



'ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

VOLUME 55, NUMBER 5

JUNE/JULY 1995

Oiled Wildlife Recovery and Rehabilitation Program

by Linda Elliott, Program Director

The Oiled Wildlife Recovery and Rehabilitation Program's (OWRRP) goal is to facilitate the planning efforts, in Hawaii and Pacific territories, to prepare for the possibility of wildlife casualties in the event of an oil or hazardous waste spill. The bulk of my time working on this program has been dedicated to participating in meetings with the Oceania Regional Response Team (ORRT) and the Federal On Scene Coordinator Area Plan Committee's (FOSC) Oiled Wildlife Work Group (OWWG). In addition, I have been actively involved in the Marine Spill Response Drills and the National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program.

ORRT is a group of 14 federal agencies and a number of state and territorial agencies, co-chaired by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, whose purpose is to prepare for and facilitate actual response efforts to catastrophic oil and hazardous substance releases throughout Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Pacific territories.

OWWG's purpose is to specifically improve response capabilities for wildlife casualties caused by such a spill or release in the same aforementioned region. This group is also made up of federal and state agencies and non-profit and private organizations concerned with wildlife preservation, including the Hawaii Audubon Society.

The sheer logistics of planning for such a catastrophic event is very involved and time consuming. The first phase of work has included much networking with resident qualified and interested personnel to develop the infrastructure and operating procedures for such a program.

My work has also meant providing my expertise to design capture and stabilization kits to be utilized by trained first responders. I have identified supplies and equipment that need to be pre-stored for first response work and those items that would take too

much time to acquire in an emergency.

In November 1994 the International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC) sponsored me for a weeklong working visit to their Berkeley, California center. I attended meetings on oiled wildlife response issues with regional representative from the west coast and the gulf coast states.

The actual hands on work at the center's facility allowed me to see rehabilitation work on aquatic birds from pelicans to coots. The IBRRC also graciously provided access to their 24 years of data. The IBRRC has appointed me to be the representative for the tropical Pacific region (Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and Wake Island). I returned with this knowledge and a commitment from IBRRC to further aid my preparedness work for this region.

The great concern for the plight of oiled wildlife has resulted in the establishment, in many parts of the world, of volunteer organizations and programs for rehabilitating affected animals. Improvements in treatment procedures and in the professionalism of rehabilitation personnel during the last 15 years have markedly improved the success of rehabilitation efforts. The release rates for cleaning and rehabilitating oiled birds have gone from a rate of less than 19% to 80 to 100% at present. Besides demonstrating a sincere human concern for oiled animals, the true value of this expertise will come to play when an oil spill threatens to jeopardize the continued existence of a local or endangered wildlife population. Participating in these type of efforts, in all honesty, is an eye opening and depressing experience, as animals will die and the long term effects can carry over to future generations. Volunteers, professional wildlife biologists, animal husbandry experts and veterinarians continue to demonstrate their willingness to meet this difficult challenge.

You may be wondering how much of a threat oil or hazardous substance spills are

to the Hawaiian Islands. Hawaii, as with all the Pacific islands, faces constant threats from the shipping lines bringing petroleum products that supply electric power plants and automobiles. All these ships carry their own fuel with some carrying more than others, as was the case with the long line fishing vessel responsible for the Rose Atoll spill. In addition to bringing in large cargos of freight, ships carry hazardous chemicals, as in the Astra Peak incident near Honolulu Harbor. Other spills are called "mystery spills," as their origin is unknown and unreported by the offending ships. These spills float out at sea killing untold numbers of animal life. If a victim of a mystery spill actually makes it to land or tar balls wash ashore, we then become aware of some of the casualties of mystery spills.

Mystery spills continually affect the Northwest Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Numerous seabirds are seen annually with oil on their plumage. Even the highly endangered monk seals have been reported with tar balls on their fur. Studies have been done on seabirds on the low survival rate and long term reproductive problems caused by the ingestion of oil products preened from their plumage.

