

THE ELEPAIO

*Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society*



*For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii*

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 2

AUGUST 1961

REPORT OF BIRDS SEEN AND HEARD ON A RECENT TRIP TO MOLOKAI AND MAUI

By Elizabeth and Frank Stephenson

At Seaside Inn on Molokai we were entertained by a Mockingbird in a large Keawe just outside the dining room. These birds were seen and heard throughout our one day stop and drive of 64 miles on this Island. They are much more abundant than on Oahu.

Driving from Kaunakakai down the beach road toward Halawa Valley we were treated to the sight of a Quail family parading across the road. First came Papa scouting for danger, then across the road single file with Papa dropping back after the crossing to check for rear end danger.

At one beach area and a nearby pond Four Black Crowned Night Heron were observed. The pond had at least fifty Coot in residence.

Because we stopped every few yards to check out a bird or scene and were slowed by a rough road, the Halawa Valley was not reached. Time had to be allotted for the trip to Kalaupapa lookout situated in a forest park by the name of Palaau some 1900 feet above Kalaupapa.

During all of our driving many Mynah, Sparrow, Finch, North American Cardinal and both Doves were seen and heard. At the forest level Leiothrix and Amakihi were heard.

A Mr. Kraynik of the FAA, met on the plane, told us of seeing quite a number of Owl during his trips there.

On to Maui - At least one Mockingbird occupied a tall tree at the border of the hotel grounds in Kahului and spent much of the day singing to all who would listen. North American Cardinals added their music too. The Mockingbird is very abundant, being seen and heard all over the Island even rather high up on Haleakala.

The first real birding effort was at Kanaha Pond where we were admitted to roam at will by Mr. Joe Medeiros of the State Fish and Game Division. This is a tremendous area composed of a number of ponds and mud flats. Keawe is predominate on the higher land. A road encircles the entire pond area with five intercrossing roads separating pond areas. It is rather difficult to make an accurate count due to the many ponds and movement of the birds but several hundred Stilt seem to be in residence. Nests with broken egg shells were found but no chicks were observed. Even with just two of us the birds became quite agitated so we did not push the hunt for nests. Six Pacific Golden Plover, part of whom were in breeding plumage, were seen. At least two were observed to have injured legs, probably the reason for their not migrating. Ruddy Turnstone were seen in several places (Seven were seen off the beach by our hotel). Some Coot were seen and Black Crowned Night Heron were very abundant. Their

roosting spots were easily identified by "white washed" rocks.

In the Keawe were Mynah, Doves, White-eye, North American Cardinal, Sparrow and Mockingbird. Mr. Medeiros reported the presence of three Cattle Egret which may have been seen by Elizabeth just outside the area of this sanctuary. Plans have been laid to make this area into a Sanctuary and Recreational Park. Canals are to be dredged supposedly to keep a steady water level to eliminate the present mud flat aroma, and picnic areas are to be cleared. One question rises in our minds - if two people, trying to be careful, disturb the birds to the extent that just our presence did, what happens when crowds of frolicking persons enter the area?

Going to Hana on a rough and narrow road which wends its way in and out of valleys, each of which had a waterfall, through forest and field curving around the East Mountain was indeed an experience. Leiothrix were heard in abundance in all forest area. White-eye and Mynah, busy as usual, with Ricebirds flying up frequently, mostly in pairs. Some trios were observed too but never in a flock as we usually see them on Oahu. Could this be a seasonal situation? At Hana a fairly large flock of Pigeons were seen, flying free, but too distant for individual identifying. A Wonga Wonga had been reported from this area by a mainland visitor.

Just past Hana small Alau Island lies off shore and flying around it were seven white birds. Closer inspection identified them as Red-footed Booby. At Seven Pools near Kipahulu Elizabeth saw three Frigates flying over head, disappearing beyond the peak. Turning back toward Hana we spotted much bird activity in very high up Silky Oak. A call was heard resembling that of the Chinese Thrush as remembered from Kapaa Quarry Road, Oahu. The birds were moving around quite rapidly and the viewing was not the best but Creeper were possible, Amakihi definite. (Peterson says separate identity is most difficult) Akepa were reported in the Hana area feeding in Silky Oak so quite possibly they are there but the area was too rugged to attempt a closer approach in the time we had allotted.

