

THE ELEPAIO

*Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society*



*For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii*

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 10

APRIL 1965

CHRISTMAS COUNT IN THE CITY

By Carl Frings

Bird counting within the city of Honolulu may not seem glamorous, but you have to hand it at least one thing, there are lots of birds to see. In an effort to see just how many birds were in the Waikiki, Moiliili, lower Makiki and downtown sections of Honolulu, one high school and four University of Hawaii students took over the Christmas Count in the area. Surprising numbers of birds were counted, our total almost equalling the total for all the other groups combined. I present here a few interesting notes we made during the count.

One of the most obvious, and probably most familiar residents of this area is the Mynah, with his proud bearing and brazen manner. Although not a native of the islands, the Mynah, along with the two doves and the Brazilian Cardinal, characterizes Hawaii's bird life for another non-native, the tourist. Tourists and residents alike enjoy the active and varied behavior of this formally dressed vocalist. During the count, as at other times, the raucous cat call was heard numerous times, many times calling our attention to birds we otherwise would not have seen. These birds definitely do not seem in any danger from the local cat population, since they see cats when others fail to notice them.

Mynahs must be among the most married of birds, almost always occurring in pairs. Everywhere we counted we saw them in pairs, even leaving their roosts at dawn. Like their relatives, the starlings, Mynahs tend to congregate in large roosts for the night. We noted, while counting two roosts at dawn, that the birds almost always left in pairs, staging out from the big trees to smaller ones and telephone wires before flying to their foraging areas. The males invariably stopped to sing to their "lady loves" for a short time in the edge of the tree, and then again on the wires. Although not early to bed, the Mynah is by far one of the earliest to rise, besides being awake off and on all night, as people know who have stood under the Banyan tree in the International Market Place entrance. We heard them awake and chattering in their large roosts before it was light and saw almost all leave by sun-up. The two trees in front of the Moiliili Star Market gave us a count of 566 birds in 45 minutes at a position between the two trees. From this we estimated that there were between 2200 and 2800 birds in that roost. Meanwhile, another group counted, from a single position, the Mynahs leaving the controversial Banyan tree at the corner of Keegumoku and King Streets, sighting 406 Mynahs. It should be noted that at the time many of the leaves were off the tree, so much of the cover was removed. From the count we estimated, that, should the tree be removed, as has been proposed, upwards of 2000 Mynahs would be seeking new night-time quarters. (I wonder whether the city planners have thought about this?)

Combining all of the Mynah data we estimate that at least 20,000 Mynahs are residents of the area. If this figure seems to be stretching things a bit, just

think of the many roosts, such as in Kapiolani Park, along Punahou Street, the numerous large trees in Moiliili and Makiki, the park area around the Art Academy and Civic Center, and Iolani Palace grounds.

I now leave our stately friends strutting around two by two, to discuss the next most common feathered friends in the area, the doves. The Lace-necked and Barred Doves were found throughout the area, even right downtown, at such places as in front of the Matson Passenger Terminal, where over 100 doves were foraging around the edge of the street. Even the Mynahs were not left completely behind, since we saw some around the docks. As all know, Waikiki definitely has its share of doves, where they offer diversion for people who feed and watch them. We heard their gentle songs in the morning emanating from all sorts of improbable places--trash can lids, buildings, fence tops, lanai railings, and power transformers. The doves seemed to be trying to do their part in the "Birds and Bees" act--perpetually courting. Everywhere we stopped, males were displaying to their companions.

It was interesting to note that the trees around the Art Academy form one of the big roosts and possible breeding grounds for the Lace-necked Doves. They awoke much like the mainland Mourning Dove: the male came out to the end of a branch at about sun-up and sang to his mate, who came out shortly and sat beside him, while they both preened and prepared for the daily search for food. I think it would be appropriate to insert here that last spring both species of doves were noted to have nests on the University of Hawaii campus. One pair of Lace-necks was actually observed raising two chicks in the top of a tree in the Bilger Chemistry Building court yard. It would not be at all surprising to find that there are conservatively 10,000 to 12,000 doves in the area.

