Journal of the Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife

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OCTOBER 1993

### High Schools Pursue Paradise--Teams Young 'Alala Fly Sought for Environmental Game Show



Kalani High School Paradise Pursuits Team on board the Navatek, enjoying their whale watching prize. Left to right: Jonathan Levy, Mark Takamiya, Leigh Ann Higa, and Assistant Coach Sumi Long. Photo by Coach Lorene Suehiro.

#### by Sheila Laffey

Audubon's successful environmental quiz program, Paradise Pursuits, is recruiting more teams. There will be one set of competitions this school year, in the spring of 1994. Paradise Pursuits is now sponsored by Hawaii Audubon Society, with funding from Hawaiian Electric Company. This will be the third year participation in Paradise Pursuits is offered to high school teams. Last season 16 schools from three islands competed. Competitions will be held on each island in early March or early April. There will be no competitions during the 19-26 March vacation or on 12 March. Each island's winning team will be flown to Honolulu for the state competitions to be be taped by KHON-TV2 the last week in April and edited for later broadcast. This year teams and coaches were flown to O'ahu courtesy of Aloha Airlines and overnight accommodations were provided by Paradise Pursuits staff and KHON-TV2 for students and coaches.

Each team has a teacher who serves as coach and who may be helped by assistant coaches. Mailings with posters, guidelines, and application forms have been sent to the principals and environmental club advisors of all public and private high schools statewide. Each team has four members (three regular and an alternate). Once a team's application is received the new bibliography and some donated books and materials will be sent to the coach for team preparation during the fall and winter. Each new coach and team member receives a free Paradise Pursuits Tshirt. Prizes will be awarded from over 30 donors! Please call Sheila Laffey at 528-1432 (or at 988-5450 mornings before 11 a.m. and evenings) for an application or if you have any questions. The application deadline is 22 October.

# the Coop

Five juvenile 'Alala had their first taste of freedom on 23 August when the doors to their hacking box were removed by staff from the Peregrine Fund. The first bird, named Hiwahiwa, ventured out shortly after 6 a.m. She was also the first chick hatched at the temporary incubation facilty in Captain Cook last April. One by one, the other birds followed her out, most flying in and out several times during the morning. These are the first captive hatched 'Alala ever to fly in the wild. With the release of these birds, 17 'Alala are known to exist in the wild.

All five birds were fitted with small radio transmitters that will enable biologists to track the birds for the next 200 days. The transmitters were glued to the two center tail feathers of each bird. When they molt next year, the transmitters will also fall off.

The birds are expected to stay relatively close to the aviary, and probably will stay together as a group, according to biologists with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Although they are foraging for fruits, berries, and insects in the wild, food is also being provided for them on a platform outside the aviary.

Seven chicks were hatched in captivity this year from eggs gathered from the wild. The other two chicks were transferred to the 'Alala flock at the Olinda Endangered Species Propagation Facility on Maui.

Source: USFWS

### **New Version of** Hawaii's Birds

A revised 112-page edition of Hawaii's Birds, with 19 new color photographs, is now available. It incorporates new information on bird species since the book was last published in 1989. Copies are \$11.50 each, including postage to U. S. addresses. To order, send payment to Hawaii Audubon Society, 212 Merchant St., Suite 320, Honolulu, HI 96813.

### Fish and Wildlife Service Successfully Translocates Palila

by Steven G. Fancy

The endangered Palila (*Loxoides bailleui*) is found only in dry woodlands on Mauna Kea volcano on the Island of Hawai'i. Historically, Palila occurred in subalpine mamanenaio forests of Mauna Kea, the northwestern slopes of Mauna Loa, and the eastern slopes of Hualalai. The estimated number of Palila during the past five years have ranged from 1,371 to 5,354, with an estimated population in 1993 of 3,719.

Overgrazing of mamane-naio forests by introduced feral ungulates beginning in the early 1800s was a major factor in the decline of the Palila. The immature seeds of mamane are the staple food of Palila, and mamane trees are used extensively for nesting and shelter. Recent removal of feral ungulates from Mauna Kea is allowing regeneration of mamane forests, but Palila are absent or occur in small numbers in many areas of seemingly suitable habitat.