The Rose Atoll incident happened on 14 October, 1993, when the Taiwanese long line fishing vessel Jin Shiang Fa went aground on Rose Atoll, American Samoa, discharging 100,000 gallons of diesel fuel, 500 gallons of fuel oil, and 2,500 pounds of ammonia. Rose Atoll is a National Wildlife Refuge. It is the smallest atoll in the world. This is an uninhabited atoll with two emergent islands that comprise about 20 acres and was considered one of the few near pristine wildlife refuges in the south Pacific. It provides important habitat for 15 species of seabirds and shorebirds, 2 species of threatened sea turtles, hundreds of species of fish, corals, and other invertebrates which include the giant clam and ground hermit

crabs. The vegetation on the islands includes a rare native tree called *Pisonia*.

The damage was extensive with the fuel oil impact zone affecting an area, 400 meters by 600 meters, of intertidal and subtidal reef flats, wiping out almost all invertebrates such as coralline algae, urchins, snails, and 75% of the giant clam population in the affected area. Damage also included the physical destruction from the impacts of the ship and debris on the reef. Much damage was done and the resulting adverse effects continue. The green sea turtles were present in large numbers due to their breeding season but no immediate casualties were reported. Other concerns are the possible introduction of rats from the ships to the nearby emergent islands. Rats are highly destructive to seabird nesting colonies. At this time there have been no signs of rodents on the islands. The entire affected area on the western side of the atoll had all life wiped out and now has been infested with a blue green algae bloom. There is now a high probability of ciguatera toxin concentrations where none was found before. The worst case scenario is the total erosion of the extensively damaged windward side, which provides protection to the island and which loss would lead to the complete loss of the wildlife habitat.

This atoll is very remote and recovery/cleanup efforts were delayed a couple of weeks. This is a good example of the great concern for the northwest Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

Other examples of long liner incidents and shipping vessel spills in Hawaii during 1994 include the long liner grounding at Kewalo Basin and in March the long liner grounding on Ni'ihau that released 5,000 gallons of diesel fuel, caused extensive physical damage to the reef, and deposited large amounts of monofilament lines on the reef that can entrap many varieties of marine life and sea birds.

The incident at Honolulu Harbor on 7 January, 1994, involved the Liberian freight ship *Astra Peak*. This vessel was carrying a cargo of dangerous pesticides, flammables, and oxidizers. A fire broke out in one of the holds, but fortunately was contained and eventually extinguished. The hazardous substances that were released were also contained and cleaned up. Again, this incident had the very great potential for a more disastrous outcome.

In mid-February, 1994, the Guam power plant had a 40,000 gallon diesel tank release

fuel after receiving a puncture caused by a safety valve malfunction. The response effort was able to contain the oil and stopped it just short of going into a storm drain leading to the sea, although 400 gallons made it to a waterway leading to the ocean. There is a large amount of contaminated soil that will require clean up efforts, but past spills in Guam have been much worse.

On 24 February, 1994, the Hamakua Sugar Company's Hana Pa'a Sugar Mill on the Big Island released 160 barrels (6,500 gallons) of oil from a storage tank. The spill overflowed the containment area and contaminated a creek that runs to the ocean. The sheen of oil covered an area 1 1/2 miles long and 200 yards wide 1-2 miles off the shoreline. Wildlife and environmental damage was not reported on.

In early June 1994, there was a gasoline spill on O'ahu. This was contained and cleaned up without any reports of environmental damages or wildlife casualties. Later that month, a tank vessel heading to Honolulu Harbor was leaking jet fuel just below the waterline. The Marine Spill Response Center was hired by the responsible company to off load the remaining fuel before coming in to dock. Fortunately, again, a major disaster was avoided.

These examples are but a small percentage of what takes place each year. These incidents demonstrate that there is the imminent likelihood of poor environmental conditions and human error combining to produce a catastrophe in Hawaiian waters, similar to those already experienced at other active ports worldwide. Therefore, proactive planning is paramount to facilitating a professional and qualified response effort to recover and rehabilitate any wildlife casualties that may occur. As we continue to depend on oil for the majority of our energy needs, we must also take on the responsibility of dealing with the consequences of our life styles on the environment.