Brazilian Cardinals were rather hard to find as compared to other times, the majority being in the Moiliili area. Even in Kapiolani Park there were very few cardinals of either species, although the area was loaded with Golden Plovers. English Sparrows were everywhere in the area including right in the heart of the city. Pigeons seemed to be well established both downtown and in Kapiolani Park, in the latter area living in the palms and foraging in the Zoo.

One of the most interesting observations concerned the White-eye, which, by the way, was in very short supply. (Could insecticides in the gardens kill these birds?) We were walking through Kapiolani Park counting birds and saw a couple of White-eyes which we stopped and watched. They were taking good advantage of a leaking water faucet to get a drink by standing on top and leaning over the edge, putting their bills up into the opening. (Could the lack of correctly available drinking water limit the population of this active little fellow?) At any rate, the ones at the faucet were surely taking advantage of this accidental oasis.

All in all, the city is full of birds, all of which, except the Plover, have been introduced, but have adapted well to the area. If it weren't for these feathered friends, the city would be a rather lifeless place.

In conclusion, we ask: is not by far the major part of Hawaii's avian charm the soft warbling of the Barred Dove, gentle cooing of the Lace-necked Doves, friendly chatter of the English Sparrow, clear calling of the Kentucky Cardinal, active labors of the White-eye, showy plumage of the Brazilian Cardinal, and amusing antics and brassy calling of the master imitator, the Mynah?

The mynah was introduced from India by Dr. William Hillebrand in 1865, exactly 100 years ago. Let us celebrate the centennial by devoting the entire August or September issue of THE ELEPAIO to the mynah. We need your help to make this a worthwhile undertaking, so please send any suggestions or articles on the mynah to

Unoyo Kojima, 725-A 8th Ave., Honolulu, Hawaii, 96816.

LEACH'S STORM PETREL IN HAWAII

By E. H. Bryan, Jr.

On October 26, 1964, a storm petrel was picked up on the beach at Haleiwa, Oahu, and taken to the Honolulu Zoo, where attempts were made to feed the exhausted bird for a day or so. This not being very successful, the bird was turned over to Mr. Ronald Walker, of the Hawaii State Division of Fish and Game, who gave it to the Curator of Collections of Bishop Museum. At the Museum the bird was put out of its misery and examined for ectoparasites (of which none was found), and then preserved in alcohol.

It was naturally assumed that this was a Hawaiian Storm Petrel, Oceanodroma castro cryptoleucura, and it was cataloged as this in the Museum. Then one of the ornithologists from the Smithsonian Institution, William Wirtz, II, visiting the Museum's bird collection, in passing remarked, "Are you sure that is correctly identified? We have been finding Leach's Petrels along the Hawaiian chain."

A week or so later, Dr. Charles Ely, who represents the Institution's Pacific Ocean Biological Survey Program in Hawaii, asked to examine the bird. After careful comparison with skins of Oceanodroma castro cryptoleucura and one from the mid-pacific, identified by Dr. Robert A. Falla as O. leucorhoa, he said he was satisfied that this was the latter species, Leach's Petrel. Roger Tory Peterson, who calls the Hawaiian Storm Petrel "Harcourt's Storm Petrel," describes it as "a small blackish petrel; the only Hawaiian petrel with a white rump," hence local mistakes in identification.

Now that it has been definitely established that Leach's Petrel wanders down from the North Pacific, where it breeds in the Aleutians and along the Northwest Coast as far south as central California, the question arises as to the status of the Hawaiian Storm Petrel. The two specimens in the Bishop Museum date from 1893 and 1894. Is this species still around?

