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THE OCCURRENCE OF THE MOCKINGBIRD ON THE ISLAND OF MAUI

By Miklos D. F. Udvardy<sup>1</sup>

During March 7-9, and again March 21-25, 1959, I had an opportunity to visit the island of Maui. I found the mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos* /L./) a very common resident, with pairs occurring on every 4-5 acres of kiawe forest, in all the dry, kiawe-covered habitats that I visited, namely: the south-west foot of Mt. Haleakala, from Kakena, near sea level, to Ulupalakua, about 2000 ft elevation; from there, along the highway toward Pulehu, between 2000-3000 ft; also in West Maui, near Papawai Point, in the kiawe along the highway, near sea level.

From these observations I have concluded that the mockingbird is a well established member of the Maui avifauna, and it is abundant where suitable habitat occurs. A correction of the "Checklist and Summary of Hawaiian Birds" (E.H. Bryan, Jr., 1958), listing the mockingbird as abundant, regular breeder on Maui, would be appropriate.

While such a comprehensive picture of its abundance has not yet been noted, there were several indications, published in this journal, of its occurrence in the suitable areas of Maui, all between 1958 and 1960. G.C. Munro (1944, *Birds of Hawaii*) saw it in 1936, eight years after its introduction. H.S. Baldwin (*Elepaio*.11:69) and H.C. Bonsey (*Ibid.* 12:31) both noted its occurrence in 1951, but these are all the early records.

A desirable task for field observers going to Maui would be to assess the mockingbird population. Variation of its density (by censusing singing males in the morning) in the different kiawe-covered areas of the island, and mapping of these areas, would indicate the size of the breeding population. This would help in understanding the fact that this bird has overcome the 30-mile wide sea channel between Maui and Hawaii in, or shortly before, 1960 (C.Hanson, *Elepaio*.20:87).

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Contribution #146 of the Hawaii Marine Laboratory.

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Editor's Note: Any definite records of the possible introduction or transfer of mockingbirds to Maui would be welcomed as present records are inadequate.

PAIKO LAGOON NATURE SANCTUARY: REPORT

The Legislature is in session and the appeal for a nature sanctuary at Paiko lagoon has been sent by the Conservation Council and also by our own society. These were sent to the Governor's office. Not long after, a letter was received from the Nature Conservancy in Washington congratulating us on our success. That office had received a letter from the Governor's office that indicated his interest and approval.

However, our society has not received such an answer, in fact, no answer. Perhaps it was not thought necessary, because the message from the Conservation Council reached the Governor's office first.

Dr. C. E. Pemberton, President of the Conservation Council, graciously asked me to accompany him to a conference at the State Planning Office concerning Paiko lagoon. We went, on Tuesday, March 7th. Two men of the staff showed us the several plans, still extant, "to be considered" for the development of Paiko lagoon and Maunalua Bay. Only our plan - to make it a sanctuary, gave any promise of saving the birds. After scheduled conferences with the authors of the other plans for Paiko lagoon, we were to be called, "next week" for a round table discussion of all the plans. That meeting has not yet been called.

In the meantime, I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Percy S. Mirikitani, Minority Leader of the House. He knows the natural history of the islands very well indeed, and will help us all he can. If we fail at Paiko lagoon, we must try even harder for some other area. I hope all of you will think hard! What shall we do?

Paiko lagoon is not gone yet and we must keep on working. Publicity will help. Will some of you write articles for magazines and the papers? Please let me see them first, so that we will strive for a concerted attack. I shall get others, outside our club, to help if I can.

Some are guessing that the fill already made by the Hawaii Kai Corporation along the shore of Maunalua Bay has so backed up the drainage that nothing can cure it but a very deep Kuliouou stream channel to the sea. This may suck out everything but bare rock, at low tide, from the lagoon bottom, washing out all food for the birds.

This brings up the point that we need desperately a greater government force for conservation. The Department in charge has no money to spend on conservation except what it can spare from game bird work! There has been an application in the last three legislatures, or more, for a staff member whose job it is to advise on just such matters as this, the understanding of currents, of drainage problems of all sorts, inland and along shores, as well as wise protection of birds and other fauna, forests and flora. In this Legislature a bill for such a staff member is again introduced, along with an application for a modest budget for such work. Mr. Mirikitani saw to it that the bill was sent in.

