

THE ELEPAIO

*Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society*



*For the Better Protection
of Wildlife in Hawaii*

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AUGUST 1965

PARADISE REVISITED By Joe and Gladys King

It was a great pleasure to return to Hawaii for one week in February and to renew acquaintances with many old friends--the people, the birds, and the trails. Unoyo Kojima invited us to make a trip with her on Sunday (February 21) and allowed us to choose the trail. Our first choice, of course, was Poamoho--if weather permitted. And it couldn't have been better.

On the way out of town, Unoyo stopped so we could see the cattle egrets at the watercress ponds near Pearl City. This species was introduced to Hawaii after we left the islands in 1959. We had seen the birds before, however, along the United States east coast, all the way from the Florida Everglades to Delaware.

The ride through the pineapple fields, with the flocks of ricebirds, brought back pleasant memories. Deep ruts on the approach road to Poamoho trail eventually brought us to a halt, and we ended up by walking the last two or three miles in to the start of the trail. This can be a very pleasant walk, as you all know, but it was a great disappointment on this occasion because of the condition of the road and some of the adjoining forest. As had occurred at numerous times in the past, the military had been using the area for training purposes. The damage they had caused, however, was much worse than we had noticed in the previous years. The road was in very bad condition and impossible for ordinary vehicles. In places vegetation had been cut down and bark stripped from the paper-bark trees; there were the remains of fires, and empty ration cans were widely scattered. At one spot they had even constructed a miniature, thatch-roofed village. Although the vegetation grows fast in Hawaii, it will take a long time for such scars to heal. We see no reason why the State Forest Reserve should be subject to such open violation. It all seems so out of keeping with our nationally stated goals to preserve such wild areas.

The deep valleys dropping away from the road and trail still rang with the song of the apapane and leiothrix, however, and the more illusive amakihi and elepaio were sighted occasionally. In the upper areas, the forest was as beautiful as we had remembered it, and the birds were just as abundant. Even though the flowering was subdued, we saw all the common bird species--but not the iiwi as we had hoped.

After the hike we certainly enjoyed the fresh pineapple at the stand on the highway. Boy, was it good!

On our way in to town we again had some sad moments when Unoyo pointed out where the Damon pond and mansion had once been. What a shame! Despite these unpleasantries it was a wonderful day, and we are very grateful to Unoyo for making it possible and sharing it with us.

Monday (February 22) being a holiday, we rented a car and revisited some other past haunts: Woodlawn, the Manoa Falls trail, Paiko Drive, Kuapa Pond (what a change!), Hanauma Bay, the Blow-Hole, and Makapuu Point. We have to admit that we thoroughly enjoyed the new Sea Life Park and believe it to be a fine addition to Island entertainment.

On our way back to town we doubled back on the Old Pali Road, enjoyed the view and the philodendrons but failed to hear the shama.

Toward the end of our week we spent a very enjoyable evening at the Reef Hotel with a number of past birding friends and Society members. Despite the six-year interval no one had changed in the least.

Thanks again to everyone for making our short visit a real homecoming. When you next come to the mainland, by all means visit the Nation's Capitol and allow us to show you some things of interest along the Potomac, such as the beautiful wood duck and prothonotary warbler, both of which nest within one-half mile of our home. Best wishes.

A SANCTUARY? By Margaret Titcomb

The trip on Sunday, June 20th, was an unusual, but very happy one, although we saw few birds.

Mr. Stephen Au, of the firm of John Carl Warnecke and Associates, planners, was kind enough to meet us and show plans for the future development of Hawaii Kai, including a bird sanctuary at the inner region of one of the valleys that lead off from Kuapa Pond. Already thirty millions have been invested in the development of the immense area, Kuliouou to Makapuu Head. Of course, many problems have developed, as well as houses. It is likely that most of us were indifferent to what has been going on at Hawaii Kai, but have now become very enthusiastic as we see from the plans Mr. Au showed us what will occur in this region that is bound to receive a large increment of the future growth of Honolulu. It was interesting to hear of the struggle in the minds of the Hawaii Kai staff and the subsidiary firms between eagerness to "get more of it finished" and eagerness to allow a somewhat slower but more careful growth.

