

# THE ELEPAIO

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Hawaii Audubon Society



For the Better Protection  
of Wildlife in Hawaii

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STATE PARKS CONFERENCE  
Princess Kaiulani Hotel  
February 8, 1962  
Reported by Harry Whitten

Hawaii is starting late to develop and conserve its outdoor resources; it needs to get going now before the task becomes even more difficult.

This was the theme, expressed by different speakers on different aspects of the problem, at the State Parks Conference, held February 8 at the Princess Kaiulani Hotel.

The conference was sponsored by the Trade Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu, with the cooperation of 42 outdoor, conservation, and recreation organizations and governmental departments. About 200 people attended.

After the meeting, its chairman, William V. Ward, scheduled a session of the conference's steering committee to discuss forming an organization that could carry on work of the conference.

Governor William F. Quinn, as keynote speaker, said that the arguments between conservation and use "has caused unnecessary delay in getting much of anything done." Expressing his determination to get the parks program moving, he said, "I believe that by far the most important thing is to do with State parks what we are doing in forestry. Move ahead with some expansion, even as we plan for bigger problems yet to come."

He announced that he was recommending to the State Legislature a \$1 million expanded parks program. This would include starting work on three new state parks, at Kahana Bay on Oahu, Waianapanapa Caves on Maui, and Honokahau at Kona, Hawaii, and improving nine existing state parks.

He noted that each island has many qualified areas for state parks, but said he was reluctant to expand his proposal "until we get a clearer picture of what do do."

Michael Ord of the Hawaii Audubon Society showed color slides of birds, goats, mountains, and erosion damage to illustrate his talk on "Preservation of Plants and Wildlife." His article follows on page 75.

J. Richard Woodworth, Fish and Game Division biologist, took up a different aspect of conservation, relating the progress being made in restoring the Nene, which had numbered 25,000 birds in the 18th century and was down to less than 50 birds in 1945. Twenty birds from the captive flock being used as breeding stock at Pohakuloa, Hawaii, have been released to join wild birds in the Keauhou Sanctuary. Another 20 birds were released in a new sanctuary in North Kona, called Keauhou 2. The sanctuaries were set aside through cooperative agreements with C. Brewer & Co., the Bishop Estate, and the W. H. Greenwell Ranch. It is hoped that 50 birds a year may be liberated, Woodworth said.

The Nene program was originally financed by a \$6,000 appropriation from the Legislature in 1949. Since 1958 the program has gone forward under a \$75,000 appropriation from Congress that was to last five years. Federal authorities have recommended extending the Nene project an additional five years and increasing the annual allotment from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

Woodworth also said he is seeking details of an offer from World Wildlife Fund, a private European organization, which might make a Nene project possible on Maui's Haleakala, where at one time the Nene is believed to have inhabited. Wildlife fund trustees are also interested in seeing a restoration project started for the Koloa, the Hawaiian Duck, now found only on Kauai.

A wide range of conservation and recreation needs were discussed by other conference speakers, who pointed to increasing needs as a result of population growth.

John R. McGuire, chief, Division of Forest Economics Research, U.S. Forest Service, discussed "Getting the Most from Our Resources." He pointed to the two definitions of conservation: conservation as preservation, conservation as wise use of reserved areas. The two definitions are not necessarily incompatible, he said. Turning to the Hawaiian scene, he commented, "What you have in the way of a State park system is the result of dedicated efforts by a few people."

DeWitt Nelson, director of the California Department of Conservation, said that huge state has 169 units in its state park system. Even so, the system had to turn away as many campers as it took, because it did not have enough facilities. As an example of the increasing demand Hawaii may expect on its recreational areas, he cited the prediction that Hawaii will be one of the fastest growing states.

Richard D. Sias, park planner with the National Park Service, outlined the program to establish national seashores on the Atlantic, Gulf, Great Lakes and Pacific areas. A 1935 survey showed what could be done; since then land acquisition costs have gone up as much as 1,100%. He said that interest has increased in a national recreational area for Kauai, but no exhaustive survey has been made yet.

Theodore Nobriga, director of Honolulu's Department of Parks and Recreation, discussed multiple uses for City-County parks.

Frank Midkiff, Bishop Estate trustee, told what the estate had done to help conservation and recreation, such as giving land for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and the City of Refuge National Historical Park and setting aside land for the Nene sanctuaries.

E. Hinano Cook, director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, said that the Forestry Division hopes to plant 2,800 acres a year with trees; that the multiple use concept for lands is increasing; that public interest was easily stimulated for Fish and Game Division projects because the results can be seen more rapidly, but that forestry project results are realized more slowly.