The last "Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide", just received, reports several efforts made on the mainland to set aside seashore areas. Will Oahu soon be an island without any natural seashore? Keehi Lagoon is destined to be an extensive area for marina sports. According to one plan, part of Kaneohe Bay will also be a marina. And now Maunalua Bay? And Magic Island? Will all of these developments leave any natural look anywhere? And will all of them have disastrous effects on areas nearby that were not in the plan?

There was one meeting of the Senate Committee on the Board of Agriculture and Conservation. Considerable time was spent on agricultural matters. The Chairman courteously asked "the ladies present", Mrs. Dudley Pratt and me, whether they came for a special purpose. We had about three minutes between us. I hope we may be called to speak further. It was an insight into how many problems there are before the Legislature.

Margaret Titcomb

## A RECENT NOTE ON THE BIRDS OF NORFOLK ISLAND

Norfolk Island, situated in the South Pacific east of Australia and north of New Zealand, has very few records in the recent literature of the bird life breeding and visiting there. The most complete list of the birds of Norfolk Island appeared in the 1909 issue of the Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S. Wales, and to my knowledge no checklist of the birds of Norfolk has been published since then. However, since the 1909 publication, G.M. Matthews published two volumes in 1928 and 1932 on the birds of Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands intended as a supplement to his The Birds of Australia. This publication, however, is not as complete as the 1909 list although it has excellent colored plates of many of the birds breeding on Norfolk.

In the middle of February, 1961, Von and Virginia Southwick, recent members of the Hawaii Audubon Society, left Honolulu for Norfolk Island with the hope of making Norfolk their new home. On their departure from Honolulu I mentioned a desire to receive any notes of interest on the birds of Norfolk which they may make during their stay there, with the hope of publishing the information in the Elepaio.

Recently Mr. and Mr. Frank Stephenson, Al Labrecque, and myself have received letters from Mr. and Mrs. Southwick mentioning some of the birds which they have observed on Norfolk during the latter part of February. A compiled list of the birds mentioned in the letters is as follows:

Little Green Pigeon (Chalcophaps chrysochlora)  
 Sacred Kingfisher (Halcyon sanctus)  
 Pennant's Parrakeet (Platycercus elegans)  
 Norfolk Island Parrakeet (Cyanorhamphus cooki)  
 Red-tailed Tropic Bird (Phaethon erubescens)  
 White Tern (Gygis alba)  
 Sooty Shearwater (Puffinus pacificus)  
 Blue Herons = White-fronted Heron (?) (Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae)  
 White-eyes (Zosterops spp.)  
 Thrushes (3 or 4 varieties)  
 English Sparrow (?)  
 California Quail (?)

In the 1909 list of the birds of Norfolk Island, 43 species are mentioned. Of these 32 were found breeding on Norfolk (9 species endemic), and 11 species visiting or accidental on Norfolk.

In the letter I received from the Southwicks, they mentioned that they had seen about a dozen Red-tailed Tropic Birds (known locally as Bosun Birds), and large numbers of the White Tern - usually seen flying in pairs. The local name for the Sooty Shearwater is the Ghost Bird or Mutton Bird - the former name referring to the groaning sounds this species makes at night. All three of these species are known to breed on Norfolk Island, as is the Norfolk Island Parrakeet, which is endemic there.

In addition, three blue herons have been observed by the Southwicks on Norfolk, the species most likely being the White-fronted Heron. Two species of thrushes, as well as three or four other thrush-like birds occur on Norfolk and the species observed by the Southwicks cannot be determined at this time. Specific determination of the white-eyes also cannot be made at this time, for three different species occur on Norfolk. I have no idea as to the specific identification of the English Sparrow and the California Quail, as neither of these birds is mentioned in the 1909 checklist. However, it is quite conceivable that these birds have become established or introduced to Norfolk Island in the 52 years since the checklist was published.

The common and scientific names listed in this article were obtained in part from the 1909 checklist mentioned previously, and also from recent books on the birds

of Australia and New Zealand. It is hoped that in future issues of the Elepaio additions to this recent list can be made, with further information on the life histories of the species listed.