Returning to Kahului nearing Nahiku we rounded a curve and saw sitting on a fence a bird which immediately zoomed into the trees. The fleeting glimpse as recorded by both of us was a shining black bird of about Mynah size. A check of the books on hand left us with the choice of Mamo or Oo although we saw no color in the brief glimpse that we had. Oo are not listed as being on Maui. Later, in a talk with Mr. Robert Carpenter, Park Naturalist at Haleakala National Park, about this bird he remarked that he had had a possible Mamo sighted in the rain forest.

Before going to Hana we had been informed that we'd find the people taking things slow and easy. By golly, the Mynah and Mongoose of the area have adopted the same attitude. We have never seen them so slow of movement on Oahu.

Haleakala - Pheasant and Chukkar were seen along the roadway, ascending and descending, this pleasant drive on the slopes of this mountain. Many chicks were seen also. From about 7000' elevation down we saw and heard so many Skylarks it would have been impossible to count them. In the air, in the grass, along the roadside and sitting on guard railings, everywhere - Skylarks. For any one desiring to study this bird, this is the place.

Hosmer Grove - situated within the National Park boundaries about one half mile from the Silversword Inn. This grove is a picnic area situated at the edge of the forest. There are tables, a shelter house, "Chic Sales" and charcoal grills furnished by the Park Department. In this area in Mamani, Eucalyptus, Koa, Pines etc we saw BIRDS. In spite of the rainy atmosphere, present both days we visited this spot, we saw birds without leaving the shelter. Apapane, Iiwi, Finch, Amakihi and Sparrow positive identity. Heard were Leiothrix, Pheasant and some calls not familiar. Elizabeth thought she detected a breast on a bird we were presuming to be Finch which was quite different and could find nothing in the books except possibly the

Crested Honey Creeper.

A mainland visitor had reported Elepaio in this area but none were seen by us. However, incidents occurred which could be confusing - Sparrows were seen landing in trees with the wind blowing their tails up, somewhat similar to the Elepaio activity and in the rain or mist that was falling it could be visualized as Elepaio.

This Island needs a concentrated effort of birding to determine just what is to be found. We saw in a few minutes more Iiwi and Apapane than we have seen in the combined field trips that we have taken on Oahu. Quite possibly there are birds located in these forests that have not been recorded for years. This picnic area at Hosmer Grove could be used as a camp site for penetration of the forests from trails leading out of the grove. It would require sleeping bags and heavy clothing as the temperature drops to 40 during the night. Water is available but not for bathing. Those having the means could put up at the Silversword Inn just a short distance away or at Hale Moi which is 22 miles below.

The people of Maui should be aroused into organizing their Society and put Maui in the realm of good birding.

MAUI NO KA OI.

It might be noted that we saw no Brazilian Cardinal on either island.

THREE DISTINGUISHED VISITORS TO HAWAII ISLAND By Helen Shiras Baldwin

Three bird VIPs have come to Hawaii Island so far this year. The first was the arrival in January of a black brant goose to the Hilo waterfront. He, or is it she, has been there intermittently ever since and is still there though it is now almost July.

He spends the daylight and early evening hours walking slowly about the strip of short grass between the Bayfront Highway and the sea from the Wailuku River bridge to Moohau Park browsing upon vegetation there.

We do not know what vegetation he eats, for he is shy of foot travellers and will not let us get nearer than about 100 feet. The vegetation is too thick to tell at this distance what he nibbles.

He pays so little attention to cars whizzing by at normal highway speeds that we fear he may get run over, for he sometimes browses along the road shoulder within a yard of passing cars. Let a car slow down and he will fly off to the safe waters of the bay.

Several kinds of seaweed grow on the rocks of the bay shore, but we have not seen the brant eat any of them, nor even linger there. Grassland and bay water are his habitat. When the power mower comes on its bi-monthly rounds, he always takes off for the Bay.

Most people in Hilo take a kindly interest in the brant. Several have put out breadcrumbs, rice or grain for him, much to the delight of the doves, mynahs, sparrows and domestic pigeons which also frequent the area. The brant does not touch these things.

I have not seen anyone molest him; but twice he has been lame for a while and fortunately recovered. He is plump and healthy now.

David Woodside, the Wildlife Biologist stationed on this island, tried to catch him to band him but gave up for lack of time and equipment and for fear of injuring him. Several local people suggested that he be transferred to Kanaha Ponds but this has not been done. On the whole the brant fares well here. Sorry he was absent when Coco was here.

In February Ensign Ben King of the U.S.S. Helena spent a few days leave birding on Hawaii Island. He spotted a Peregrine Falcon in Kilauea Iki crater. Later the rangers of Hawaii National Park verified this. We have not seen it. So far as I know, this is the first time this species has been seen on this island.

