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Birds of Hawaii and Adventures in Bird Study Behaviour of Birds when Protected By George C. Munro

It has become apparent recently that the migratory ducks are responding to the cessation of shooting this season. A short time ago David Woodside saw a pair of pintail ducks in a small pond in the middle of the city of Honolulu. These birds have been seen in other unusual places on Oahu lately.

During a trip January 14 to 16, this year to Maui and Molokai I saw other instances of birds becoming quite fearless of human beings when not molested by them. The birds on the Kanaha pond near Kahului, Maui, have been under protection for several years but it was difficult to prevent a certain amount of poaching on the birds there. Under present conditions there is little opportunity for poaching and the birds have become very tame. I saw several hundred pintail ducks sitting on the pond and its borders and a few hundred more, probably shoveller ducks, coming in on the wing from other foraging localities. The road runs alongside the pond for some distance but the birds pay no attention to the stream of passing cars and trucks. Aukuu and coot are there as usual. All the birds were oblivious to the human beings working near the pond.

A small flock of pintail ducks was on the pond at Kawela, Molokai. When I lived on Molokai 1899 to 1906 this pond was a cultivated rice-patch. Now it is an open sheet of water, probably used as a fishpond but now serving as a nice haven for the ducks. Aukuu were to be seen on the borders of the old native fishponds on the shore at Kamalo. On arrival at my brother James G. Munro's home on the beach at Kainalu, a beautiful view presented itself from the back porch on the land side. A lagoon about 300 paces long by 100 wide lay athwart the house about 30 paces distant. The pond was fairly free from surface vegetation except on the land side which is bordered by a belt of tall reeds about 20 paces wide along its full length. Looking over the pond the eye passes over a green pasture with grazing cattle. Beyond that the main road runs along the foot of the mountain towards the Halawa Valley. The mountain side rises steeply with pastures and groves of planted trees till the virgin forest is reached. If one is lucky deer may sometimes be seen passing between the groves. When the forest is reached the land rises in plateaux in some places covered with acres of wild native bahanas; boggy ridges covered with trees unbelievably enveloped and festooned with mosses mount to the top of the range where one looks down into the Wailau Valley. In 1936 I cut trails and traversed miles of this interesting and almost untrodden forest between Kainalu and the top of the range. I was on a bird survey but did not see a single native forest bird there.

Alluring as was the view it could not vie with the sight of the swimming coot quite unafraid of the human beings watching them with a field glass from the edge of the pond. These birds had driven away the red-fronted alae ula which had undisputed possession of the pond before they arrived. The gallinules had nested and raised their chicks there but the pond was too small for them and the coots. On larger ponds there are bordering streams and nooks where the gallinules can find secluded spots in the reeds secure from the more aggressive coots.

To be continued

BIRD NOTES FROM GUADALCANAL (continued)

Mynahs (true mynahs, too. Twice the size of our familiar species, which also is found here, the true mynah here is coal black, with a bright yellow bill and mask. It has the white patch on the underside of the tail, and the white markings on the wings. In fact, except for color, it is the exact counterpart of our familiar species. They emit several kinds of notes. Some resemble the Iiwi. A common one is a crowlike guttural "kioea". I have heard it whistle up the scale, and another note sounds like someone running his fingers rapidly down the strings of a harp. I have no doubt that they can easily be taught to talk.) are calling from the tops of the tall Homba trees. There is a loud, piercing note, followed by loud raucous guttural sounds. (Close your throat, draw your breath back into your throat, and the rasping sounds your vocal chords make are close to the notes these birds make) There is a rustling of branches and leaves and a loud flapping of wings, and two strange longtailed birds fly up into the trees from the ground. What strange-appearing birds they are! Dark brown (male with white head) their feathers are mottled like a turkey. Their beaks are extremely large and grotesque, somewhat resembling a bird of prey's. In general appearance they resemble a guan or chacalaca. They are as large as a pheasant.

There is a loud guttural crowlike note (there are crows here, *corvus woodfordi*). Their crow resembles that of the Hawaiian species) and I move towards that direction. A large bird overhead is startled from a tree, and flies over to a neighboring tree where it "turns out to be" a large green-winged, white-headed, brown-breasted pigeon. It is very large; half again the size of a carrier pigeon. Two large jungle-green parrots (large as a leghorn pullet) fly out of the same tree and fly off over the jungle.

There is a loud cheesy warbling song uttered from some strange bird somewhere in the jungle, and seeming easy to imitate, I do so, making a half attempt at it. It is good enough, however, and a cardinal sized, yellow breasted and throated, olive green backed bird with a black band across the chest, flies out of the jungle and perches in a tree overhead. I don't know what it is. It has a beak like a thrush. It may be that or a pewee lark.

You now have a cross section of the bird life here. I have seen others. One, I believe may have been a cuckoo, was white breasted with a grey back and tail. It was as large as a turtle dove, and flew in the manner of a mocking bird.

Another interesting bird nests in colonies, building oriole shaped nests in the crown of some tall tree. The male is glossy black and the female has a slate colored back, head and tail, with a white brown-streaked breast. They have large red eyes and are the size of mynahs. Though I don't believe that is what they are, they have the appearance of the bower bird. They may be a starling.

I also saw a strange black bird, size of mynah, with an extremely wide orange and yellow bill, as if it still retained the large bill it had when it was a baby. It snaps up wasps, for which it perches in wait on a dead limb.

There are doubtless many other species that I have yet to see, as I say, this place is very rich. There are some birds that I have on my list that I have not seen yet. However, I haven't had much opportunity to really get into the jungle, and I haven't been into the mountains (which rise up to 8,000 feet) so that the inroads that I have made on the birdlife have been small.

Boys at the front look forward to letters from home more than to anything else. Members who would like to write to Walter can get his address from Miss Hatch.

BUMBLEFOOT DISEASE. I have had a letter from Paul Baldwin, who is now Assistant to Superintendent of the Hawaii National Park, in reply to one of mine about a case of bumblefoot on a linnet which visited the bird table. It was the only bird seen that was affected, but it was a severe case. One leg ended in a large blob of ugly red matter halfway down the tarsus and there were also eruptions around the eye. The bird appeared over a period of a week and was seen no more.

Paul Baldwin says "A fairly large round scab develops on the legs of birds with bumblefoot. In its early stages it may be red and pussey swollen mass but later it hardens and is brown. The infection may break out on the wings or around the eyes or bill. Bumblefoot is one of these general terms that may be applied to any large mass of matter adherent to the leg from an infection." He thinks he can promise us an article based on some work which he has been able to do on the nene problem, but "bird work has been all but dropped - a war casualty!"

"FADING TRAILS" was prepared by a committee of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service. Each of the thirty one chapters deals with some rare and interesting form of wildlife whose future existence is endangered. The chapters are written by experts and though no particular chapter is attributed to any one author, the list of contributors in the foreward contains America's foremost authorities on wildlife, including many that will be familiar to Audubon members. George C. Munro and Spencer Tinker are included from Hawaii, since Chapter XIV deals with the Nene. I question the statement on page 131 that "Willie Wagtails from Australia are now well-established birds that feed on ticks in the dairy country". I once checked on this statement, which appears in an earlier book on Hawaiian birds, and found that though the birds were introduced in 1926 they dwindled and finally disappeared about 1933. The book contains many illustrations and four colored plates by Walter A. Weber. That of the California condor is particularly good. It is published by Macmillan, \$3.00.

BIRD WALK. There was no bird walk on March 20th., due to rain. Meet April 17th., 2.00 p.m. at end of Paty Drive for next walk.

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