David W. Lupton  
March 11, 1961

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#### AMAKIHI

It is wonderful to live at the edge of the forest. Our home is at the upper end of Paty Drive in Woodlawn. Behind us and in the vacant lot makai grow guava, Christmas berry, iron wood, brassaia and a few mango trees. Leiothrix and elepaio are common visitors, and occasionally we also have Chinese thrush and shama.

About a month ago I began hearing bird calls which I had not heard in these parts before. In a few days I was able to catch fleeting glimpses of small plump greenish birds, some quite yellow. Although I was never able to see white eye-rings, I was sure I must be seeing mejiro - the birds could not possibly be amakihi! A few days later I saw four or five feeding on the blossoms of thunbergia vines growing over guava trees within a few feet of our house. Two were also searching for food around clusters of iron wood cones on the tree beside our garage. I was no longer in doubt. They were amakihi.

Since then a day has not passed when I could not see or hear them. They seem to particularly enjoy the thunbergia blossoms. This morning I was delighted to see a flock of at least twenty scolding at each other among the guavas along our driveway and this afternoon, as I sit at my desk writing, I can hear several in the trees just outside my window.

Blanche A. Pedley  
February 5, 1961

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#### NOTES FROM C. DUANE CARLSMITH:

Ten Cattle Egrets were introduced to Puuwaawaa some months ago. I do not believe that any of these has survived. We found them occasionally drowned in the water troughs. Many of them just disappeared.

I notice that considerable interest is expressed each time a Hawaiian Owl is sighted. On the main road between Puuwaawaa and Waimea during the mouse season there are a good many of these visible at night. Occasionally they are hit by cars as they rest on the road. They are also frequently to be seen at dusk in the Puu-anahulu region during the same season. I speculate that they fly there from elsewhere in order to eat the mice. The mouse season is, incidentally, from approximately November through February.

My conclusion as regards the Owls is that they are quite a common bird, inasmuch as I have sighted 22 in any evening along the road illuminated by the lights of a car.

#### THE VISITING GEESE

A note in the latest issue of Hawaii Library Association's NEWS LETTER tells us that "... the famous brant geese that made all the papers, are still in residence in front of the Lindley's Maalaea (Maui) home."

COMMUNICATION FROM CAMP DENALI, INC., Box 526, College, Alaska, January 5, 1961.

For those interested in the nature lore of the arctic-alpine environment of the new State of Alaska, Camp Denali, located on the north boundary of McKinley Park, will again conduct their "Wilderness Workshop" to explore, enjoy, and understand the tundra

world of the north. After nine years of operation as a Wilderness resort, Camp Denali last summer began to feature special sessions to attract the Alaskan visitor looking for more than the conventional tourist approach to a vacation. Not attempting to be as academic as the Audubon Camps, the Wilderness Workshop program is informal, unregimented and flexible to meet the special interests of the participants.

"Each day", the workshop brochure states, "we will go out by foot or station-wagon to investigate a different habitat. You'll see ptarmigan, jaegers, Arctic terns, golden plovers and perhaps even the wandering tattler or rare surfbird. Caribou, moose, mountain sheep, grizzly bear, and sometimes a wolf or wolverine will capture your attention. The varied plants of the tundra are everywhere underfoot, while in the near distance loom the glistening glaciers and peaks of the Alaska Range, culminating in 20,300-foot Mt. McKinley (called Denali by the natives). Evening discussions and exchange of ideas on conservation, ecology, and conditions unique to the northland will take place at get-togethers around the open fire in the lodge."

The owners and operators of Camp Denali, Woody and Ginny Wood and Celia Hunter, report that last season's participants in the workshop were Audubon members 100%. The Woods and Miss Hunter will present a feature program on Alaska at the March Audubon convention at Asilomar, California.

In addition to the Wilderness Workshop, two other special sessions will be featured by Camp Denali this coming summer. They are the "Tundra Treks", to explore the back country of McKinley Park by foot from base camps, and the "Shutter Safari", for the serious wildlife photographer willing and capable of leaving the road to "capture" the spectacular wildlife of this region on film. Further information can be obtained by writing Camp Denali, Box 526, College, Alaska.