As to the bird sanctuary region, it will be an artificial extension of Kuapa Pond, perhaps four acres in extent, with one or more islets for birds, and the edges for houses of ample size and excellent quality, on more ample lots than elsewhere. The sanctuary will attract people who appreciate both land space and birds in view.

When the pond is created, or extended, it will be up to us of the Audubon Society, and to any experts in any aspects of the undertaking, to advise as to physical details such as depth of water at various points, food supply for the birds, nesting-material plants, etc.

Four acres does not promise an immense, secluded area, such as birds might prefer, but the presence of birds happily feeding at Paiko lagoon--as they have for years--with houses along the shores nearby, encourages the hope that similar success can be achieved at Kuapa.

Each one of us had a chance to get all our questions answered--that we could think of at the moment and did not seem to wear out the patience and courtesy of Mr. Au. Dr. Frings found out to his great joy that the sanctuary idea was formed in the mind of one of his former students, David Au, brother of Stephen Au. With his usual cheerfulness and resourceful ideas, Dr. Frings talked with Mr. Au at length, and was hopeful as to the likelihood of adaptability of the stilt, 'auku'u,

and migratory birds to the nearness of human beings.

Altogether we were greatly encouraged by this plan for a unique and beautiful asset to Hawaii Kai, which will also be one refuge for shore birds on Oahu. We pray that nothing will stand in the way of accomplishment. It will doubtless be a drawing card for residents and is bound to be acclaimed by conservationists. It will surely attract a good deal of attention and commendation as one of the first such features of a real estate development in Hawaii, possibly in all America.

As to birds, we saw several 'auku'u and one tattler ('ulili). There were no stilt at the pond.

At the end of our interview we pushed on to Hanauma Bay region, and were rewarded by the sight of eight fairy terns flying about. Sometimes two would swiftly wheel together in as perfect coordination as two dancers of long training. As all the birds rose and caught the wind, they would let it sweep them along at great speed. It was a beautiful sight.

We had four guests: Miss Thorp of the museum at Ann Arbor, Mrs. McCabe of Kuliouou, and Mr. Lovinger joined us; the fourth guest was Mr. Kurtz, pausing in Hawaii for a brief stay with his family. They have had a leisurely journey round the world and have enjoyed it enormously.

Mrs. McCabe told an amusing story of an 'auku'u at Kuliouou which caught a fish a bit oversize, but perched on a post, tossed the fish in the air and caught it several times, finally having the luck to have it come down from the toss vertically. The 'auku'u opened its mouth and received the fish descending head first. Even then the fish was a pretty copious mouthful; the heron had to gulp several times to encourage downward passage to the digestive organs!

LETTERS: From Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., March 1, 1965:

...So many wonderful people responded to the appeal for help in publicizing our large-scale Pacific bird migration study that I thought you would be interested in knowing what is being done....

In view of this massive publicity being carried out it is not surprising that reports of bands or color-tagged birds are already beginning to come in. The first sighting of a color-tagged bird arrived a few days ago, from Leslie A. Seal, at Naha, Okinawa. We have written him to get more details, but it is clear from the tag color he reported that the bird he saw (a Sooty Tern?) was tagged on lonely Johnston Island in the Central Pacific--over 3,000 miles away.

Incidentally, the attention of potential cooperators should be called to the instructions in the "Notice" which specify that all bands and band numbers recovered should be sent directly to the address on the band. We have already received bands which have been recovered from birds found in Korea, Mexico and Japan that were not banded by the Smithsonian Institution. Other people are banding birds in countries bordered by the Pacific Ocean also, and we don't want to receive their bands.