This year has already been a busy one for the OWRRP. The Chevron Companies, Hawaii renewed support for the OWRRP with another grant to the Hawaii Audubon Society (See *'Elepaio* 55:26). This funding continues the planning process, core response team training assistance, and eventually the volunteer coordination work. Chevron should be recognized for the inception of the program and remaining very supportive in this oiled wildlife response planning process, the results of which have been important improvements to the re-

sponse program.

I recently returned from giving an International Bird Rescue Research Center oiled wildlife response training session in Guam, only to be called to assist in an actual response in California. This response involved 78 American coots and several other aquatic species in smaller numbers that were affected by a crude oil spill in Long Beach (Unocal/Metrolink February 1995). This work allowed me to receive important experience working with a species that is very similar to the endangered Hawaiian Coot. Also, it further exemplified the need for the permanent oiled wildlife rehabilitation facility here in Hawaii.

The birds were stabilized in Long Beach for an average of 24 hours. They were then sent by commercial plane on an approximate four-hour journey to the IBRRC facility. I was there for two weeks and had the opportunity to work in many areas of an oiled wildlife response. I participated in the stabilization of affected birds to ready them for cleaning. This could take 24 hours to a week depending on the condition of the animal. This work involved the use of blood taking and analysis, physical exams, weights and rehydration techniques such as gavages, subcutaneous, and IV fluids. I also assisted in the actual washing and rinsing procedures developed by IBRRC. Finally, I participated on some of the successful releases. The survival rate was 85% and a followup study is being done at UC Davies on a majority of the released coots. We look forward to the results of that study.

I have shared my experience with the OWWG and continues to actively participate in the effort underway to create a real life response plan to meet Hawaii's wildlife resource needs.

There will be future articles and bulletins for oiled wildlife volunteer rehabilitators as the OWRRP progresses. The second phase of the program focuses on the establishment of a qualified resident response team. Many of you were among the 400 volunteers who participated in the 1993 statewide training sessions. We hope to provide similar training, to update you, and recruit others this year.

The Environment and the Legislature—1995

by Bart Dame

Environmental bills did not fare well in the 1995 Hawaii State Legislature. Very few pro-environment bills passed this year. Fortunately, few anti-environment bills passed either. Because of the state's financial crisis, any bill requiring the expenditure of state funds had little chance of passing. Many good bills died for budgetary reasons. But others were killed because of the anti-environmental climate in the legislature, especially in the Senate.

Some good environmental bills did survive. Probably the most important are HB 745 and SB 1320. HB 745 (introduced by Rep. Alex Santiago) appropriates \$60,000 for Non-point Source Pollution (NPSP) programs. Our drinking waters, our nearshore ocean waters, and our streams are being contaminated by pesticides, fertilizers, oil products, and other contaminants leaching into the water table or being washed into streams and the ocean during rainstorms. The U.S. Congress—under the previous leadership—set aside matching funds to help the states develop programs to reduce the problem. For each dollar Hawaii commits to spend, the Feds will give more than an additional dollar. Unfortunately, State Senate Ways and Means Chair Donna Ikeda slashed the state's share from about \$500,000 to \$60,000, which will cost the state more than half a million dollars in available federal environmental funds. It also should be pointed out that Senator Ikeda refused to even hold a hearing on HB 380, a very important bill which would have raised needed funds for the state's environmental programs through a very small tax on imported oil.

SB 1320 (introduced by Sen. Fernandes-Sallings) will restrict the use of pesticides by state and county road crews. Many mainland counties have greatly reduced the use of pesticides for weed control in favor of the environmentally safer and often cheaper methods of "integrated vegetation control" and hot-water spraying. But in this state, county and state transportation departments have refused to even experiment with these methods; an exception is Hawai'i County, which is actively exploring non-chemical alternatives.

HB 401 (introduced by Rep. Jim Shon) was an attempt to form an Environmental Protection Agency within the Department of

Health. At present, state environmental protection programs are scattered across several departments, where they are often low-priorities for funding and staff support. HB 401 would have created one agency as a locus for environmental responsibility. Because the Cayetano Administration was unable to achieve agreement on the bill within its ranks, the bill died. It may, however, reappear next year as an administration bill.

