pilot. If others had effected a landing here before our visit there is apparently no record of the fact. The main rock, only 200 yards long, is composed of two peaks, the highest rising 170 feet, with a deep cleft between. A smaller rock is separated from the first by a narrow strip of water."

We saw no birds about the rock different from those we had seen at Necker or about the rock at the French Frigate Shoal. We were puzzled to see a frigate bird being pursued by others of its kind but were to learn more about this when we reached Laysan. Next day when becalmed we saw a white-rumped storm petrel flying around. We also sighted a large flock of sooty tern fishing. They would alight on the smooth surface of the water almost as closely as they could sit.

On the 10th I have a note saying that the gooneys with us that day did not dive but stretched down into the water after meat till the "greater part of the body" was immersed. I afterwards found that it was the young birds that acted in this way. During the next few days with our good supply of turtle meat there was an excellent opportunity to study these birds but unfortunately I was ill for several days with flu and unable to get about. The only food I could take was turtle soup which pulled me through nicely. However, Palmer told me he saw the gooneys "dive deep into the water after sinking meat". On the 15th we were again almost becalmed and I was out again. My journal says: "The gooneys were floating under the stern all day, coming right up and pulling the meat off the turtle flippers that were hanging over the

stern to attract the sharks. It is amusing to see the quantity they can swallow. They will dive several feet below the surface." I have a definite record of a gooney diving on August 3, on our return voyage. The bird had pulled a lump of salmon off a line "and in swallowing a piece let the main piece sink, on which he rose up perpendicularly and dived down, staying under for 20 to 30 seconds, when he again popped up with the prize but lost it again immediately afterwards."

While we were becalmed a number of sharks were hauled in. While in the water they were surrounded by black and white banded pilot fish which for some reason keep company with sharks. Other small fish were seen in shoals about the boat, larger ones were jumping from the water. A school of porpoises passed us. It was amusing to watch their antics. Some would jump clear of the water, others stick their long snouts straight up in the air, others again sticking up their tails, waving them and slapping the surface of the water. It is surprising how quickly these cetaceans can rise to the surface, exhale their breath with a blow, inhale and go down again.

It is interesting to study pelagic life from a small boat far at sea during calm weather when the water is glassy smooth without a ripple. One can see masses of "whale food", jelly fish and all sorts of minute marine life. A pretty medusa floated past with its fringe of tentacles depending from its disc. A long-legged crustacean running on the surface of the water surprised us. It looked so much like a "daddy long legs" spider.

One day two fine dolphin (the Hawaiian mahimahi) were speared but one broke the spear-head and escaped. They had been around for several days and the wounded one still stayed, generally keeping before the bowsprit but beyond reach. We knew it by the wound in its back.

When some days from Laysan we had visits from curlew which flew around the vessel several times in answer to our imitation of their call.

When 25 miles from Laysan several insects appeared on board. A skip-jack beetle was evidently from that island but a mosquito and a hymenopterous parasite on cockroach's eggs were probably hatched out on board.

Our troubles now began with insects and grubs eating the bird skin. We had used arsenical soap for our forest skins and I persuaded Palmer to use a solution of bichloride of mercury on bills and feet as ants quickly tore up any parts not touched by poison. I had had sad experiences with nonpoisonous preservatives and had no faith in alum but we used it on this trip to our sorrow. On all the way back we worked hard to eliminate the grubs from the skins but failed and in desperation on our return we treated them with bichloride of mercury. To make matters worse we used a cut down kerosene can to hold the solution. Those treated so were preserved but some were discolored. Some small Laysan Island birds that Palmer had given to the Gay and Robinson collection had evidently been preserved with alum and are now nothing but bunches of feathers, with legs and bills to show what they were. A white tern given to the Bishop Museum is no longer white. Rothschild afterwards procured a collection of Laysan Island birds from Prof. Schauinsland which I have no doubt were in better condition. He would be better prepared and better situated than we were to cope with the difficulties we met on our pioneering expedition to Laysan.