We directed Ben King to the ponds in Keaukaha as birding is good there including several species of migratory ducks. We also thought that the Koloea liberated at the Wailoa ponds and missing since the May 1960 tidal wave might have taken refuge there.

Instead Ben found another little duck there which he identified as a Garganey Teal, for he has spent some time birding in the Orient while stationed there and is familiar with Asiatic birds. He asked us to come and verify it. We saw the duck all right-----a small dark brown one with a conspicuous white stripe over each eye and down its dark brown neck. Its tail, bill, primaries and feet were black; its chest flanks and under the tail were gray. Some pintail-like hackle feathers showed at the base of its short tail. We could not verify the species; so this took some time.

Bill and Marge Dunmire of Hawaii National Park and I visited it. Marge made some sketches. They found the bird in a Japanese book but the name was given in Japanese---not much help.

My husband and I returned many times to watch it and I made some color sketches. I sent some of these to our friend, Dr. John Davidson formerly of Australia and now residing in Santa Ana, California, as he has done wildlife photography and collected birds and animals in many parts of the world for zoos. His reply is given below:-

"Your sketch and description of the teal is excellent. You must have been able to observe it for some time at close range in order to make such an accurate sketch in color.

"I was able to identify it at once as a male Garganey Teal. The female differs from the male in that the chocolate brown on the sides of the face and foreneck are much lighter, and the dark brown spot on the chin is white in the female.

"These little teal are distributed over northern Europe, Asia, tropical Africa and the island of New Guinea. They are accidental to Australia, three having been collected in the State of Victoria. There is no record of their ever breeding in Australia.

"In 1958 I observed a mated pair in north central New South Wales near the little village of Collarenebri. They seemed to have taken up residence there in a small waterhole out on the open plain. I was able to approach within a hundred feet of them and positively identify them.

"I could easily have collected them for the record but was in high hopes that they would raise a family there and furnish the first record of a nesting in Australia. After observing them every day for a week they finally disappeared and I never saw them again."

The Garganey Teal here was shy and kept to the far side of the ponds for a long time. Towards the end of his stay he grew tamer and sometimes came within 75 feet of us, so we became well acquainted with him.

He stayed with the shovellers more than any other wild ducks but kept on the

outskirts of their groups. Apparently their water churning stirred up food for him, too. We saw him jab at things on the water surface and snatch at things in the air. He seldom tipped up.

Most of the time he stayed in the water among the reeds and trailing grasses bordering the ponds and their many islets. We never saw him on land. When frightened he swam rapidly into open water away from land. He seldom flew away.

He sat low in the water, held his bill horizontal, not slanted down like the shovellers, and seemed active during all daylight hours.

We last saw him on April 29 together with a half dozen remaining shovellers. (The pintails, scaups and most of the shovellers had left earlier.) When we looked again a few days later no water birds remained save a tattler and the resident night herons and a few plover. All plover were gone by mid May.

If you visit this island in winter or spring, be sure to include these ponds in your itinerary. Watch for the Garganey Teal on all islands. He or his kindred might possibly return.

COLOR PLATES OF HAWAIIAN BIRDS

Two excellent publications have appeared recently, both describing Hawaiian birds and picturing them in color. One is the 1961 edition of "A Field Guide to Western Birds," by Roger Tory Peterson; the other is "Birds of the National Parks of Hawaii," by William W. Dunmire, energetic and versatile Park Naturalist of Hawaii National Park, recently published by the Hawaii Natural History Association.

Peterson's handy volume has been a popular field guide to birds west of the 100th Meridian since its first appearance in 1941. It included some birds which had found their way to Hawaii, but not the endemic species or those introduced from the Orient. In preparing a revised edition, Dr. Peterson decided to include a special new section on Hawaiian birds. After reading extensively about them, he spent parts of June and July 1960, in Hawaii, to meet them first hand, visiting most of the main islands and the Midway Islands, and talking with many persons here, much to our enjoyment and enlightenment. (See Elepaio 21 (3), September 1960, for details)

The new section fills pages 310 to 336 with a concise account of Hawaii's water birds, native land birds, near extinct and extinct birds, and introduced birds. Color plate 59 shows nineteen species of our native land birds, and plate 60 displays seventeen of the introduced land birds which do not occur also on the American mainland, and hence are not shown in the main body of the book. There is a sketch map of the Hawaiian chain together with the eight main islands in more detail. There are 24 black and white drawings of water birds and two others showing the light and dark phases of the Hawaiian hawk. Subspecies are not included, but all the species are mentioned, with useful notes on field marks, similar species, voice, where found, habitat, and nest, in the concise style which has made the "Peterson Guides" so popular, all of them published by H.M. Co's. Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass. This new edition will do much to make Hawaii's colorful and exotic bird life familiar to a host of bird enthusiasts.