To meet the request for more information about our migration study, bird identification material and 35 mm color-slide programs are being prepared, chiefly for presentation to school children. Color-slide programs will be loaned on request. Bird identification material will be distributed free to those who are in a position to work with the schools.

Because so many people have become interested in the results of our program, it has been decided to issue reports periodically in the form of a newsletter. I would be most grateful if you could somehow obtain for me the names and addresses of people who you know are helping watch for bands and tagged birds, or who are helping publicize our program in some way and want to be informally kept abreast of findings. I will then add their names to the mailing list....

If any of you are interested in this project, please write to Philip S. Humphrey, Curator, Division of Birds, Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum, Washington, D.C. 20560.

From H.R. McKenzie, Clevedon, Auckland, New Zealand, May 1, 1965:

...To any of you who come this way and would like to see some of our birds we invite you to come to us, and if it suits, to stay with us. We greatly enjoy visitors from overseas...Those albatrosses you saw, Miss Titcomb, would be Royal or perhaps mature Wandering. (THE ELEPAIO, Vol 25, No. 9, page 76)...I am surprised that Hudsonian Godwit is estimated to be so scarce. We get an occasional one here, but more of the Asiatic Black-tailed. The only sure difference in the field is the all-dusky underwing of the former and the dark narrow underwing border with really white otherwise. We do not "collect" rare birds. We have had I think five Hudsonian Curlew....

...I should have mentioned earlier that in the case of anyone travelling throughout New Zealand, we can give addresses of "birding" people all the way....

From Grenville Hatch, La Jolla, California, May 16, 1965:

...I have just come home from two days in Redlands. Saw several beautiful hooded orioles and a gorgeous western tanager....

May 24, 1965: ...The male hooded oriole was working the honeysuckle, just outside my window, over and over, looking for insects to feed a couple of vociferous young ones, which (I think) emerged from the nest just the day before. I never heard any more insistent little ones. Never for a moment did they stop screaming for food....

I am enjoying the Frings' book*. What a lot of information, and fascinating information, too, they have put together.

*ANIMAL COMMUNICATION, by Hubert and Mabel Frings. Blaisdell Publishing Co., \$2.50; 204 pp, illus.

From Gerald E. Swedberg, Biologist, Lihue, Kauai, May 18, 1965:

...In regard to your request for field notes...the problem lies not in making notes, but in organizing and interpreting them, and presenting them in a logical manner. This represents not only a terrific amount of work, but also quite a responsibility. Fragmentary field notes, or broad statements made on the basis of one or a few observations are more often than not false or at best misleading. The fact that many persons believe whatever they see in print, makes it the moral responsibility of the person in a position such as yours to make sure statements which appear in print are true not only in specific details, but also in connotation. Let me give you an example:

In one of the recent issues of THE ELEPAIO, there was a statement made that fewer white-eyes were seen in downtown Honolulu area in a recent bird count, and the question was posed as to whether or not this was due to aerial spray.

If it did appear that there were fewer of the birds, this area should have been counted and recounted. Weather observations should have been made, temperature should have been taken, and any number of other factors which affect birds should have been considered before jumping straight to the now-popular premise that aerial spray is killing birds everywhere. I know that THE ELEPAIO did not say that aerial spray was the cause, but they suggested it, and then dropped it. That is not being biologically responsible.

Now, to be more constructive, may I suggest that you organize specific projects. Plan in detail, what information is needed, then send a request to members for this information. Get a committee to organize it, interpret it, and prepare it for publication. For instance, at present a state-wide survey of all the remaining stilt habitat is sorely needed. You could send out a request for every written stilt observation made in the past ten years.

After receiving the observations, the committee should group them by areas and list them by dates in sequence. Then each area should be described by size, ownership, past, present, and proposed future uses, and other factors which might influence use by the stilts such as proximity to housing or industrial developments. The areas should then be accurately laid off on maps. This information would then be ready for publication. It would have some meaning; it might also lay the ground work for further studies which would result in saving some of this habitat for the stilt before it is too late.

