

T H E E L E P A I O

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BIRDS OF HAWAII  
and  
Adventures in Bird Study

An Ocean Cruise  
By George C. Munro  
No. 10 (contd.)

Much has been written of Midway recently. Years ago it also formed the theme of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel "The Wreckers". Andrew Farrel in "John Cameron's Odyssey" told something of its wrecks and the experiences of the castaways from these, fifty years ago it was indeed a desert island. Fred Hadden has also written of it in a recent Hawaiian Planter's Monthly.

We went ashore on Sand Island and made a complete round. The surface was nearly all white sand, a large area of it evidently swept by the sea in heavy weather. The only greens were a few Scaevola covered mounds about 12 feet high and a small patch of grass at the extreme southwest end. Remains of shipwrecks strewed the sand. A small square house of heavy ship's timbers and a pile of coal told of a former use of the island as a coaling station. The house was originally a 12 feet by 12 feet structure but shipwrecked sailors had added to it all around making it 24 by 24 feet with an inside and an outside room. It was built of 4 inch thick ship's timbers and was in good order except that the door had fallen off. The Walker family had lived in it for 14 months after the wreck of the "Wandering Minstrel". At the time of our visit a little white tern chick was the sole inhabitant. Other small habitations where members of the crew had lived still stood.

Captain Walker had left an account of his ship's company's sojourn on the island in a bottle and various carved and painted records were on the inside walls of the house: the first was in a square cut into the wood.

Arrived

September

1886

W. Brown

Haw. Sch. "General Siegal"  
Honolulu

1886 - 87

Lost at this island the  
night between 16 - 17 Nov.

7 Men in 1886 Shore I (word scraped out)

1 Man died and buried in shore

7th October 86



Captain Walker's note was in a bottle, it ran:

### Midway Island

"The British Barque "Wandering Minstrel" of Hongkong belonging to the Sharkfishing Company Limited of the above port F. D. Walker Master was wrecked here in a severe storm Feb. 3, 1888. Scarcely anything was saved a strong current running to the Northard sweeping things to sea, very few provisions were saved but all hands were landed safely, also a man named Jorgensen who is reported to have murdered his Captain on the other island and from his character there is no doubt he did.

On the 15th of March the cook named Frank Lord with five other men ran away with a boat and are probably lost.

On the 13th of October the mate John Cameron, Jorgensen, and a Chinese lad, left for Honolulu in a boat properly fitted up and provisioned for two months.

We have been very hard pressed for food in the months of June, July, August, September and October but the rest of the year we subsisted entirely on eggs and birds.

On the 16th of March 1889 the schooner "Norma" of Yokohama Charles Johnson Master arrived here, shark fishing, who gave us such food as he could spare which I must say saved the lives of two or three which were very ill with scurvy, everybody being more or less sick, as the eggs were finished and only goonie meat to eat, the sea being too rough to fish and the boat leaked.

We intend to leave (D.V.) tomorrow for Honolulu, I having chartered the vessel for that purpose.

March 25th  
1889

F. D. Walker  
Master

late "Wandering Minstrel"

Then follow instructions about water, birds and fish which would be useful to any unfortunates wrecked here. Below this is another later record. It ran: "The schooner Norma came back to this place on June 25th 1889 the thing in this note is very useful no doubt, and if carried out you will always have something to eat. P.S. Please leave a note similar to this when you leave or leave this one J. T. B. 2nd Mate Norma Yokohama Japan."

Feb. 18, 1942

oOo

DESTRUCTION OF BIRD LIFE ON RABBIT ISLAND. Mrs Reginald Carter, Treasurer of the Hui Manu, has sent us copies of letters between Mr. McGuire, Territorial Game Warden, and the Army. Mr. McGuire reported that artillery firing at Rabbit Island from the mainland had been taking place. He pointed out that Rabbit Island and other offshore islands were the breeding places of thousands of sea birds and were protected by Territorial and Federal laws. In reply he received the following letter: "Dear Mr. McGuire, I am in receipt of your letter of 2 June, 1942 regarding bird life on Rabbit Island. I appreciate very much the interest you have shown in the protection of bird life. However, on some occasions it has been absolutely necessary in the interests of the defense of these Islands to practice the firing of coast artillery at the various targets. You may be assured, however, that no such firing will be conducted on Rabbit Island except when direct war time benefits can be obtained. Thank you very much for calling this matter to my attention. Sincerely yours, (signed) Thomas H. Green, Brigadier General, A.U.S. Executive."



That is the most that we can expect in these times and we appreciate the courtesy of General Green's letter. Admiral Bloch was equally courteous when we wrote to him about Bird Island being used as a bombing target. Other letters from the Navy to Mr. Munro are reported in Elepaio, Vol.3, page 3. If members will report any apparently useless destruction of bird life to us, we will see that the facts are sent to the National Audubon Society and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

There is a brighter side to the picture. When human beings are at war the birds generally have a little peace. It was recognized in the last war that military operations have little effect on bird life, which benefits from the absence of shooting for sport. Perhaps members noticed a paragraph in the paper (Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 10/1/42) stating that in the absence of any protests, the Board of Agriculture and Forestry adopted a resolution prohibiting any further shooting of game birds here.

oOo

BIRD WALK ON OCTOBER 17th. Tantalus has many trails but the one followed last Saturday by the Audubon members was especially beautiful. After the first uphill climb, which was steep enough to make some of us wonder why we had chosen to spend Saturday afternoon in such a strenuous manner, our efforts were rewarded by a breath-taking view on all sides. Below us was the city of Honolulu and an unobstructed view from Barber's Point to Koko Head. Beyond were the islands of Molokai and Lanai. Some of the party were describing the fauna and flora of these remote places with disconcerting exactness. Our observers evidently using high-powered lenses, particularly the one who discovered the dog with the broken leg on Molokai. On the other side, ranges of the blue-green Koolaus stretched far into the distance, the tops of some lost in the blue haze.

The afternoon was passing all too quickly. We followed the trail from the top through tall, rustling bamboo and tree ferns. Berry bushes laden with bright red fruit temporarily slowed down the travelling speed. Ieie grew in profusion beside the trail and finally we reached the point where we could see the Pali and the ocean beyond.

Our steps were directed homeward by another trail down the mountain side. It was gay with bright red lehua blossoms. One lone, gorgeous clump of dozens of ginger blossoms stood in solitary glory beside the trail. The last of this season's ginger! All too soon we reached the steep part of the trail which led down to our starting point. We think that part of the trail could be developed into a first class ti leaf slide.

At the foot of the trail a police car was parked. We made split-second mental inventory on gas masks, identification cards, etc only to find it was wasted time. The officer was looking for somebody else!

During the walk we had seen several elepaio and many white-eyes. We heard amakihi, apapane and hill robins. Next month the crowd will get together for another happy afternoon on the trail. Meet 2.00 p.m. at the corner of Punahou and Nehoa, Saturday November 14th. O.M.N.

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HUI MANU. In the November issue of Paradise of the Pacific Laura Mell Pleadwell, President of the Hui Manu, discusses the work of that group. Members of the Audubon Society will be interested in the article.