Dunmire's "Birds of the National Parks of Hawaii" gives a concise account of "how the birds came to Hawaii," the decline of the native species, and where to see the 32 species which occur in the Kilauea and Haleakala regions. For each there is a short description together with notes on voice and park distribution. Chief feature of this little booklet is an artistic color plate which shows a dozen species of the brightly colored birds found in the two park regions. Most of them are excellent little portraits of the species represented. In addition there are well reproduced

drawings and photographs of eight other kinds of less colorful birds, and of types of habitat in which they are found and the food plants some of them patronize. Several other birds are mentioned. The color plate is reproduced on the front cover and an excellent photograph of Hawaii's State Bird, the Nene, on the other.

This attractive and informative booklet should be very popular both with the many visitors to Hawaii's two National Parks and also bird lovers everywhere.

NORFOLK ISLAND BIRDS: A FURTHER NOTE

In a letter dated May 10th, the Southwicks mention that the agricultural officer is very active in banding the birds that occur on Norfolk - both breeding birds and visitors. The agricultural office had recently received from Australia a complete list of Norfolk Island birds titled "List of Birds Recorded for Norfolk Island," including extinct species. Birds included on this list which are not included in the 1909 reference mentioned in the "Elepaio" Vol. 21, No. 10 are as follows, bringing the total number of Norfolk birds to 61 species (58 living, 3 extinct):

Giant Petrel - <u>Macronectes giganteus</u>	Bar-tailed Godwit - <u>Limosa lapponica</u>
Gould's Petrel - <u>Pterodroma leucoptera</u>	Greenshank - <u>Tringa nebularia</u>
Grey-faced Petrel - <u>Pterodroma macroptera</u>	Southern Skua - <u>Catharacta antarctica</u>
Fleshy-footed Shearwater - <u>Puffinus carneipes</u>	Silver Gull - <u>Larus novae-hollandie</u>
Brown Goshawk - ?	Black-fronted Tern - <u>Sterna</u>
Mongolian Dotterel - <u>Charadrius mongolus</u>	<u>albostrata</u>
Pied Oyster-catcher - <u>Haematopus ostralegus</u>	

Most of these records are probably of accidental birds.

The Southwicks mention that Pennant's Parrakeet and the Sacred Kingfisher are everywhere very abundant. The Norfolk Island Robin (Petroeca multicolor) is also very common, but only in certain parts of the island. The Boobook Owl (Ninox boobook) is seldom heard or seen and appears to be uncommon. In conclusion, a note of correction is in order. The Southwicks and the Norfolk agricultural officer are both under the opinion that the bird tentatively identified as a skimmer ("Elepaio," Vol. 21, No. 11) was not that species, but more likely another type of seabird.

David W. Lupton

CATTLE EGRETS IN HAWAII

In May, a letter from Mr. Carter Bundy of Florida, making certain inquiries about Cattle Egrets in Hawaii, was turned over to Mr. Alan Thistle, Head of the Division of Plant Industry, Department of Agriculture, for reply. Mr. Thistle kindly sent to the Elepaio a copy of his letter, as quoted below:

"In September 1960 a small colony of Cattle Egrets which had settled at Kahuku, Oahu in July 1959 were observed in mating plumage and were periodically leaving the livestock with which they were feeding and flying to a dense thicket of shrubs. Three nests were found in this thicket, one containing two eggs, one a fledgling in downy stage and one was occupied by two young birds about ready to fly.

"This rookery is located about 15 miles from the original release site on Oahu (the island on which Honolulu is located).

"At the end of October 1960, 27 birds were observed in this area having increased from the July 1959 count of 5. Shortly after the October 1960 observation, the entire colony disappeared but it (or another colony) was observed soon after at Honouliuli (Ewa) Oahu which is about 25 miles from Kahuku. A few birds had been observed in this area from time to time during 1959 and 1960 but no rookery was found.

"According to the rancher this colony currently consists of over 50 birds but I saw only 15-16 earlier this week.

"Since September seems to be rather late in the year to find eggs and fledglings, I think that the original stock may have nested twice in 1960 or maybe once quite late in year 1959.

"Some birds in the colony released on the Island of Kauai (1959) had plume feathers in April 1960. This colony has since disappeared.