The prime objective of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Palila Recovery Plan is to "maintain/restore a self-sustaining population of Palila distributed continuously throughout their range in healthy, regenerating habitat." To be downlisted to threatened status, the density of Palila should exceed 25 birds/km² throughout the 139 km² area identified as critical habitat. Densities currently exceed 200 Palila/km² near Puu Laau, yet rarely exceed 10 Palila/km² on the southern, eastern, and northern slopes of Mauna Kea.

Results of recent studies using radio telemetry and resightings of color-banded Palila indicate that they show strong site tenacity and therefore limited dispersal and colonization potential. Nesting studies indicate that individual Palila and their offspring build nests within a few hundred meters of their previous nests or the nest where they were born.

Because of their low potential for dispersal, translocation of Palila to seemingly suitable habitat on the eastern slope of Mauna Kea appeared to be a promising means of speeding the recovery of this species. After discussions with cooperating agencies and a review of previous translocations of birds in New Zealand and elsewhere in the world, we decided to capture and translocate approximately 40 Palila from Puu Laau to the eastern slope of Mauna Kea in March 1993.

Between 1 March and 10 March we

captured 60 adult Palila in mist nets near Puu Laau and held them for 1-3 days in two large field aviaries. Although we intended to translocate 20 male and 20 female Palila, only 13 of the birds were female. Previous banding studies found an adult sex ratio of 2.2 males per female, presumably because of higher mortality of adult females. We eventually transported 35 adult Palila, 23 males and 12 females, to Kanakaleonui on the eastern slope of Mauna Kea, On 3 March and 11 March, we took Palila from the field aviaries, put them into specially designed transport boxes, and moved them by helicopter to the release site, 20 km away. All the Palila were banded with a numbered aluminum band and a unique combination of three colored aluminum bands. Seventeen of the 35 Palila were fitted with small, 1.5 g transmitters to closely monitor their movements.

One objective of the study was to compare the effectiveness of "soft" versus "hard" releases. Researchers in New Zealand have had better success in translocations with "soft" releases, where they keep the birds at the release site and provide food and water for several days before they are released.

Palila in the "hard" release group were released at Kanakaleonui immediately after they were weighed and were fitted with a transmitter. The "soft" release group was placed into another large field aviary built around two mamane trees with large numbers of green pods and were released from the aviary one day after they arrived at Kanakaleonui.

Four Palila died during the translocation—one during transport and three within one day of their release. These four birds lacked fat reserves and apparently died from a combination of poor initial body condition and the stress associated with being captured. All of these birds were observed feeding regularly in the aviaries, but they still lost excessive weight. Of the remaining 31 Palila, all of the birds with transmitters have been relocated repeatedly and appear to be doing well.

Twenty-nine of the 31 Palila were known to be at Kanakaleonui 2-3 weeks after their release there. However, after 2-6 weeks at Kanakaleonui, at least 12 of the Palila homed back to the exact location where they were captured near Puu Laau. This homing ability was surprising given the strong site tenacity and limited movements of this species.

Two of the translocated birds paired up

and built a nest at Kanakaleonui, although they later abandoned the nest. Another pair of translocated Palila successfully fledged a chick and were observed with it at Kanakaleonui on 7 July. During a recent trip to Kanakaleonui on 6-8 July, we observed at least 16 Palila in the kipuka, including three that were banded there in March 1990.

From this first experimental translocation, we have learned that it is possible to move birds to a new site and have them successfully nest there. We will continue to monitor the translocated birds to see if additional birds pair up and establish nests. We have discovered that Palila have the ability to home back to their capture site, but that many adult birds will remain at a new site. We have also learned important lessons about holding Palila in aviaries and have found that a 1-day "soft" release technique did not improve the short-term success of translocated birds.

We will continue to monitor the translocated birds at Kanakaleonui for two years to determine their fate. If the birds remaining at Kanakaleonui continue to do well, additional translocations may be considered in the future as a means of speeding the recovery of this species.

Reprinted from Hawaii's Forests and Wildlife, Volume VIII, No. 2, Summer 1993, The Quarterly Newsletter of the Hawaii State Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Land and Natural Resources. Dr. Fancy is a USFWS wildlife biologist.

### Beware of Seeds in the Mail

A Mainland environmental organization recently sent a promotional mailing to Hawaii residents which included viable seeds. Importation of live non-native species is strictly controlled by state law. There was no indication in the materials sent by this group that they had any clearance or permit from the state for this importation. Similar mailings have been done by other organizations in recent years.