Richard C. Dunlap, chief, State Parks Division, discussed integration of a parks, recreation and conservation program, saying that recreation needs are complex. Beaches have attracted the greatest interest so far. Upland areas have been little utilized but offer great opportunities. State parks should protect unique examples of the state's scenic resources. They are projects beyond the city or county interest and should supplement but not compete with city plans.

He said a parks plan for forthcoming legislation will report on outdoor recreation needs on each island, list the resources available, the greatest unmet needs and how they can be met. Special problems exist in this state, because of the population being unbalanced, with 73% of it on Oahu.

The conference, to this observer, seemed to be a good start toward organizing the various conservation, recreation and scientific organizations interested in the Hawaiian outdoors. But the real work is yet ahead--work that will require much hard-headed planning, much detailed study, much analysis of conflicting viewpoints to achieve concrete results.

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PRESERVATION OF PLANTS AND WILDLIFE IN HAWAII  
By W. Michael Ord

The need for preservation of plants and wildlife has reached a critical stage in the Hawaiian Islands. Our endemic birds and plants are in danger of being placed on the extinct list at an increasing pace. Much of this has been due to thoughtless introduction of exotic species of birds and plants and to the devastation that man is creating by bulldozing natural areas with very little idea of the catastrophic repercussions on our wildlife.

The greatest offenders are the pigs and goats which roam virtually unchecked through the rain forests and mountain slopes on all islands and also the feral sheep which are a constant nuisance on Hawaii. These animals were brought to the Hawaiian Islands in the 1800's by men like Captain Cook. They no doubt envisioned the islands as a place to replenish ships' holds with fresh meat on future voyages. Unfortunately for Hawaii, the sheep, pigs and goats multiplied at a fantastic rate, there being no predators to keep the numbers down and little disturbance by man in the higher inaccessible areas.

The Ohia and Koa used to grow in dense stands on the lower slopes of our mountains up to approximately 6000 feet. At this point the terrain changes vastly, giving way to woods of Mamane, Naio, and some Koa together with various bushes and grasses. Above 9000 feet the vegetation gives way to cinder slopes and lava. The pigs flourish in the Ohia and Koa areas, where the undergrowth is dense with ferns and shrubs. Rainfall is so heavy here that only the pig is able to survive. The sheep and goats take over above 6000 feet in the Mamane woods. Due to continual over grazing, erosion is now a very common sight. Large areas of the Ohia forests also lie bare, thanks to the pigs foraging for food. When this happens it affects the ecology, resulting in the disappearance of our mountain birds, all of which feed on the blooms of our endemic trees.

In the case of the Mamane woodlands, the sheep and goats, after eating all the grass, eat the Mamane sprouts with the result that no new trees are growing up particularly on Hawaii, and the older ones are dying off due to rains washing away the top soil and exposing the roots to the hot sun.

If this devastation is not checked in the very near future, and these feral beasts removed or placed under stringent control, we will have very few native birds or plants left. As you may know, we are fortunate in being the only place in the world which has the particular type of wildlife and plants to be found here. This represents some 1600 plant species and eight families of land birds. One endemic family of the latter, the Hawaiian Honeycreepers, has already suffered the tragic extinction of eight of its 22 species. One of America's top ornithologists, Roger Tory Peterson, says that the outlook for the surviving species is hopeful only where there are large wilderness areas such as in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island, Haleakala National Park on Maui and the untouched virgin forests on Kauai, in particular the Alakai Swamp, an area which if exploited will result in the extinction of yet another of our truly Hawaiian birds, the Kauai Oo.

In 1940 a step was taken in the right direction when an open season was introduced on the feral animals. This resulted in a large decrease of their numbers which was the best thing that could have happened for Hawaiian wildlife. Unfortunately when the

sheep flocks dwindled, the Fish and Game Division decided that it was vitally important to have a closed season again--1950-1953, with the result that these creatures are now back in ever increasing numbers doing more damage than before due to the thinner areas of woodland that are left.

Having painted a rather bleak picture for our mountain areas, which are the last real part of old Hawaii, let me go on to elaborate on the lowland situation.

Many of you who spend time fishing or boating, probably sometime or other have been fascinated watching a slender black and white bird with long red legs wading through the shallow waters. An awkward fellow you may think though very agile and you name him subconsciously Stilt.

To be more precise, it is the Hawaiian Stilt, the only remaining water bird of Hawaii left in any numbers, which can be seen with little physical effort. Don't let me mislead you when I say numbers. Excluding the Nene which is now in very capable hands--I consider the Stilt situation the one most needing our immediate attention.