SOME WINTER BIRD OBSERVATIONS ON MAUI, 1964-1965

By Eugene Kridler

U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

On December 14, 1964, Mr. Chandler Robbins, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries, Mr. Joseph Medeiros of the Hawaii Division of Fish and Game and I censused Kanaha Pond near Kahului, Maui, and Kealia Pond, also on Maui. On January 11, 1965, I censused Kanaha again. Emphasis was placed on water birds but others were recorded also. Following is a tabulation of birds and their numbers seen:

	KANAHA		KEALIA
	Dec. 14, 1964	Jan. 11, 1965	Dec. 14, 1964
Shoveler	327	463	205
Pintail	.	44	80
Widgeon	.	1	.
Mallard	.	.	1 male
Scaup	.	5 female (1/12)	.
Black Brant	1	1	.
Stilt	155	150	30
B.C.N. Heron	9	15	9
Coot	32	32	8

	KANAHĀ		KEĀLIA
	Dec. 14, 1964	Jan. 11, 1965	Dec. 14, 1964
Golden Plover	45-50	30-35	2
Wandering Tattler	3	1	1
Sanderling	11	12	7
Ruddy Turnstone	17	22	.
Least Sandpiper	.	2	.
Kentucky Cardinal	7	8	1
Mockingbird	3	1	1
White-eye	2	3	.
Barred Dove	4	6	.
Lace-necked Dove	3	2	.

The mallard was a drake, full winter plumage and was noted loafing on a mud flat among a flock of shovelers. The scaup were all females. The least sandpipers were in a small pond in the northeast portion of the sanctuary and were busily feeding in company with several sanderlings and turnstones. Yellowish-green legs, short bill, streaked breast, and diminutive size, especially when contrasted with the sanderlings and turnstones identified a species I have seen by the thousands in the vast western marshes of the West. Identification was made at about 10 yards with a 25X spotting scope.

LETTERS:

From: Dr. Yoshio Kondo, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii, January 8, 1965.

Re seagull seen on Lanai March 18, 1961.

At Poaiwa, north coast of Lanai, at a place commonly referred to as Shipwreck Bay (a wrecked tanker is stranded there) I observed a lone gull on the shore which had apparently settled there and, according to a conversation with George F. Arnemann who was camping out with me then, this lone bird had been there at least two years. It was dirty white in color and suspicious; it would not let me approach closely. I had seen gulls in California, Massachusetts, and in Maine, so that I was quite sure of my identification. I was reminded of this bird when Brenda Bishop told me I should read a most interesting article by Dr. Frings on the gull's salt glands and its possible explanation as to why gulls have not settled on Pacific islands, among other related factors.

This gull may have followed this very tanker to Hawaii but had been unable to return to the mainland. It may still be there and any interested Ornithologist can check on it by driving north from Lanai City on the paved road until he comes to the end of the pavement. Drive west from there on a jeep road until he comes to the end of jeep road very close to the concrete platform of a former lighthouse. Thence walk along beach for 0.85 mile westward until he arrives at a bouldery spot where fishermen have constructed a kind of shelter from driftwood, and he finds himself directly opposite the stranded ship. Hereabouts he should find the gull; its faecal remains should pinpoint its regular resting places.

From: Donald Brock, Oakland, California, November 21, 1964.

I am writing you because I notice in the October, 1964, issue of THE ELEPAIO (page 31) that Hummingbirds are going to be introduced into Hawaii.

According to the article it states Hummingbirds are garden birds and Hawaii need not fear their introduction.

I would like to point out to you...that Hummingbirds are not only garden birds but they are birds of the valley, the hilltops and the hillsides, and they follow the flowers everywhere.

I would also like to point out that all species of Hummingbirds are great fighters. They fight among themselves most of the year, defending territory they claim as their feeding grounds. During the Hummingbirds' breeding season they become terrific fighters and will attack any size bird that is near their nest or on flowers

they claim.

Here in California I have maintained aviaries in my yard for over thirty years, and in these aviaries I have studied as a hobby many hundreds of wild birds from every part of the world including foreign Hummingbirds. I have also studied and fed native Hummingbirds in my yard for many years and I still feed them to this day, so I feel well qualified to write you.

I have walked the roadsides and the fields of Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii studying your native Hawaiian birds.