Anyone receiving viable seeds in the mail from out of state is asked to send a letter of complaint to the organization sending the seeds, and to forward a copy of the complaint to the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture, Plant Quarantine Branch, 701 Ilalo Street, Honolulu, HI 96813.

### Fundraising Appeal Still Short of Goal

by Lynne Matusow

Contributions from our August fundraising appeal are still coming in. As of 13 September, 94 members had contributed \$2,520. Our goal is \$8,000. With National Audubon closing its office and abandoning its programs in Hawaii, we are trying to pick up the slack. Paradise Pursuits (see article on page 67) is going forward, with a grant from Hawaiian Electric Company. We are seeking additional grants for this program. We will also be seeking grants to continue the oiled wildlife training program, so Hawaii's wildlife will be properly cared for when a spill occurs hereas it inevitably will.

### **Mahalo Donors!**

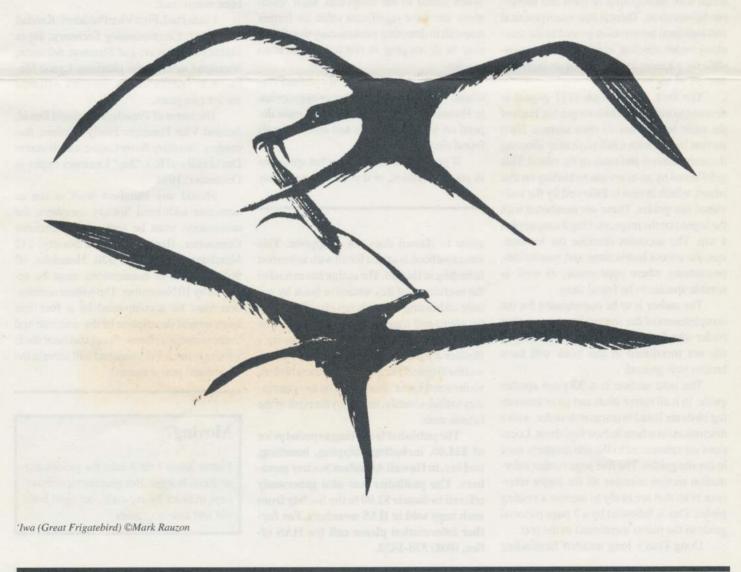
The Hawaii Audubon Society thanks the following members and friends for their generous donations. This list reflects contributions received through 13 September.

Mary Louise Jeffrey Akaka, Lea Anspach, Eleanore Aylett, Paul Banko, Edwin and Stella Baughman, George Beach, Jr., Dr. and Mrs. Carl Berg, Jr., Hannah Bowman, Terry Burns, David Caccia, George Campbell, Marilyn Carlsmith, E. R. Champion, Terry Clark, Patrick Conant, Jacqueline Craver, Jennifer Crummer, Myra Davis, Satoru Doi, Walter Donagho, Drs. Fern and Renate Gassmann-Duvall, Barbara Earle, Russell Eldredge, Jr., Dr. Steven Fancy, Patricia Federcell, Shelby Anne Floyd, William Friedl, Fred Fukuroda, Linda Gallano, Richard Gaspard, and Emily Giese.

Also, William Haines, Bryce Hataoka,

Linda Hayashi, Jennifer Hilderbrand, Noboru Hirayama, Harvey King, Virginia Koch, Roberta Kolman, Takako Kujirai, Edwin Laak, Robin Leong, Carol Lilley, Sally Lowery, Helena Mainieri, Atsushi Marushige, Guy Masuda, Dallas McLaren, Col. David Milotta, Rose Mooradian, Joel Moribe, Albert Moscotti, Iuli Mulholland, Joy Nagata, Jane Nikaido, Valerie Nishida, Lesley Patton, Kathy Payne, Evelyn Peck, John Perry, Kurt Pohlman, Linda Pratt, and Doti Price.

Also, Louise Ripple, Hal and Elly Roberts, Tom and Leslie Robb, Sharon Rooney, Lillian Scanlan, Susan Schenck, Kevin Shaney, Loree Sandoz Sloggett, Stanley Strezleck, Brett Strong, Maria Suganuma, Clyde Sussex, Nancy Thurston, Floyd Tilton, Phyllis Turnbull, R. Van Etten, Karen Victor, Mary Lucile Waldron, Ronald Walker, Sally Wang, Garrett Webb, Nancie Wylie, Alan Ziegler, and Robert Zimmerman, Jr.