There were several bills containing citizen suit provisions introduced this year. When faced with the threat of lawsuits, government agencies that might have been willing to overlook environmental law violations can be prodded into doing their job. Corporate lobbyists and most state and county agencies are opposed to the concept. Because of this opposition, no hearing was held on most of the bills, but the issue will resurface in next year's Legislature.

The bad news about the pro-environment bills is offset, in part, by the appointment of Mike Wilson as director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Gary Gill as the director of the Office of Environmental Quality Control. In addition, the Legislature has rejected the attempt of the Cayetano Administration to eliminate alternative-energy tax credits. This would have effectively killed the alternative-energy industry here.

Several legislators showed themselves to be strong advocates for the environment this session. Particularly worthy of mention are Representatives Jim Shon, Cynthia Thielen, and newcomer David Tarnas.

While other individuals and organizations followed particular environmental bills this session, the Hawaii Audubon Society and Life of the Land were the only environmental organizations consistently attending the hearings, delivering testimony, and haunting the corridors of power.

Hawaii and the Congressional Conservation Agenda

by Andy Cowell

As many of you are no doubt aware, a number of important changes to the nation's environmental laws and regulations are being considered by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The following is an update on actions either already taken or pending, with an emphasis on what effects these changes may have upon Hawaii.

The House passed a bill (HR 925) that would require that private landowners be compensated by the government on the condition that any portion of their property should lose 20% or more of its value due to restrictions imposed by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Clean Water Act, or the Swampbuster provision of the Farm bill. A practical effect of this in Hawaii would be that in many cases action to prevent destruction of wetlands harboring endangered species, such as waterbirds, would become much more expensive, or perhaps not be undertaken. Likewise, where action is required under federal laws to prevent runoff, (a major threat to the health of coral reefs) or toxic runoff (a major cause of stream and coastal pollution), private property owners would receive government compensation for restrictions on the use of their property. Again, the practical effect, given current budgetary conditions, is that many such protective measures would become either extremely expensive to the general taxpayer, or else not be taken. At this writing the Senate had yet to take action on this legislation.

The House also passed a bill (HR 450) placing a moratorium on all new federal regulations for the 1995 calendar year. It includes an amendment preventing the listing of endangered species for two years, or until the ESA is re-authorized. The Senate passed a bill on new regulations (S 219) which is more limited: it would allow Congress to rescind any new regulation with which it did not agree. A separate bill (HR 889), already signed into law by President Clinton, places a moratorium on all new endangered species listing until this October. Another Senate bill under consideration (S 503) would explicitly place a moratorium on the listing of new

Paradise Pursuits Finals—1995

by Wendy Johnson

Four teams of bright and inquisitive high school students from across the state met on Saturday, 8 April at the KITV television studios in Honolulu to compete in the semi-final and final games of the 1995 Paradise Pursuits season. Actually they met the afternoon before, in the halls of the Outrigger Reef Tower in Waikiki, where complimentary rooms were provided by Outrigger Hotels Hawaii, Inc. for Paradise Pursuits participants and their coaches.

Parker School science teacher Pat Wagner arrived from the Big Island on Friday with a lively group of young men, including student team captain Michael Roehrig and team members Max Lamouria, Asa Sugitan, and Mario

endangered species until the re-authorization of the ESA. The differences between these bills must now be worked out in Conference Committee. The effect of the ESA bills in Hawaii would be, to take one example, the suspension of all listing of new endangered species, of which there are more than 100 candidates here, or the designation of critical habitat for those species already on the list, of which Hawaii has more than 150.