I learned from personal study in the field that your native Hawaiian Apapane and Iiwi practically live with their heads looking into flowers. Their main source of food is the nectar of flowers and the small insects attracted to the flowers. The same holds true for Hummingbirds; they too live with their heads looking into flowers for nectar and small insects.

The real question is who will win the fight between the Hawaiian Apapane and Hummingbird, when the Hummingbird decides that the beautiful Hawaiian native tree covered with red flowers is his feeding grounds? Having studied both birds carefully it is my opinion the Hummingbird will win the fight with ease, and he will win the fight against any other Hawaiian native bird that requires flowers as a source of his food supply regardless of his size.

It is my personal belief that the introduction of any species of Hummingbird into the Hawaiian Islands will bring about a sharp reduction in the present population of the Apapane and Iiwi, and it would not surprise me if the Hummingbird was to bring about the complete extinction of the Apapane and Iiwi or any other native Hawaiian bird that requires flowers as a source of food.

I am told that the people in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa have found to their regret that the introduction of some species of foreign wild birds into their countries was a bad mistake, and today the governments of these three countries strictly prohibit the importation of any foreign wild bird entering their countries.

If you in Hawaii wish to preserve and protect your remaining native birds, you should give the introduction of Hummingbirds and all other species of foreign birds into your state very serious consideration.

If you decide to protect your remaining native Hawaiian birds, I hope you will act before it is too late.

From: Phillips Petroleum Company, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, January 28, 1965.*

Your letter...inquiring about the chemicals developed by Phillips Petroleum Company for use in bird control has been referred to the licensing division of Phillips for reply.

You asked if the chemicals are available in Hawaii. The chemicals as such are not available to the general public. The registration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture does not permit their use by the public. They must be used by a qualified pest control operator or a governmental agency. We have licensed the process to pest control operators in all of the states except Hawaii and Alaska. Presently we are considering licensees for Hawaii but do not have one at this time who can offer the process.

...The registered trademarks for the chemicals are Avitrol 100 and Avitrol 200. Enclosed is a writeup entitled, "Avitrol Method of Bird Control with Chemicals"....

/Following is the summary from the article:/

The conservation of wildlife has long been of interest to Phillips Petroleum Company and full cooperation is being given to the government agencies in this field as well as the various conservation societies interested in maintaining the balance of nature. However, when nature becomes unbalanced it may be necessary to control the species by the best available means which will not harm the species itself. Where birds are concerned, no completely satisfactory method has been available.

Phillips discovered a new principle that promises to relieve this situation. Phillips' Avitrol method for the control of bird species involves feeding small amounts of effective chemicals in suitable baits. Birds that consume treated food

*Editor's note: Reference--THE ELEPAIO, Volume 25, No. 7, January, 1965, page 56.

react in such a manner and utter distress calls that cause unaffected birds to leave the area.

The two most effective chemicals, trademarked Avitrol 100 and Avitrol 200, found this far by Phillips...are registered under Section 4 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. These chemicals are toxic when ingested in sufficient amounts, but danger to the birds is controlled in two ways: One, by adjusting the concentration in the bait, or Two, by limiting the amount available to a flock. There is no secondary poisoning by these chemicals. Among the more social species, only an extremely small percentage of affected birds is required to give the warning signals to the rest of the flock.

Excellent results have been obtained on sparrows and pigeons around buildings and on starlings in feedlots. Good preliminary results have been obtained in tests with birds in standing grain, but neither chemical is registered for use on field crops and research is continuing in this area. Gulls and crows on airports respond to the method of control.

February 14, 1965, field trip was reported by Warren Turner from California as follows:

Participants: 6 members, 6 visitors, 9 boy scouts

<u>Location</u>	<u>Birds Observed</u>
Sand Island:	Brown booby, bristle-thighed curlew, Pomarine jaeger, sanderling, turnstone.
Sumida Watercress Farm:	Cattle egret - 4.
Waipio Peninsula:	Strawberry finch, black-headed mannikin, black-crown night heron, stilt, skylark, owl.
Pali reservoir:	Gallinule
West Loch:	Either immature little blue heron or white phase of reef heron.