### **Book Review**

by Reginald E. David

Enjoying Birds in Hawaii: A Birdfinding Guide to the Fiftieth State

H. Douglas Pratt, 193 pages including over 150 color photographs and paintings by the author as well as 27 maps. Perfect bound 5.75" x 8.5" paperback, first edition 1993, \$18.95, Mutual Publishing, 1127 Eleventh Avenue, Mezz. B, Honolulu, HI 96816.

Dr. Pratt has divided this book into three main sections—introduction, site guides, and species guide. In addition, there is a section on further information and references and an appendix which is a photographic guide to the plants most important to birders.

In the 25 page introduction, the author discusses the history, status, and distribution of the major bird groups found in Hawaii as well as the major habitat types and how to recognize them. The section is richly illustrated with photographs of birds and numerous habitat shots. There is also much practical and logistical information geared to the travelling birder, much of which is almost impossible for a tourist to get without an immense amount of leg work.

The bulk of the book (117 pages) is devoted to well organized site guides. Each of the main islands has its own section. Each section begins with a full page map showing the main features and roads of the island. This is followed by an overview to birding on that island, which in turn is followed by the individual site guides. These are numbered with the legend on the maps, making it easy to plan a trip. The accounts describe the location, specific access instructions and restrictions, precautions where appropriate, as well as notable species to be found there.

The author is to be commended for the completeness of the site guides. Any visiting birder who finds a really productive birding site not mentioned in this book will have broken new ground.

The next section is a 33 page species guide. In it all native birds and most interesting birds are listed in taxonomic order, with a discussion on where to best find them. Locations are referenced to the site numbers used in the site guides. The five page further information section contains all the major reference titles that are likely to interest a visiting birder. This is followed by a 7 page pictorial guide to the plants mentioned in the text.

Doug Pratt's long awaited birdfinding

### **Bishop Museum Seeks Specimens**

by Robert L. Pyle

The Bishop Museum vertebrate zoology collection currently contains approximately 82,800 specimens (17,600 birds, 12,700 mammals, 21,500 reptiles and amphibians, and 31,000 subfossil bones). The collection is maintained for purposes of scientific research and education, employing modern conservation techniques to protect and preserve the specimens in perpetuity. The collection is directed primarily toward specimens from the central and western tropical and subtropical Pacific area. Within that area, special emphasis is given to the Hawaiian Islands collections—one of the largest in the world.

A significant portion of the Hawaii bird specimens were collected around 100 years ago, and include many specimens of species now extinct or critically endangered. Unfortunately, the collection contains fewer Hawaiian specimens collected in recent years. When added to the collection, such specimens can have significant value for further research in detecting evolutionary trends that may be developing in our native and alien species.

Organized field programs to collect vertebrate specimens are no longer appropriate in Hawaii, so the Bishop Museum must depend on salvage of birds and other animals found already dead.

If you have a dead bird or bat specimen in your possession, or if you find one, it may

guide to Hawaii does not disappoint. This attractive book is a must for all with an interest in birding in Hawaii. The author has extended the usefulness of this attractive book by not only addressing the birds but also discussing the plants and habitats found in Hawaii. The combination of this book and either *Hawaii's* Birds or A Field Guide to the Birds of Hawaii and the Tropical Pacific will give most birders, visitors and kama'aina alike, the tools necessary to find, identify, and enjoy the birds of the fiftieth state.

The publisher is offering a special price of \$15.00, including shipping, handling, and tax, to Hawaii Audubon Society members. The publisher has also generously offered to donate \$2.00 to the Society from each copy sold to HAS members. For further information please call the HAS office, (808) 528-1432.

be something the Bishop Museum needs for its collection. The need for specimens varies among species, type of specimen, and the location in which it was living. The Museum is looking for whole bodies and skeletons as well as nests and eggs. For a complete list of what the Museum is looking for, call the Zoology Department, 848-4155.

This is not a request to purposely collect any of the specimens. It is a request to researchers and others who find any of the items to contribute them to the scientific collection at the Bishop Museum.

# Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee has presented a slate of officers and directors for the December election. The following members have been nominated:

Linda Paul, First Vice President; Kendall McCreary, Corresponding Secretary; Joyce Stanney, Treasurer; and Shannon Atkinson, Sherilyn Garrett, John Harrison, Lynne Matusow, and Kevin Shaney, directors. All terms are for two years.

The terms of President Reginald David, Second Vice President Emily Gardner, Recording Secretary Betsy Gagne, and directors David Hill and E. J. "Jay" Lembeck expire in December, 1994.

Should any members wish to run or nominate additional Society members, the nomination must be sent to the Elections Committee, Hawaii Audubon Society, 212 Merchant Street, Suite 320, Honolulu, HI 96813. Write-in nominations must be received by 10 November. The written nomination must be accompanied by a four line biographical description of the nominee and the nominee's written consent that he or she is willing to run for election and will serve in the designated post if elected.

### Moving?

Please allow four weeks for processing address changes. Because our records are kept in order by zip code, we need both old and new addresses.

### Hawaii Audubon Society

212 Merchant Street, Suite 320 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Telephone (808) 528-1432

#### **Board of Directors**

President: Reginald David, on Hawai'i, 329-9141 (W), 329-8507 (FAX) First Vice President: Linda Paul, 262-6859 (H)

Second Vice President: Emily Gardner, 734-3921 (H)

Treasurer: Lynne Matusow, 531-4260 (H) Corres. Sec.: Carl Christensen, 239-5136 (H) Recording Sec.: Betsy H. Gagne, 941-5659 (H)

#### Directors

Shannon Atkinson, 737-3528 (H), 956-8625 (W), 956-6751 (FAX) David Michael Hill, 988-7460 (H), 955-0100 (W) E. J. "Jay" Lembeck, 261-6657 (H) Kevin Shaney, 988-5626 (H), 548-4811 (W),

548-6690 (FAX) Joyce Stanney, 533-0204 (H), 543-0827 (W), 533-0308 (FAX)

#### Committees

Conservation: David Michael Hill (as above) Education: Emily Gardner (as above) Field Activities: Lance Tanino, 247-5965 (H), 247-7878 (W)

Finance: Lynne Matusow (as above) Fundraising Task Force: Stan Michaels, 528-1432 (W)

Grants & Scholarships: Phil Bruner, 293-3820 (W)

Membership: Robert Pyle, 262-4046 (H) Programs:

Publications: Reginald David (as above) Publicity: E. J. "Jay" Lembeck (as above)

#### **Island Representatives**

Maui: Renate Gassmann-Duvall, 1-572-1584 (H)

### **'ELEPAIO**

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Doug Lamerson

Distribution:

George Campbell, 941-1356 (H), Christi Moore, Robert Pyle, Alan Ziegler

The 'Elepaio is printed on recycled paper.

### **T-shirts for Sale**

The Hawaii Audubon Society has a stock of T-shirts designed to spread the Audubon message. Not only are they attractive personal apparel, but they make excellent presents as well.

T-shirts bearing the Society's 'Elepaio logo are available in ash (gray) with a black design. We also have a few in aqua, navy, white, and beige. In addition, the "hot" Kolea (Pacific Golden Plover) T-shirts are also available. This T-shirt is white with a three-color design of the Kolea and native hibiscus. Proceeds from the Kolea T-shirt go to help HAS fund research on shorebirds in Hawai'i and elsewhere in the Pacific region.

T-shirts are \$12 each, plus \$2.00 per shirt for postage. They are available in medium, large, and extra large adult sizes only. When ordering T-shirts, be sure to list size and first, second, and third choice of color. To order T-shirts send your check, payable to the Hawaii Audubon Society, to Yvonne Izu, 2069 California Avenue, #20B, Wahiawa, HI 96786. Don't forget to add \$2.00 per shirt for postage. Insufficient postage will delay your order until the proper amount is remitted. T-shirts are not available at the HAS office.

### HAS Dues for 1994

All amounts are in U.S. dollars. Includes delivery of 'Elepaio.

Regular Member

Delivery to U.S. zip code addresses Via bulk mail \$ 10.00

(Not forwardable to new address)

Via first class mail 16.00

(Hawaii residents: there is no significant time difference between bulk and first class mail to addresses within the state of Hawaii.)