Finally, the House passed a regulatory reform measure (HR 926, now included in HR 9) that would require cost-benefit analysis of all new regulations. In other words, if the economic cost of implementing the regulation outweighed known economic benefits, the regulation would not be imposed. One practical effect of this measure would be to greatly increase the cost of writing new regulations, due to the expense of the cost-benefit analyses. Additionally, where harmful effects are suspected but not known, regulations would probably not be imposed, since these suspicions could not be included in the cost-benefit analysis. This measure could prevent costly new regulation of substances that turn out later not to have large harmful effects, but at the same time it would increase the risk that substances such as chemicals and pesticides, which later are proven to be highly harmful, would be permitted before these effects were conclusively proved. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency has stated that under the proposed legislation it would not have banned DDT in the early 1970s.

Brown. When describing the Parker School team's preparation for the final competitions, Pat admitted to resorting to heartfelt pleading at the reference desk of the Waimea Library in order to borrow a particular Hawaiian source book for use at school. Pat won that round, and probably at least as an indirect result, her students did a fine job and went on to win their first round in the Paradise Pursuits final competitions.

Ed Bartholomew, the teacher/coach from Lahainaluna High School on Maui, accompanied team captain Michael Bonnet along with Jason Wagner, Joseph Tam Lung, and Everett Ferreira on their trip to the big city. It turned out that the Lahainaluna students were more familiar with Waikiki, and had been to O'ahu more recently than their teacher, so they were preparing to show him the sights. Mr. Bartholomew thought they should try to fit an educational outing into their off-island trip, and suggested an early morning wake-up call so they could attend the fish auction at Kewalo Basin before heading off to the Paradise Pursuits games. That plan was rejected by a four-to-one-vote. Unfortunately, the team from Lahainaluna was defeated in the first semi-final match on Saturday, but we can surely expect to see more fine performances from that school in the future.

From the Garden Island, Kaua'i High School teacher Sharon Orth arrived Friday evening with her 12-year-old son Nick, who is in training to become a Paradise Pursuits participant, along with team captain Marina Hidalgo and Steve Nakayama. Meeting them on O'ahu was the third team member from Kaua'i High School, Cyndi Ozaki, who was already in Honolulu performing in a high school jazz band contest. Ms. Orth finds herself on Oahu almost "too often," because she and her students are involved in a wide variety of science enrichment programs throughout the year. The Kaua'i High School team was hoping for a lot of questions from the "human impact" category during the Paradise Pursuits games, but they did a great job in all the categories. They did not qualify for the final match this year, but quickly devised an alternate plan for the afternoon. When Sharon Orth and her students left the TV studio, they were determined to conquer Ala Moana Shopping Center.

The team from Kamehameha Schools on O'ahu joined the neighbor island Paradise

Pursuits competitors at the Outrigger Reef Tower for an evening of relaxation and studying in Waikiki. Teachers Richard Mills and "Doc" Burroughs accompanied their able and experienced students, including team captain Rosanna Alegado, Mark Silva, Jennifer Punohu, and Roxanne Reiny. Rosanna, Mark and Jennifer participated in the Paradise Pursuits program last year and their extensive knowledge about Hawaii's natural history and environmental issues was enhanced by their poise and skill in the heat of competition. Their excellent performance again proved hard to match. For the third consecutive year, Kamehameha Schools was declared the Paradise Pursuits State Champion, remaining undefeated throughout preliminary rounds on O'ahu and during the semi-final and final competitions broadcast statewide in three half-hour shows on KITV Saturday, 15 April.

Viewers of the Paradise Pursuits television programs may have noticed that the games had a new look and format this year. Switching TV networks necessitated the use of a new game-show set, and in order to give the fine sponsoring organization a little higher profile, the Hawaii Audubon Society's 'Elepaio logo was featured on the host's console. The games themselves were played in four timed segments and taped in "live-time," eliminating the need for post-production editing to fit the games into a 30-minute time slot for TV broadcast. This meant the viewing audience of approximately 50,000 people for the three programs got to watch each game in its entirety, rather than an edited version of the actual competitions. KITV reporter Keoki Kerr served as host of the Paradise Pursuits competitions, a task he found to be a cheerful departure from a normal day on the news beat. He clearly enjoyed working with the kids and admits to having learned a lot about our island home.

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.