What is the status of the cattle egret? Is it being threatened by the use of pesticides and insecticides? Please write to the editors, if you have any information on this bird.

MINUTES OF THE HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY General Meeting, January 18, 1965

The meeting was called to order by Michael Ord, President. Minutes of the General Meeting of December 14th were read and approved.

Michael Ord made comments on the Christmas count, which will be presented in full in the March issue of the ELEPAIO. The high count of over 10,000 birds was made. Incidentally, the present draining of Kawainui Swamp by the Army will surely diminish the number of the rare gallinule, a few of which have found refuge there until now.

A brief report was made by the Treasurer, Hannah Richards. The George Munro fund has reached \$900.25.

A topic discussed at length was the proposed national park for the Kokee region. Bob Wenkam made a lengthy statement which gave us all some facts and views we did not know of before:

The forestry interests would like to use the area. That would destroy the native forest trees. Present forestry ideas prevailing seem to be to clear off all growth in a given area and set out mainland trees, for commercial use. (The wisdom of this plan is still problematical; Hawaii not being redwood country.) The Land Board has given permission to plant redwoods in only ohia forest in Kokee.

At present there is no protection for reef, shore and sea life.

Helicopter trips are now being made, commercially, within the area, and little control is in force as to where landings are made, and what use made of the forest.

The Fish and Wildlife Department propose a chain drag of Alaka'i swamp. Why?

The last sanctuary of the Hawaiian duck is in Waimea Canyon. There is no control there. Hunters know shooting is forbidden, but shooting goes on to some extent.

Wilderness values are disregarded.

A highway is proposed along the Kalalau ridge. 200,000 people visited last year. Kauai native birds will not survive these proposed projects.

There is a proposal for water storage (for sugar interests), a dam or reservoir, which will change a great part of the area, with partially unpredictable results. (See Dan Inouye's statement; he will offer a bill in Congress for the Kokee water project.)

Ernest Holt brought up the question as to whether our society has taken any action as to the National Park Service Kokee proposal as a club. None has been taken.

Bob Wenkam proposed that we make our own map of the areas to be protected and send it to the Governor of Hawaii. Control of pigs and other destructive animals should be specified.

A motion to this effect--a letter to the Governor--was offered by Ernest Holt. The motion was carried.

The only dissenting statement was by Ronald Walker. The lower portion of Pukapele is not in Alaka'i swamp. No money.

Michael Ord reported on a recent visit to Haleakala, Maui, to check on honey-creepers. He saw no nene at Paliku; dog tracks were plentiful. Dogs are especially fatal to nene.

January field trip to Poamoho--too much rain for success.

Speaker of the evening was Paul Scheffer, Soil Conservation Service.

Margaret Titcomb, Secretary

FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS:

The Kirtland's warbler, named for the noted naturalist, Dr. Gould P. Kirtland, is the bird of the month.

I have two sources of information on this rare bird to share with you.

The first is the minutes of the Hawaii Audubon Society on page 55 of the May, 1964, Volume 24, No. 11, issue of THE ELEPAIO. It gives a resume of Dr. Andrew Berger's talk on "The Life History of Kirtland's Warbler."

The second is on pages 370-375 of the November-December, 1964, issue of the AUDUBON magazine. It not only has an article titled, "The Bird Worth a Forest Fire" by Les Line but also has an artistic picture of a male Kirtland's warbler perched on a branch of jack-pine.

The following is the description of the bird: "...The tail-wagging bird...is one of the most attractive of the many wood warblers, which Roger Peterson calls 'the butterflies of the bird world.' The adult male Kirtland's warbler is bluish gray above with a striking, lemon-yellow breast, its back boldly marked with black streaks. It wears a black mask, has an interrupted white eye ring, wing bars, and dark streaks on its flanks and sides. The female, minus the mask is similar but a bit duller.