Dec. 17, 1941

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Members can help greatly in these difficult times by paying their subscriptions. Even though we economize by single-spacing, each issue of the Elepaio takes 500 sheets of paper. Please send your dollars to Miss Hatch, 1560 Wilhelmina Rise.

Some cards have just been received from the Fish and Wildlife Service reporting the finding of birds banded by members of the Hawaii Circuit of birdbanders.

Three of these are particularly interesting on account of the distance covered by the birds.

A Brown Booby banded by Mr. James E. A. Kinney on Jarvis of the Equatorial Islands on May 30, 1940 was killed by a hawk at the island of Kara Kara, on June 30, 1941, 30 miles from Madane on the northeast coast of New Guinea. Reported by Fr. John Tschander C. M. Kara Kara Island. This bird had travelled from 3500 to 4000 miles. It was at Jarvis in the breeding season of 1940 and at Kara Kara in the breeding season of 1941. It possibly was a young bird as it is my opinion that the young birds of these sea birds go to breed on a different island to the one they are raised on. (If it were a young bird, as Mr. Munro suggests, it is unlikely that it was breeding at Kara Kara, since boobies do not breed until they are two or three years old. It is generally believed that young sea birds are great wanderers but when they feel the breeding urge they return to their original home. J.d'A.N.

A Red-footed Booby banded by Kinney on April 9, 1940 at Jarvis Island was "caught while fishing" on May 25, 1941 at Manahiki Island 500 or more miles to the south of Jarvis. It was reported by L. H. Trenn, Resident Agent.

A Black-footed Albatross banded at Midway by Walter Donaghho on December 29, 1940, was caught off the coast of Tokyo, Japan, on May 23, 1941 and reported by Naomito Oka of the Institute for Ornithology and Mammalogy, Magure, Tokyo, Japan.

Several Black-footed Albatrosses banded at Midway by Donaghho in the breeding season of 1940-41 were reported again from there in the following breeding season of 1941-42. Young Laysan Albatrosses banded by Fred Hadden at Midway in 1937 never returned there.

Research work on the birds of the Pacific has sustained a loss in the death of Joseph K. Kilihananui, who died from wounds inflicted by the Japanese in one of their cowardly attacks on the defenceless youth on Howland Island.

Kilihananui was one of my associates in birdbanding in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service. He was in the employ of the Department of the Interior in the Equatorial Islands and also doing research work in birdbanding there. He was a promising student of bird-life and his death is a loss to the work.

George C. Munro.

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We have received a letter from the National Audubon Society, part of which follows:- "In war-time every organization and society must take a new look at its program and ask itself: Is this work essential to the national welfare? The National Audubon Society has made such an analysis, and has no hesitation in saying to you that even more than in peace-time, it is now necessary to watch our great heritage of national resources, and to point out constantly to our people that they must keep fit if they are to win a long war. One way to keep fit, spiritually and physically, is to keep outdoors, to keep alive an interest in all the beauty and life of outdoors."

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Checklist of Hawaiian birds - E. H. Bryan Jr- 27