The above is only an example, but it will give you an idea of how work must be done if we are going to help rare species, or provide reliable information to our members or to the public.

As you may have noticed, what I am proposing takes a fantastic amount of time and work for what appears to be meager results. Unfortunately this is always the case when you are trying to nail down facts. This is why it takes a professional biologist so long to complete a study of a species, and why we are often reluctant to make off the cuff statements about anything.

I hope I haven't discouraged you with my letter. If THE ELEPAIO takes this as a challenge, to get needed, accurate, information you will be performing an invaluable service in understanding and preserving our wildlife.

If any of you are willing to take this challenge, please write to Kojima,
725-A 8th Ave, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816.

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From Chester M. Pennell, Seoul, Korea, June 5, 1965:

...Well-fledged White-faced Wagtails are already out of the nest and abundant along the streams near Seoul and on the Compound--the first brood. I suspect the adults are well in the midst of yet additional domestic cares--from their actions. Black-naped Orioles flood the Army Compound every morning and evening with their loud, cheerfull, melodiously whistled songs and cat-like scolding calls. Turtle Doves continue to drone out their lugubrious "songs" and every night, after the city noise dies down, after curfew, I can hear the Nightjar and Brown Hawk Owl calling from the old palace grounds...They produce a most comforting lullaby duet--the last thing I hear before turning off the light and drawing the covers up around my ears at night as well as thefirst matin when I awake at the first streaks of dawn....

Field Trip, Poamoho Trail, May 9, 1965.

The field trip on Poamoho Trail on May 9 led by Mike Ord consisted of 5 members and 10 visitors. On the way to the trail a stop was made at the water-cress farm, and 3 Cattle Egrets were seen. Along the jeep road to the trail, 25 Ricebirds were sighted.

The Poamoho Trail was quite wet and muddy owing to rain the previous night, but the weather was good for the whole trip. Besides the birds seen, we saw several frogs and heard many crickets in the underbrush. We were on the trail from 9:45 to 12:30 and sighted the following birds: 25 Apapane, 6 Elepaio, 1 Night Heron, 10 Ricebirds, 6 Amakihi, numerous White-eyes, and abundant Leiothrix. Mike Ord heard 1 Iiwi.

All in all, the trip proved quite successful.

Carl Frings

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Waipio Peninsula, May 9, 1965, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

After a very pleasant morning on Poamoho Trail, Waipio Peninsula was a disappointment. We did not stop to see the stilt at the city dump, because according to Mike Ord, there aren't any more stilt. The human traffic is too heavy, so the stilt moved. Where? If anyone knows, please let us know.

Unfortunately, the city dump is gradually pushing out toward the cattle egrets' rookery. We saw a few egrets flying over the mangrove, and at the sand bar near the rookery, we counted 3 stilt, 7 plover, and 4 night heron.

Disappointment after disappointment awaited us as we approached the ponds. We found sugar cane and weeds instead of shore birds. The last of the shore-bird area near town is gone! The area was full of doves--both barred and Chinese. We were watching the black-headed mannikins, strawberry finches, and ricebirds feeding on the green grass-seeds, when someone called "owl." Sure enough, way out in the distance, a pueo flapping its wings suddenly swooped down and disappeared.

Then, another pleasant surprise--high in the blue yonder, a skylark was singing.

"Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!"--Hogg

"Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire;

The blue deep thou wingest,

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest."--Shelley

I know within a few months this bird that enchanted the poets will be gone too, but I pleaded, "please let me keep it a little longer." Why not keep some of these wonderful creations for the next generation to enjoy? I am helpless, fighting against the tidal wave of population expansion.