Several years ago, one could go to Kahuku, Kaelepulu Pond, Kuapa Pond, Paiko Lagoon, the ponds at Kaneohe Marine Base and West Loch of Pearl Harbor where hundreds of Stilt used to be in year round residence. Today, if you go to Kahuku, Kaelepulu Pond, and Kuapa Pond, you may see one or two Stilt if you are lucky. Bulldozing, dredging and the draining of water has placed this bird on the critical list. You might think that West Loch, an area still relatively untouched by progress and which used to harbor hundreds of Stilt would still be a stronghold--unfortunately, this is not so. The highest count in the last six months has only produced some 275 Stilt.

The reasons for this decrease are fairly obvious in many instances. The dredging and draining of ponds and lagoons is upsetting the balance of wildlife. It forces birds which are normally permanent to find new feeding grounds and in turn causes these areas to be overflocked, resulting in a lack of food after a time with the fittest surviving, the weaker dying. This you say is Nature's way of maintaining a balance in wildlife--my answer is, do we have to give nature a helping hand? It was doing all right before we interfered.

Another reason for preserving our natural water areas and mudflats is to give a place to our migrant birds which arrive in September and stay through March. These birds have flown several thousand miles over open sea--some flying directly here from the Aleutians. If the remaining ponds are also ruined we shall be a much sadder State and will be pitied by visitors for our lack of foresight and consideration for future generations.

In my travels around the islands during the last few weekends, I was horrified to hear a proposal to reinstate a law allowing the shooting of the Golden Plover, the reason for this being the supposed great numbers of these birds. If shooting has to be done, then a thorough check must be made of the problem by people who know what they are talking about. Any wanton slaying of the Golden Plover in the Hawaiian Islands would result in such a national debate as could only hurt the image of Hawaii that tourists have, not to mention the fact that it would be like slaying chickens in a coop.

I should now like to take the four large islands individually and attempt to tie in loosely the multiple use idea with the views of the segment of the public which I represent.

First, on Kauai, we have possibly the remotest area of the islands, the Na Pali Coast and Alakai Swamp. From the preservation point of view this area is a must. The plant and wildlife is as near to old Hawaii as is possible. The introduction here of the blackberry briar was a grave error. But of particular interest are the virgin forests and the bird which is possibly nearest to becoming extinct in the whole world,



the Kauai Oo. At this point, we should remember back to the 1930's in Florida and Louisiana where the destruction of the hardwood forests led to the disappearance of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Do we have the courage to learn from this page of history or do we chalk number nine up for the lost Hawaiian Honeycreepers?

Second, on Maui, we luckily have a National Park, Haleakala, a tourist must from a scenic point of view. It is a sanctuary for our mountain birds and plants but also for goats. If these aren't brought under control before long, we may lose the silver-sword which the goat considers a delicacy.

Of most interest to me on Maui is Kanaha Ponds at Kahului. The area is a natural refuge for wildlife and the adjoining beach is an ideal park area. As a refuge for waterfowl it is the best we have in Hawaii and worthy of every effort to preserve as such, particularly since we have lost Kaelepulu and Kuapa Ponds on Oahu. In the winter months it has the largest duck population that I have seen since leaving the Chesapeake Bay area on the East Coast. Here also the Stilt are plentiful in the only real stronghold that they have on Maui. Any proposal to place boats on the fresh water should be immediately rejected as it is not large enough for both ducks and boats. It is also one of the few areas in the islands where visitors can watch a segment of Hawaiian wildlife without putting their lives in jeopardy. Most States on the mainland which are in the path of a flyway have a waterfowl refuge of one type or another. One of our own at this location would make a pleasant tourist's stop, not to mention the knowledge that could be gained by school children from such a place.

Third, on Hawaii, an area of particular importance is the Mamane forests on Mauna Kea. As I mentioned earlier the sheep and goats are causing an inestimable amount of damage here.

There are a number of potential parks or protected areas. Once again, I feel compelled to stress the need for some stringent control on feral animals--each day we let go by indifferently is one day nearer to losing our Mamane woodlands and their wildlife.

Last but not least, the Island that requires the most immediate action is Oahu, with the majority of the Hawaiian population and a minimum number of areas for recreation and preservation. Of particular interest to many is the proposed Kahana Valley Project. As a park area I feel that it has great potential, for residents as well as tourists. The area can meet the needs of all outdoor groups, from hikers to botanists, birdwatchers to sports enthusiasts.

Sand Island and Keehi Lagoon could be developed into a suitable park in addition to the proposed marina, though I should like to see the small islands in the lagoon established as bird refuges. We are hoping that Paiko Lagoon will eventually be created a sanctuary.

Two of the most important areas from an ornithological point of view are Ulupau Head and West Loch, both under the jurisdiction of the military and fairly safe from immediate worry at the present time.

There are many more points which one could bring up in connection with preservation. We must act now to save our birds, as Restoration where bird wildlife is concerned is too late.

