

THE ELEPAIO

Journal of the HONOLULU AUDUBON SOCIETY
Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.

For the Better Protection of Wildlife in Hawaii

Volume 3 Number 12

June 1943

Mr. Munro has received some more notes on the birds of Guadalcanal from Walter Donaghho. We are very pleased to be allowed to include them in this and following issues of Elepaio.

A Trip up a Jungle River

Finding myself free of my military duties, I decided to utilize the time on hand for a trip up the - - - River. Grabbing up my binoculars and my camera, I set out along the road out of the camp on the beach. A beautiful beach it was, too; a wide sweep of black sand, two miles long, backed with orange trunked (covered with a sort of algae) cocoa palms.

A truck soon came along and I grabbed a ride. It progressed inland sliding and slipping over the muddy road, and turned east on the "Highway", going towards the - - - River. I got out just before reaching this and walked through the cocoanut grove. Flocks of red Lorellas (?) flew about among the palms, screeching noisily as they foraged among the buds for their food. Green backed parrots with fiery red breasts now and then flashed among the palms. A blue kingfisher squeaked somewhere, in his rubber ratlike notes. He was answered by his mate. Then I saw one of them fly down to a dead palm trunk and disappear into its nest-hole, half way up the trunk. The sweet, clear, bell like notes of a fantail flycatcher flooded the grove with melody. There he is, sitting on top of that dead limb over there, vigorously wagging his tail back and forth in time to his music.

I passed through a beautiful profusion of ginger and ferns. A climbing vine with large, serrated leaves entwined up the mossy palm trunks. Large, beautiful blue green and black bird winged butterflies flapped lazily about among the ginger, pausing at the red blossoms for sips of nectar. The spot was like a beautiful garden, such as one would find in one of the homes in Honolulu.

I came out into a grassy field and crossed over to a grove of trees along the far edge. Reed warblers sang cheerily from somewhere deep in the grass as I progressed. It was useless to find them as they would only fly away through the grass. I flushed a small brown and black marked quail as I came to the edge of the field.

I entered the grove of trees; hau and venua, as well as another that had clusters of pink blossoms. One of these was full of strange shiny black birds with large red eyes. They uttered a note resembling that of a chick. There were several females; slate colored above, with a cream, brown streaked breast. Several myzomela honeyeaters also flitted about the pink blossoms. They were beautiful birds, olive green above, with bright yellow breasts. They wore a bib of shiny deep purple. The female was similar in color to the male amakihi; dark olive green above, and yellow below. The loud buzz of cicadas filled the air as I entered the cool depths of the grove. Something flew up

from a clearing under one of the trees and alighted in the deep shade of another further over. It turned out to be a deep reddish brown, grass green winged ground dove. A strange bird whistled nearby; a slow sad descending note. I imitate it. It answered, and came closer. Soon I saw it fly out of a vine covered tree and perch in a tree overhead. A cinnamon breasted thickhead, black, with a cinnamon breast and a light blueish white bill. Another bird whistled in the manner of a boy calling his dog, and a myiagra flycatcher flew into view at my imitation. It whistled as it flew, spreading its wings and quivering them as it whistled. It made a dive and, spreading and raising up its tail to break its speed, it reared up and emitted its ascending whistle. Then it dove down again, to rise up again for the next note. It was a deep black bird, with a clean white breast. It was followed by its brown, slate blue headed mate. Something large flew up at my approach and perched on a fallen trunk of a tree in an open glade nearby. I saw what I believe may have been a megapode; the Benchley's megapode. It seemed to resemble that bird, and, like the Benchley's megapode, it was a dark olive color, lighter below.

I came out of the grove and up to the bank of the wide river, flowing between banks of grey gravel. A little pied shag sat on a small bar out in the stream, and it flew up on sighting me and disappeared down the bend. Several cinnamon breasted swallows flew about over the water, in company with several grey swiftlets. One of the swallows disappeared under the bridge nearby, and investigation disclosed its mud plastered, grass nest on one of the beams. A flash of bright blue flew past me and alighted on a limb jutting out over the water, and I recognized the tiny gentian kingfisher, with a white breast and a black cap.

Crossing the bridge and following the road on, I turned off at a road running inland. A truck came along presently and I caught it. We passed out of the groves, and the road wound through open jungle. Then, crossing a wide grassy field and plunging into the jungle again, it came up along the bank of the river. Here I got out and had quite a thrill as I peered at the river rushing between high green stands of magnificent jungle, which crowded right up to the water's edge. I was exalted at the supreme wild, fascinating beauty of the scene. I could have been in Borneo, or in South America! Interesting of note was the wild sugar cane which grew on the sand bars jutting out into the stream. As I stood gazing at the opposite bank, about 70 yards distant, I saw a large bird flying and wheeling slowly about along the edge of the trees. I peered at it through my glasses and recognized, with a thrill, the red backed eagle, with its white head.

This is all for the first instalment. In the next I relate of my walk through the jungle and of some of its fascinating feathered dwellers.

BIRD WALK. The bird walk along the Manoa Cliffs side of Tantalus on May 15th gave great enjoyment to the members. We had a guest, Sgt. Wilson of the Marines, an active bird enthusiast from New Jersey.

We feel the Society is doing good work by helping our boys to continue their interest in nature when they are far from home. On our walks we have had soldiers, sailors, war workers and now a marine and we have enjoyed meeting them all.

Next walk; meet Punahou and Nehoa for another Tantalus walk on the Pauoa side, June 12th at 2.00 p.m.