Somehow with the changing environmental conditions the wildlife also changes, so it is interesting to note which birds will survive. Today, without the ponds, there were no ducks, shore birds, stilt, nor coots. All the waterfowl were gone. The estimated count for the day was as follows:

N.A. cardinal.....3	Strawberry finch..... 9	Short-eared owl.... 1
Brazilian cardinal...1	Linnet..... 5	Ring-necked pheasant 2
Barred dove.....numerous	Black-headed mannikin. 31	Ricebird..... 8
Chinese dove....numerous	Mockingbird..... 2	Skylark..... 2
Cattle egret.....13	Mynah..... 18	White-eye..... 6

Kojima

FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS:

Information on this month's bird, Attwater's prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*), is very scarce. This bird is one of the showiest grouse of the great open space. It is known as the strutting, striped "boomer" of the coastal prairie of Texas.

The following information is taken from page 20 of February and pages 16 and 17 of March 1965 issues of the NATIONAL PARKS MAGAZINE:

Each spring the male birds perform their strange courtship dances. They assemble at the traditional Texas breeding grounds, erect plumage, inflate orange gular sacs, and by beating rapidly on their wings they send out loud booming noise which reverberate throughout the countryside.

In late years, however, these congregations of the birds have been alarmingly low. This Texas relative of the now extinct heath hen was once counted in the millions along the coastal plains of Louisiana and Texas, but a recent survey has indicated that the population is now down to little more than a thousand birds.

The birds nest on the ground, and are dependent on the tall prairie grass for shelter from predators and harsh weather. A century or so ago the tall-grass coastal plains of Texas supported large populations of bird life, but with the advent of modern agricultural methods much of the grass and many of the birds have disappeared. In recent years rice farming has all but destroyed natural prairie chicken habitat. As each natural area is invaded, the rare birds are placed in a more precarious position, and the lack of suitable habitat is forcing the last remaining birds to inhabit dangerous areas. For example, the alteration of their habitat has been so severe that the birds have been forced to seek shelter in the tall grass surrounding a runway at Ellington Air Base in Texas, and there were several recent incidents of bird-plane collisions, which have aroused the consternation of the Air Force.

Conservationists fear the species may become extinct if immediate steps are not taken to insure preserves of a portion of its prairie habitat--a portion large enough to support a viable population of birds. They feel that the preservation of unbroken prairie is the only hope for this bird to be saved from extinction.

If any of you have any field notes or information on this bird, please share with other members.

Field Notes:

July 5: The fledglings are on their own now, and I seldom if ever hear the "begging for food" notes, but the young birds are still noticeably immature in their actions and in their duller colors.

On June 20, after the bird walk, Mrs. Rockafellow and I stopped at Kuapa Pond, and to our delight we saw stilt, turnstone, and tattler--all in pairs. The water level was very low, and the birds were wading in the middle of the pond. The other areas where we normally found the wading birds were dry and parched. Are the turnstone and tattler heading for Alaska, or are they already coming back, or are they permanent residents?

Our next stop was at the Kuliouou Park. Here we found a turnstone. This bird seemed in no hurry to migrate.

Since the tide was low, we decided to stop at Paiko Lagoon. To our surprise, we counted 22 stilt--a beautiful sight, some feeding, some resting, and others standing sentry. While we were happily looking at these birds, two tattlers called "ulili, ulili" and flew over a handsome black-crowned night heron, that was intently looking for food.

Of course, we had to stop at Na La'au Hawaii Arboretum. Yes, the area was dry. Despite the dry condition the wiliwili trees were thriving, but we noticed that some large ones were cut. Why? If any of you know the answer, please let us know. The area was quiet except for the occasional calls by the sparrow, mynah, and barred dove. We were meditatively sauntering back to the car, when we suddenly heard a haunting whisper. We stopped! Looked at each other and listened! Then, the whisper changed into a full melody--a mockingbird. A most appropriate finale for a peaceful happy birding.

According to the HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, June 18, 1965, page A-9, Honolulu finally has a robin--not one but four of them. They came to the Zoo from Canada. Jack Throp, the zoo director, said that despite the 3,000-mile change in environment, they are well adjusted to their new surrounding, and the first thing they wanted was a bath. After they ate the fruit, ground meat, and hard boiled eggs, they started running around looking for worms, but all they could come up with were a few dead termites.