We have the power and know-how to make Hawaii a place that our children will appreciate, and by the same token we have the power to destroy that which is Hawaii.

We know what is best for Hawaii. Will we be governed accordingly or will we shrug our shoulders and say tomorrow is another day?

Field Trip to observe shore birds, March 11, 1962, Leader: Michael Ord.

Fifteen people, many of whom were visitors, joined our search for shore birds. We had a beautiful day and the tide was low. Our first stop was at Kuliouou Beach Park to observe Paiko Lagoon. Golden Plover were seen, some in breeding plumage, Wandering Tattler, Ruddy Turnstone were there, however, not in very great numbers. There were only a few Hawaiian Stilt in a place where there were formerly hundreds. Local fisherman were a disturbing factor. By means of the "scope", Shearwater and Albatross were seen following outgoing ships.

We continued our search for Stilt by going on Kaiser's newly built road through Kuapa Pond and on to an old drainage ditch. On the latter, there were two Coot, one with a bit of red above the white frontal plate and one very small baby Coot, gray in color. A Black-crowned Night Heron flew up in the palm trees nearby. At Kuapa, there were Plover, Turnstone and Sanderling feeding together. We saw one lone Stilt very close to the road. We also approached Kuapa Pond on the Lunalilo Home Road but still no Stilt.

Our next stop was on the leeward side of Sand Island in hopes of seeing Jaeger. None were seen - in fact, there were no shore birds in this area.

In the Kiawe groves, we were attracted by the song of the Mockingbird which caused us to stop. Two Brazilian Cardinals in a Kiawe scrub tree caught Mike Ord's attention. He located their nest, small for such size birds, loosely woven into a definite bowl shape. There were 4 or 5 eggs, about 3/4 inch in length, mottled dark olive green in color. House Finch were also in the area.

West Loch was our next observation post. There were many shore birds on the mud flats. Several Night Heron, Sanderling, Tattler, Plover, and a few Stilt and Coot were there. Ricebirds and Cardinals were in the land area nearby. The biggest find for the entire day was a Chestnut Mannikin seen by Mike Ord in the land area at Iroquois Point.

Since we were so near the alfalfa fields in Ewa, we decided to show our visitors the Skylark. Enroute, we saw one lone Cattle Egret in a wooded area near the back country road on which we were traveling. Incidentally, several Egret were seen around cattle grazing in fields just south of the watercress farm on Kam Highway. Upon arrival at the alfalfa fields, the Skylark could be heard and were soon sighted high in the sky. Ricbirds, Doves both Barred and Spotted and Mynah were in this open area.

We all had a good day and appreciated the persistent efforts of our leader to find more birds. - But where are the Stilt?

Mildred Mench

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FIELD NOTES:

A Kingfisher, of unidentified species, has been seen during rainy weather for about two months, by Mr. and Mrs. Jiro Matsui, of Petland, near their establishment at Pearl City.

Since March 14th, a Mockingbird seems to have taken up residence near Hunakai and Koloa Streets, in the Waialae-Kahala district. It has been seen and heard by several, including your editor.

OSPREYS GUARDED IN SCOTLAND. An interesting clipping describes the methods which have been taken at Speyside, Scotland, to protect the only pair of Ospreys known to be nesting in the British Isles. Once numerous, they have been driven from previous nesting sites by hunters and egg-collectors, who defy the law to collect. This pair of birds have returned annually to Speyside since 1959 to rear their young. An area of 677 acres about the nest has been declared a sanctuary. A warden, with an assistant, organizes the watch. Volunteers, who camp nearby, keep a twenty-four hour watch during the breeding season, to protect the birds, not only from marauders, but from over-zealous bird watchers, who come by the thousand, and who are permitted to enter by only one path, and watch the nest through powerful mounted glasses. One interesting side light is the attempt to induce other Ospreys to nest by lashing cart wheels to tree tops, a method which has been successful in the United States, but which has proved of no avail so far.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER. We welcome Dr. Paul H. Baldwin, an old friend, and an authority on Hawaiian birds, who is now at Colorado State University, as a life member.

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#### APRIL ACTIVITIES:

- April 8 - Field trip to Pa Lehua. This is a beautiful trail, with spectacular views, which is usually frequented by the Japanese Bush Warbler. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 a.m.  
LEADER: Al Labrecque, telephone 983-104.
- April 10 - Board meeting at the Auditorium of the Honolulu Aquarium at 7:30 p.m. All members are welcome.
- April 16 - General meeting at the Auditorium of the Honolulu Aquarium at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Ray Kramer, of the Board of Agriculture and Conservation, will give an illustrated talk on "Bird and Wildlife Management of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge."

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