Birds of Hawaii and
Adventures in Bird Study
Value of Birds to Man
By George C. Munro

An excellent publication entitled "Wildlife Conservation" by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, was published in 1941. Some statements in it interest us here in Hawaii. On page 167 Dr. Gabrielson says: "... as few if any forms of wildlife can be considered as having either entirely beneficial or entirely harmful economic relations." Again on page 168 "... no method has yet been devised to bring about an actual increase in crop production by relying solely on the agency of birds as insect destroyers..... Many believe that the repressive effects of birds are of greater value during periods of insect scarcity and of less value when there are great insect outbreaks."

I question the accuracy of these opinions. I am strongly of the opinion that the Pacific Golden Plover (Pluvialis dominica fulva) better known in Hawaii as the Kolea is a form of wildlife against which no charge of harmful habits can be made or sustained, at least in Hawaii. And that the beef crop in certain sections on Hawaiian ranches has at times been to a great extent saved by the agency of birds. Also that the kolea is of immense value here in Hawaii in great invasions of the larval stage of insects. This is not theory as I have spent 37 years in the beef raising industry in Hawaii and during that time I have seen many invasions of army worm in pastures and have blessed the work of birds in stopping them. I have seen lush grass eaten to the ground by a solid advancing mass of caterpillars. Luxuriant unimpaired vegetation before the hungry horde and in its wake bare ground. Who would say that stopping that invasion would not affect the crop of beef that depended on that lush grass in fattening for market? Dr. Gabrielson has surely overlooked the story of the gulls at Salt Lake City where a monument was erected to these birds commemorating an incident in the early days of that settlement when the gulls stopped an invasion of grasshoppers which threatened their crops and food supply.

On many Hawaiian ranches there are large areas of semi-dry country. On this class of pasture land the surface may be almost bare in the dry season except for patches of bermuda grass which here does not form the solid cover it does in wetter country. Here it is a nutritious grass but it is on the annual grasses and other plants on this class of country ^{that ranchers} depend mostly for fattening their cattle for the beef market or furnishing rich milk for the cows with calves. If heavy rains come early while the weather is still warm the growth on these lands is remarkable. The surface soil is sometimes lifted in cakes with the sprouting seed under it. It is at this time the pupae of the grass army worm awakes and the moth (Spodoptera mauritia) emerges and lays its eggs on the bermuda grass patches: caterpillars hatch out, grow to maturity, pupate, emerge into moths and the same cycle is repeated perhaps several times in a short period if the weather continues favorable. This cycle of course does not occur every year in this sequence as it depends on weather conditions; probably on a series of warm but not too heavy rains. Nor does it happen at the same time on different islands, or on different ranches, or even on all parts of the same ranch. One island may be suffering from drought while another has favorable rains. Opposite conditions sometimes prevail on the different islands during the same seasons. Consequently the caterpillar invasions are often local and the birds have the opportunity to concentrate

on them. By the time several cycles of the life of Spodoptera have been completed and conditions continue favorable there has been a great increase in the number of the matured moths. Large numbers of eggs are now laid and the caterpillars when about half grown have eaten out the patches of bermuda grass and are spreading into the adjoining pasture. The battalions from other patches meet, devour everything green between the patches, advance and come to new untouched country. By this time they have formed a solid line and are travelling fast, cleaning up everything green in their path. The rancher is dismayed seeing the disappearance of his beautiful green feed. Many devices have been adopted to stop these invasions but nothing in my experience has equalled the work of the birds. It is how they show their invaluable services.

To be continued

YOUNG BIRDS The mortality among young birds during the first week after they leave the nest is very high, probably at least 50%. That is the time when they are barely able to fly. They crouch on the ground, giving their incessant hunger cries. These cries primarily serve to advise the parents of the whereabouts of their young, but at the same time they betray the fledgelings to any prowling cat, which finds them easy prey.

Every year we hear of young birds which have fallen out of the nest and have been discovered by some bird lover, and we are asked what is the best thing to do. The best thing to do is to catch the young bird and put it in the top of a thick bush near where it was caught and leave it. This will give it some protection from cats and the parents of the chick are probably near, even if they are not in sight, and they will soon find it and take care of it. It is not much use to replace it in the nest, even if that can be found, for the bird will not stay there.

Do not try to rear it. That is a full time job and it hard to give correct food. Young birds are always hungry, it is stated that they will eat their own weight of food in a day. Of course it has been done many times, sometimes the bird ends its life in a cage and sometimes it becomes a friend of the family, free to come and go as it pleases. That is how one of the recent members of our Society became interested in birds. She adopted a young Brazilian cardinal which had complete freedom but was pleased to continue the relationship. Eventually it disappeared, perhaps it found a mate and returned to its natural life, perhaps it fell a victim to some cat or boy through the habits of trust it had learned. But the memory of that happy friendship has made our member a friend to all birds.

J.d'A.N.

JAPANESE BLUEBIRD

The Hui Manu and all bird lovers are glad to hear of further reports of the bluebird. They have previously been reported at Kokokai and Ewa, now Mr. Francis Evans has reports of them this year at Wahiawa (twice seen), at Ewa (once seen) and at St. Louis Heights, where one is seen every day at a bird bath. His duties take him all over the island and he will make further enquiries in his travels.

HONOLULU AUDUBON SOCIETY

President: J. d'Arcy Northwood, 3449 Paty Drive, Honolulu, T.H.
 Vice-President: Charles M. Dunn, 3227 George St., Honolulu, T.H.
 Sec. Treas.: Miss Grenville Hatch, 1543 Wilhelmina Rise, Honolulu, T.H.
 Advisors: George C. Munro and Capt. E. H. Ryan Jr.

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