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'ELEPAIO

ISSN 0013-6069

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Distribution:

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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 blue spruce and mountain rose with a black design. We also have a few in ash (gray). 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, 1957 Alai Place, 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.

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Albatross Project

by Andy Cowell

Observations for the Albatross Project, which began on 15 November, 1994, ended on 30 April, 1995. Volunteers from Hawaii Audubon Society and elsewhere contributed approximately 600 hours of observation time during approximately 140 days of observing from Sea Life Park over the course of the project. Thanks to all of you for your dedication and effort!

Project head Dr. Stephen Kress did not expect any breeding would occur in this, the second year of the project. That was in fact the case. This year, the goal of the project was to continue to attract as many juvenile albatross as possible as they prospected for potential new breeding sites. During the period up to the middle of January, numerous sightings and landings of albatross occurred at the island. After this time, sightings and landings dropped off noticeably. It is unclear whether this was a random event or due to some ecological circumstance, such as this year's el niño. Other birds such as Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies began nesting nearly a month later this year than last year, both on Manana Island and elsewhere, suggesting a large-scale disturbance which may have affected the albatross.

Nevertheless, over the course of the season's observing, albatross were sighted on 38 days, with landings on the island occurring on 24 days. The sightings ranged from 10 December to 10 April, with one additional sighting on 25 April. The 37 days with sightings were the result of 111 days of actual observing; thus albatross were seen on 33% of observing days during this time. In the case of most of the landings, the birds remained for extended periods of time. Additionally, many of the sightings and landings involved pairs of birds, and courtship activities were seen at the island on several occasions, which offers the hope of future breeding. The project should be returning in the winter for a third season.

Special thanks are due to Steve Carter for his work last year and getting things started again this year, Patrick Ching for donating the artwork for the project T-shirt, Sea Life Park, the Hawaii State Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for financial and logistic support.

Calendar of Events

Monday, June 12

Board meeting, 5:30 p.m. Call the office for location.

Monday, June 19

General meeting, 7:30 p.m., Paki Conference Room, Bishop Museum. Linda Elliott, Program Director of the Oiled Wildlife Recovery and Rehabilitation Program, will talk about her work to date (see related story on page 29) and what we can do to help. Refreshments will be served.

Saturday, June 24

Half day hike of Aiea Loop Trail to see native birds and plants, led by Casey Jarman and Janice McCain. Bring water, snacks, binoculars, sunscreen, and hiking shoes. Meet at the State Library on Punchbowl Street at 8:15 a.m. or at the park at the end of Aiea Heights Road, top parking lot, at 9 a.m. For more information call the office, 528-1432. Suggested donation: \$2.00.

Wednesday, July 5

Monthly meeting of the Education Commit-

tee, 7:00 p.m., at the Coffee Line, 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 to work on next season's Paradise Pursuits program. All are welcome.

Monday, July 10

HAS Board meeting. Time and place to be announced.

Saturday, July 22

Field trip to Nu'upia Ponds on Marine Corps Base Hawaii-Kane'ohe Bay, led by Scott Henderson and Linda Paul. First two hours will be spent assisting the base environment department with pond maintenance. Then we will go birding. Bring shoes that can get wet, gloves, lopping shears (if you have them), sunscreen, binoculars, lunch, and water. This is light work only. Ponds were recently cleared of 80% of the mangroves growing in them and the biologists need help pulling up the seedlings as they try to grow back. Twenty person limit. To register call Linda Paul, 262-6859 (H).

Table of Contents

Oiled Wildlife Recovery & Rehabilitation Program.....	29
by Linda Elliott	
The Environment and the Legislature..	31
by Bart Dame	
Hawaii and the Congressional Conservation Agenda.....	31
by Andy Cowell	
Paradise Pursuits Finals—1995.....	32
by Wendy Johnson	
Albatross Project.....	33
by Andy Cowell	

Birders Network

HAS has a list of birders who are interested in informal trips with other members, allowing members to find others to go along with them on their outings—for the sake of safety, to share information on good spots, or simply to increase the fun. If you are interested in putting your name on the list, which would be circulated to all those on the list, call or write HAS, attention Andy Cowell.

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