"The emphatic song of the Kirtland's warbler--superficially similar to both the house wren and the northern waterthrush--lacks any of the familiar warbler buzzing or trills....The low-pitched burst, from one to one and a half seconds long may be heard more than a quarter of a mile away on a windless day. The bird is a persistent singer...."

This bird's "ecological niche is a sun-scorched, dry, desolate, fire-scarred, oftentimes windswept plain appropriately called 'the barrens'--a bird which nests only in Michigan and nowhere else in the world, and there only in a few limited areas with a very specific type of cover....It has been found nesting only in 12 counties in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula, and never in more than 9 counties at once. It nests on the ground. Moreover, the bird is restricted under natural conditions to large tracts of small jack-pines where, necessarily, the soil drains rapidly and where the trees have living lower branches reaching down to thick ground cover. The favored jack-pine stands must cover a minimum of 80 acres, with trees 6 to 18 feet tall, 8 to 20 years old, and with numerous openings to keep low limbs exposed to sunlight and, thus alive. The barrens have filled the bird's need exactly.

The rigid habitat requirements of the Kirtland's warbler have placed it on the list of endangered and vanishing species.

"The key to the complex relationship between the warbler and fire is found in the cone of the jack-pine. Unusually tight, these cones may remain closed on the forest floor or on the trees for years without releasing their seeds. Intense heat is needed to pop the cones open and scatter the millions of seeds necessary for natural regeneration. Historically, wildfires in these jack-pine plains kept the Kirtland's warbler well supplied with a suitable habitat. Forest fire has been tamed as an enemy of conservation. But man's efficiency now threatens to push the Kirtland's warbler right out of its home and over the brink of extinction. Foresters are now rotating the cutting and planting of trees to provide the best nesting conditions. The Forest Service has made fire its tool. A controlled burn requires a precise set of weather conditions. Wind velocity and direction, temperature, humidity, days since rain--all mesh, both to keep the fire within bounds and to assure the necessary high heat.

"The problem of jack-pine regeneration appears to have been solved, but another remains. The 'cowbird poses an intolerable burden' for the Kirtland's warbler. It is a perfect host for eggs of the brown-headed cowbird. An estimated 55 per cent of the warbler's nests are parasitized."

Both Berger and Line emphasize the cowbird menace. Line says, "Its song is called 'the most beautiful of any' warbler's, but the Kirtland's warbler may cease to sing--or to exist--if the cowbird's invasion of its nests increases."

The estimated total population in 1951 and 1961 is less than 1,000 birds.

Laysan teal, another Hawaiian bird, is the bird for May. Let us study not only these birds on the calendar but also the birds around us. Have you noticed that the black feathers are beginning to show on the golden plover's breast? Very soon they'll be migrating to Alaska. Note and write to me the date you notice the black feathers and also the date your plover leaves for the nesting grounds.

Unoyo Kojima

725-A 8th Ave, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96816

ALOHA to our new members:

Patrick Conant, 3663 Alani Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96822

Warren King, P.O. Box 8095, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815

APRIL ACTIVITIES:

- April 11 - Field trip to Ulupau Head to visit the red-footed booby colony. Bring lunch, water, and if possible, your car. Transportation cost (50¢) to be paid to the drivers. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 a.m. Leader: Mike Ord, telephone: 587-328.
- April 12 - Board meeting at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. Members are always welcome. PLEASE NOTE TIME.
- April 19 - General meeting at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Program for the night to be announced at later date.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD:

President: W Michael Ord
 Vice Presidents: Dr. Hubert Frings
 Eugene Kridler
 Secretary: Miss Margaret Titcomb
 Treasurer: Mrs. Paul M. Scheffer
 Board Members: Paul M. Scheffer
 Ronald L. Walker

THE ELEPAIO: EDITORS:

Miss Charlotta Hoskins
 Miss Euphie G.M. Shields

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 5032,
 Honolulu, Hawaii, 96814

DUES: Regular - \$3.00 per annum, Regular out of State - \$2.00 per annum,
 Junior (18 years and under) - \$1.00 per annum, Life - \$50.00