180. *Chlorodrepanis virens kalaana* Molokai Amakihi. Endemic on
(Wilson) Molokai.
(Himatione kaalana Wilson, 1896)
(May be synonym of 179.)
181. *Chlorodrepanis virens chloroides* Lanai Amakihi. Endemic on
(Wilson) Lanai.
(Himatione chloroides Wilson, 1896)
(May be synonym of 179.)
182. *Chlorodrepanis virens chloris* Oahu Amakihi. Endemic on Oahu.
(Cabanis)
(Himatione chloris Cabanis, 1850)
183. *Chlorodrepanis parva* (Stejneger) Alawi, Anauanii, Anianiau.
(Himatione parva Stejneger, 1887.) Endemic on Kauai.
- Genus *Viridonia* Rothschild (1892) (Classification may place this
genus close to *Palmeria* and
Himatione.)
184. *Viridonia sagittirostris* Green solitaire. Endemic on
Rothschild (1892) island of Hawaii.
- Genus *Paroreomyza* Perkins (1903)
Oreomystes Stejneger (1909)
Oreomyza Stejneger, (1887), nec Pokorny (1887)
185. *Paroreomyza bairdi bairdi* (Stejneger) Akikihi. Endemic on Kauai
(Oreomyza bairdi Stejneger, 1887)
(Oreomystes bairdi Stejneger)
186. *Paroreomyza bairdi mana* (Wilson) Olive-green creeper.
(Himatione mana Wilson, 1891) Endemic on island of Hawaii.
187. *Paroreomyza perkinsi* (Rothschild) Perkin's Creeper. Known only
(Oreomyza perkinsi Rothschild, 1900) from a single male specimen,
Kona, Hawaii.
188. *Paroreomyza maculata flammea* (Wilson) Kakawahie.
(Loxops flammea Wilson, 1889) Endemic to Molokai.
189. *Paroreomyza maculata montana* (Wilson) Alauhiio.
(Himatione montana Wilson, 1889) Endemic to Lanai.
190. *Paroreomyza maculata newtoni* (Rothschild) Maui Creeper.
(Himatione newtoni Rothschild, 1893) Endemic to Maui.
191. *Paroreomyza maculata maculata* (Cabanis) Oahu Creeper.
(Himatione maculata Cabanis, 1850) Endemic to Oahu.
- Genus *Loxops* Cabanis (1847)
192. *Loxops coccinea coccinea* (Gmelin) Akepa, Akepeuie.
(Fringilla coccinea Gmelin, 1788) Endemic to the island of
Hawaii.

Checklist of Hawaiian birds - E. H. Bryan Jr - 28

193. *Loxops coccinea ochracea* Rothschild (1893) Ochraceous or Maui Akepeuie. Endemic to Maui.
194. *Loxops coccinea rufa* (Bloxam) Oahu Akepeuie. Endemic to
(*Fringilla rufa* Bloxam, 1826) Oahu. Probably now extinct.
(*Loxops wolstenholmei* Rothschild, 1893)
195. *Loxops coccinea caeruleirostris* (Wilson) Ou-holowai. Endemic to Kauai.
(*Chrysomitridops caeruleirostris* Wilson, 1889)
- Genus *Hemignathus* Lichtenstein (1838)
Heterorhynchus Lafresnaye (1839)
196. *Hemignathus obscura obscura* (Gmelin) Hawaii Akialoa. Endemic to
(*Certhia obscura* Gmelin, 1788) the island of Hawaii.
197. *Hemignathus obscurus lanaiensis* Rothschild (1893) Lanai Akialoa. Endemic to
Lanai.
198. *Hemignathus obscurus ellisianus* (Gray) Kipi? Formerly endemic
(*Drepanis (Hemignathus) ellisiana* Gray, 1859) to Oahu; now probably
(*Hemignathus lichtensteini* Wilson, 1889) extinct.
199. *Hemignathus obscurus procerus* Cabanis Kauai Akialoa ("Iiwi").
(1889) Endemic to Kauai.
200. *Hemignathus lucidus hanapepe* Wilson Nukupu'u. Endemic to
(1889) Kauai.
(*Heterorhynchus hanapepe* (Wilson))
201. *Hemignathus lucidus lucidus* Formerly endemic to Oahu;
Lichtenstein (1838) now extinct.
(*Heterorhynchus lucidus* Lichtenstein)
202. *Hemignathus lucidus affinis* Rothschild Maui akiapolaau.
(1893) Endemic to Maui.
(*Heterorhynchus affinis* Rothschild)
203. *Hemignathus lucidus wilsoni* Akiapolaau. Endemic to
Rothschild (1893) the island of Hawaii.
(*Hemignathus olivaceus* Wilson
nec Lafresnaye, 1839)
(*Heterorhynchus wilsoni* (Rothschild))
- Genus *Pseudonestor* Rothschild (1893)
204. *Pseudonestor xanthophrys* Rothschild Parrot-billed koa finch.
(1893) Endemic to Maui.