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#### FIELD NOTES:

On February 25, 1961, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stephenson, Paul Schaeffer, and myself went on a field trip along Palehua (Mauna Kapu) Trail in the Waianae Mountains. The elevation of this area is approximately 2800 feet above sea level. White-eyes and house finches were abundant along the trail, as were the red-billed leiothrix, although the latter bird was more frequently heard than seen. Late in the afternoon the Japanese bush warbler was heard singing, but it was not seen.

In the valleys below the trail, koa, guava, lehua and silky oak trees were in bloom everywhere and were frequented by elepaio, amakihi, and apapane. Paul Schaeffer also sighted a bird that may possibly have been a creeper. In addition to the preceding birds, Brazilian cardinals, North American cardinals, Chinese spotted doves, barred doves, and a mockingbird were seen along the road approaching the trail.

On February 26, 1961, as a farewell trip for Paul Schaeffer, Mr. Frank Stephenson, Paul Schaeffer, Judith Lupton and myself went on a field trip to Makua Ranch to observe cattle egrets. Paul has recently left Hawaii to continue his tour of duty with the Coast Guard in Massachusetts. Cattle egrets were not seen about the cattle, however, although mynahs, English sparrows, and a few golden plover were observed. Later in the afternoon, two possible cattle egrets were seen flying in the vicinity of the ranch.

From the Makua Ranch we continued on to Iroquois Point in the Ewa area. In the large alfalfa field there many skylarks were heard singing in the air and closely observed both in the air and on the ground. From the actions of the birds on the ground it appears as if the nesting season may be near at hand, and periodic observations for actual nesting records should be regularly continued. An interesting observation was made of an adult skylark which was seen to descend to the ground and perch on a bare spot of earth. Within seconds a large mongoose passed within a few feet of the skylark on the same spot of bare ground, although neither animal paid any attention to the other. From this observation it appears as if adult skylarks have no fear of predation by the mongoose. Other birds seen and heard in the alfalfa field were ruddy turnstones, approximately forty in number, ring-necked pheasants, and many golden plover. Most of the plover were starting to acquire their distinctive

spring plumage.

From the alfalfa field we continued on to Salt Lake late in the afternoon. The three Bonaparte gulls, first noticed on the Christmas count, were still observed in the area. In addition many coot and a few baldpate, pintail, and scaup were seen.

David W. Lupton

Field Trip, Kahuku, February 18, 1961.

Threatening skies, following several days of rainy weather, failed to deter seven from the scheduled trip to Kahuku.

The only stop on the way out was made at Wheeler Field, where several skylarks were heard singing, but were not seen.

The changes at Kahuku, after my absence of more than a year, were appalling. A drainage ditch runs beside the road which divides the area formerly occupied by the ponds. Bulldozers were at work in the mauka ex-pond area. In the low-lying area between the road and the sand dunes *akulikuli kai* (pickleweed, *Batis maritima*) covers the ground, with occasional bushes of *Pluchea indica* and other unidentified vegetation. One small basin, eight or nine feet across, filled with weed, was the only bit of water found. The dump area, filled with refuse and bagasse, has been extended.

Where once were hundreds of shore birds, and at times water fowl, now only a few dozen plover, turnstone and doves could be found. The desolation was almost complete. Unless plans for the area can be revised to provide a feeding and resting ground for the birds, we will have to consider this another lost territory. Since this has been the landing place for the migrants as they completed their long journey, it seems particularly bad.

After this discouraging stop, we went to the mudflats at Waipahu. Here, too, great changes are taking place. The small settlement of houses through which we used to approach the area has been torn down, to be replaced, we were told, by housing. A row of shacks is being built on the edge of the mudflats. The mangroves are thicker, encroaching more and more upon the flats, and making it difficult to observe the bird life which is certainly there. We could see -- when we could find an opening -- many birds on the mud far across on the other side of the water. The birds are better provided for than are the bird watchers, for which we are grateful, although we long for an observation point.

Grenville Hatch

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APRIL ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIP: AL LABRECQUE WILL LEAD THE TRIP.

April 9 - To Pa Lehua. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 a.m.

MEETING: BOARD - April 10, at 3653 Tantalus Drive at 7:30 p.m. Members are always welcome.

GENERAL - April 17, at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Robert Wenkam will give an illustrated talk about Alakai Swamp, the wettest spot in the world.

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