They are temporarily in the cages with the Birds of Paradise, though he hopes to start a special section soon for North American displays.

There is a picture of the birds on page C-12 of the June 23, BULLETIN, but you must see the birds, so if you haven't seen a robin, go down to the Zoo and watch these birds and hear them sing. What a songster! Doesn't it remind you of the Brazilian cardinal's song?

September's bird is white-tailed kite. Do you know anything about this bird? If you do, please share your information with others by writing to me.

Kojima, 725-A 8th Ave, Honolulu, Haw. 96816

Report of the Hawaii Audubon Society Meeting of May 17, 1965

...The bird walk of May 9th, to Poamoho, was reported by Carl Frings. The bird count yield was not as good as on other trips. A trip to Waipio Peninsula at Pearl Harbor ended the day. As a birding area Waipio shows signs of becoming less abundant in birds. Filling in of the area is going on "successfully."

Mr. Jack L. Throp, the new Director of the Honolulu Zoo, spoke most interestingly of the Zoo; some of the changes that he hopes to make, and of some of the experiences he has had with animals.

One of his latest experiences is as a member of a team trying to save one of the rarest animals now, the Arabian oryx, Mr. Thorp said. He has had a part in its establishment here in Arizona, in an area fairly similar to its old home. The sudden calamity of near-extinction for this animal occurred in the last few years. Due to speedy jeeps and powerful machine guns getting into the hands of many hunters in Arabia that are not yet conservation minded, the sport of hunting down the oryx became easy and popular. Almost the last ones were killed off. By shrewd trading of one animal for another, and combing zoos and private collections, about 14 animals

were procured and brought to Arizona for preservation. Those in charge of this recovery for the oryx are now hopeful of success. But, like several other animals, the future means life in zoos; wild areas are more scarce and danger from hunters greater due to better guns, and not enough concern for conservation.

Mr. Thorp spoke sympathetically about snakes, believing that snakes not only in the zoo but in the wild would be a benefit to Hawaii. They eat rats, and the mongoose has fallen down on the job. But he realizes that the road would be long and hard if he tries to induce people here to welcome snakes. The absence of snakes has been something to boast of for some of us.

Mr. Thorp's humor and friendliness appealed to all listeners. We hope to know him well.

Margaret Titcomb, Secretary

ELEPAIO ON MAUI AND LANAI?

On page 2 of the July, 1965, THE ELEPAIO, Vol. 26, No. 1, Dr. Cooper mentions seeing the elepaio on Lanai and Maui.

According to George C. Munro, BIRDS OF HAWAII, page 81, "Why there should be no elepaio on Maui, Molokai, or Lanai is not easily explained."

Is it possible that elepaio has established itself on these islands?

If you have any information on this subject, please write to Kojima, 725-A 8th Ave, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816.

ALOHA to new members:

From regular to life: Dr. Alden D. Hinckley, Box 327, Apia, W. Samoa.

Regular: Kenneth Uyeda, 445 W. Hartsdale Ave, Hartsdale, N.Y.

Junior: Martha King, 2536 Olopuia St, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

Last call for MYNAH issue: August 15, 1965 is the deadline.

Since there are not enough articles on mynah for the September THE ELEPAIO, the mynah issue has been postponed to October. Please send in any suggestions or articles to Kojima, 725-A 8th Ave, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816, by August 15.

AUGUST ACTIVITIES:

- August 8 - Field trip. To St. Louis trail. Bring lunch, water, and if possible, your own car. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:00 a.m.
Leader: Ronald L. Walker, telephone: 984-151.
- August 9 - Board meeting at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.
Members are always welcome.
- August 16 - General meeting at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.
Program for the night: Senator Taylor Pryor will talk on "Sea Life Park." If he is out of town, Ken Norris of the Sea Life Park will substitute for him.

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