Junior Member (18 and under)	5.00
Contributing Member	30.00
Sustaining Member	100.00
Life Member (one-time payment)	250.00
(three annual payments) 100.00,	100.00, 50.00
Benefactor (one-time payment)	500.00
Patron (one-time payment)	1,000.00

#### Delivery to non-U.S. addresses:

Mexico (airmail only)	16.00
Canada (airmail only)	17.00
All other countries (surface mail)	18.00
All other countries (airmail)	28.00

#### Introductory dues for

National and Hawaii Societies: 20.00 (Includes delivery of 'Elepaio and Audubon

Magazine as bulk or 2nd class mail to U.S. zip codes. Renewal, \$30 annually.)

### **Aiea Field Trip**

by Eric VanderWerf

Fifteeen people met at either the State Library or the trailhead at Keaiwa Heiau Park on the mostly sunny but windy morning of 15 August. The windy conditions made it difficult to hear and see birds, but the pleasant temperatures in the mountains were a nice break from the city heat.

On the hike up we heard or saw Whiterumped Shama, House Finch, Nutmeg Mannikin, Northern Cardinal, Japanese Whiteeye, Red-vented Bulbul, and most people had at least a glimpse of Common 'Amakihi. We also talked about some of the reasons for the scarcity of native Hawaiian birds.

Several newcomers to Hawaii were interested in learning about the plants along the trail. We stopped to examine native plants such as 'ohia, koa, pukiawe, lama, 'ie'ie, 'uki'uki, Smilax, kopiko, and sandalwood, as well as aliens like Clidemia, palm grass, lantana, guava, ironwood, and Norfolk Island pine. After a brief stop for snacks at the overlook, we walked a short distance on the ridge trail to see several beautiful flowering lobelias.

We heard several more 'Amakihi and Red-billed Leiothrix singing down on the steep slopes, but couldn't get a good look at them. We had stopped so often on the hike up that it was already late, and we returned to our cars at a faster pace under the warm midday sun.

#### **Research Grants**

The Hawaii Audubon Society makes grants for research in Hawaiian or Pacific natural history. Awards generally do not exceed \$500 and are oriented toward small-scale projects within Hawaii. Special consideration will be given to those applicants studying dryland forests and aeolian systems on Hawaii. The deadlines for receipt of grant applications are 1 April and 1 October.

For an application form send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Grants, Hawaii Audubon Society, 212 Merchant Street, Suite 320, Honolulu, HI 96813. For more information, call Phil Bruner, (808) 293-3820 (W).

### **Calendar of Events**

#### First Monday of Every Month

Monthly meeting of the Conservation Committee, 6:30 p.m., at the Coffeeline, 1820 University Avenue (in the YWCA). To join or for more information call David Hill, 988-7460 (H).

#### First Wednesday of Every Month

Monthly meeting of the Education Committee, 7:00 p.m., at the Coffeeline, 1820 University Avenue (in the YWCA). To join or for more information call Emily Gardner, 734-3921 (H). The Committee is actively seeking new members. All are welcome.

#### Saturday, October 9

Big Island field trip. Bird 'Aimakapa Pond and shoreline areas, the native forest area of Kaloko Mauka for native species, and the grasslands of Pu'u-wa'awa'a for introduced estrildids. Meet at the First Hawaiian Bank parking lot in Kailua-Kona at 7:30 a.m. Bring binoculars, water, sunscreen. For more information, to make reservations and/or arrange for car pooling call Lance Tanino on O'ahu, 247-5965 (H), 247-7878 (W), or Reggie David

on the Big Island, 329-9141 (W). Suggested donation: \$2.00.

#### Monday, October 11

Board meeting, 7:00 p. m., HAS office. Call Reggie David on Hawai'i, 329-9141 (W), for details.

#### Monday, October 18

General Membership Meeting, Paki Conference Room, Bishop Museum, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Paul Banko and Scott Johnston from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will give a multimedia presentation on ongoing efforts to recover the 'Alala. Among the things they will discuss is the captive hatching of seven chicks this year. Refreshments will be served.

#### **Publications Available**

The Hawaii Audubon Society publishes books, checklists, and field cards relating to birds of Hawai'i and the Pacific. For a complete price list send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Publications List, Hawaii Audubon Society, 212 Merchant Street, Suite 320, Honolulu, HI 96813.

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