"No birds have been observed with plumage or carrying nesting material so far this year.

"Releases were made on Kauai (1959 and 1960), Oahu (1959 - 2 sites), Molokai (1959), Maui (1959) and Hawaii (1959-1960 - 3 sites). We do not know whether there has been any "natural" dispersal between islands; however, the 1959 Kauai colony may have joined the Kahuku-Honouliuli flock.

"No recent observations have been made of these birds on the neighbor islands except Maui where three birds were seen earlier this month ... "

On July 12th, the following letter from Mr. Thistle was received by the editor of the Elepaio:

"I believe that you and the members of the Audubon Society of Hawaii will be interested in knowing that with the assistance of Mr. Carter Bundy of Florida, this department introduced another colony of young Cattle Egret.

"Twenty-two (22) of the birds were released on July 11th with an existing colony of thirty (30) or more at Honouliuli, Oahu behind the Kahua Ranch Company's slaughterhouse.

"Many of the local cattle egret showed a great interest during the release of the newcomers by flying around over our heads as we removed the "malihinis" from their crates.

"An additional ten (10) birds will be released shortly at the Honolulu Zoo in exchange for Mr. Paul Breese's courtesy and assistance in housing and feeding the birds since their arrival June 25th.

"Thank you for putting us in contact with Mr. Bundy. Incidentally, in response to my letter of May 18th, a copy of which was sent to you, Mr. Bundy advised me as follows:

"My only comment would be regarding the late nesting date you mention (September 1960). Cattle Egret commonly nest that late in the rookery here. The nesting season extends from late March through October, with the peak months May and June. Eggs in early September are common. Two nestings in one year have never been observed. If the Cattle Egret do it they are, I believe, unique among the herons in that respect."

BANDING RETURNS. (Reprinted from The Maui News of July 1, 1961)

A recent letter from the U.S. Department of the Interior reveals that an adult male Pintail Duck, banded on Oahu on February 26, 1954, was recovered on May 29, 1960 in Russia near Beringovaki, according to Wildlife Biologist Joseph Medeiros, Jr.

Mr. Medeiros told The Maui News last week that Beringovaki is located 62°58' north by 179°18' east near the Bering Sea. The nearest American point is St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

He revealed that several years ago the Department of the Interior had a banding program to determine flight patterns of the ducks, and that a total of 161 bands from the United States had been recovered to date from Russia.

Most of these have been Pintails, of which 121 bands were recovered. Others

included 24 Snow Geese and 16 Black Brants. The latest recovery was received from the USSR Academy of Science.

Alternatively, some of the Russian Ducks seem to be heading for the United States. Mr. Medeiros said that some 6 Russian-banded Snow Geese, banded in July 1960 on Wrangel Island have recently been recovered. Three were in California and three were in Oregon.

A hearty welcome to the following new members:

Mrs. Laura Horigan, 2311 Oahu Ave., Honolulu 14, Hawaii
 Lt. (jg) Ben King, Naval Force Korea, APO 301, San Francisco, California
 Craig Laurence, 9744 Lakeshore Blvd., N.E., Seattle 15, Washington
 P. Quentin Tomichi, Box 517, Honokaa, Hawaii

AUGUST ACTIVITIES:

FIELD TRIPS: AL LABRECQUE WILL LEAD (Phone: 983-104)

August 13 - To Pupukea. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 a.m.

August 26, Saturday - To Popoia Island to watch the shearwaters come in to their nesting burrows in the evening. This trip is primarily for members and guests who are really interested in birds, as we cannot manage transportation for a large crowd.
 Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 3:00 p.m., bringing flashlight, picnic supper, sweater, and \$1.00 for the boat transportation.
 Call Al Labrecque, 983-104, for further information.

MEETINGS: BOARD - August 14, at 3653 Tantalus Drive, at 7:30 p.m.
 Members are always welcome.

GENERAL - August 21, at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.
 Robert Carpenter, from the Haleakala National Park, will tell us about the park, and the birds of Maui.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS:

President:	Miss Margaret Titcomb
Vice-Presidents:	Dr. H. McClure Johnson Alphonse Labrecque
Secretary:	Miss Ann Halstead
Treasurer:	Mrs. Blanche A. Pedley

THE ELEPAIO: EDITORS

Miss Grenville Hatch, Editor in Chief
 Mrs. Althea Marrack
 Miss Euphie G.M. Shields

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 5032, Honolulu 14, Hawaii

DUES: Regular - \$2.00 per annum
 Junior (18 years and under) - \$1.00
 Life - \$50.00