



'ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

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MARCH 1998

State of the Society for 1997: President's Report

By Linda Paul

The Hawaii Audubon Society, established in 1939 by a small group of dedicated birders, is now a statewide conservation organization with a membership of over 2,000. Although it became a chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1978, it is independent of that organization in matters of policy, financial control, and programs. As the Society has slowly grown over the years, the number of tasks that needed to be done began to outpace the time and ability of our volunteers. Accordingly more and more tasks are now done professionally, including office management, Paradise Pursuits coordination, accounting and bookkeeping, legislative monitoring, the mailing of the 'Elepaio, and the distribution of our publications. However, a large number of volunteers continued to generously donate a huge amount of time and effort to the Society.

Membership meetings continued to be held on a bimonthly basis at the Bishop Museum Paki Conference Room. The 1997 membership programs featured the following presentations:

Sightings and Status of Hawaiian Birds Project (Bob Pyle of the Bishop Museum); Captive Propagation as a Tool for Restoration of Endangered Hawaiian Birds (Al Lieberman of the Peregrine Fund); The Debt of Hawaii's Critters to Hawaii's Plants (Bill Mull); The Behavior, Biology, and Interactions of Albatross with Longline Fishers and Midway Tourists (Beth Flint of the USFWS); Restoration of the National Wildlife Refuge at Kealia Pond, Maui (Kathy Smith of USFWS); He'eia Wetland Mangrove Research Project (Vida Yap)

The monthly field trip/service trip program also continued under the guidance of Mary Gaber, with trips to Kanepu'u Preserve on Lanai, the Native Forest Bird Propagation Program at the Honolulu Zoo, the Ka'ena Point Natural Area Reserve (nesting albatross and shore birds), the Makapu'u

Lighthouse seabird and whale watching hike, Hanauma Bay (geology and snorkeling), the red-footed booby colony at Ulupau Head, the Ewa Sink Holes at Barber's Point for a fossil bird bone hunt, the Waikalualoko Fish Pond in Kane'ohe (service trip), the Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden, the Ki'i Unit of James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge, Hawaii Loa Ridge for a forest bird hike, the Kahuku Point Sand Dunes (migratory bird hike), the Aiea Loop Trail (forest bird hike). The Society also maintains a list of birders interested in setting up their own informal birding trips with other members.

Education activities: Paradise Pursuits Environmental Quiz Program, the Society's high school environmental education effort, completed its sixth year in 1997. Major funding continues to be generously supplied by Hawaiian Electric Company, with additional support from Aloha Airlines, Outrigger Hotels, the Department of Education's Environmental Education Branch, the Department of Land & Natural Resources, Castle & Cooke Homes Hawaii, and First Hawaiian Bank. A teacher training workshop funded by an Environmental Protection Agency grant was co-sponsored by the State Department of Education and the Society. Education Committee members also judged and presented the Society's annual awards to the best junior and senior division entries for outstanding research on natural history at the Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair. See the Education Committee report further on in this issue.

Grants & Scholarships: The Annual George C. Munro Environmental Law Award (funded by the Society) went to Kimberley Wong. Tuition scholarships for the 1997-98 school year, provided in the memory of Rose Schuster Taylor for use in the University of Hawaii system, went to Kerri Fay, a Koke'e Natural History Museum volunteer, and Vida Yap. The

Society's small grants program recipients were 1) Jessica Garb for her project that examines the diversity of crab spiders in Hawaiian dry forests; 2) Cheryl Bauduini, who is investigating the parent-offspring conflict on adult provisioning strategies of the wedge-tailed shearwater; 3) Lisa Stratton and Mitiku Habte who are examining the role of *myccorrhizae*, a fungus, in Hawaiian dry forest restoration, and 4) Susan I. Jarvi, who is examining blood samples from birds in American Samoa for hemoparasites.

The Society's Legislative Analyst Byron Baker and other members monitored environmental issues at the 1997 session of the State Legislature, preparing and presenting testimony on behalf of the Society. The Society joined with a number of other local conservation organizations in a partially successful attempt to fix a very bad bill that amended the State's Endangered Species Act, raising concerns about the impact of habitat conservation plans and safe harbor agreements on protected species and their habitats, and the lack of public involvement in monitoring and enforcement. In addition, the Society and the Kawai Nui Heritage Foundation joined forces to successfully lobby for state matching funds to provide a 3:1 match to a federal grant to restore 60 acres of waterbird habitat in Kawai Nui Marsh. The Society is currently seeking funding for an environmental and cultural education center at the marsh.

The Society continued to provide volunteer observers for the Laysan Albatross Recolonization Project on 'Oahu in conjunction with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of Land & Natural Resources, and the National Audubon Society. In addition, members represented the Society on several public committees and task forces, including the Alien Aquatic Organisms Task Force and the Permit Process Task Force

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First Annual Rota Christmas Bird Count (CBC) 1997

by Lance Tanino

On Sunday, December 21, 1997 five Rota residents braved through a mixture of sun, wind, rain, and high humidity to take part in the first Rota CBC. Thirty-two species were seen on the count despite Super Typhoon Paka roaring through the island five days before.

A couples of species showed effects from the storm. The red-tailed tropicbird was absent on county day. It was quite unusual for this species as they are usually reliably seen at the seabird sanctuary lookout. Fortunately, they were found during count week. The white terns' surprisingly

large number was probably due to large areas of defoliated forest which made them more visible at a distance. Forest birds were no doubt affected by the defoliated, uprooted, and downed trees left by the typhoon, but no previous count is available for comparison.

Interestingly, two of the five top species for the count were introduced species, while the remaining three were indigenous. The red-footed booby (959) was the most abundant species followed by the introduced black drongo (640), the introduced Eurasian tree sparrow (306), Pacific golden plover (263), and white tern (157), respectively.

Two unusual species were recorded for the count. A wedge-tailed shearwater was seen at the end of count day. It flew low over the water along the As Matmos Fishing Cliffs. It was identified based on its pale undersides and arcing flight over the waves. A bristle-thighed curlew was identified during count week based on a "Chiuit" call heard right after a series of Whimbrel calls.

Rota is the last island in the southern portion of the Northern Mariana Archipelago still having relatively large areas of native forests. These forests are inhabited by native forest bird species that can be seen from most roads on the island. Unfortunately, these birds are no longer seen on Guam and are in low numbers on Saipan. With the success of the first Rota CBC, hopefully it will attract more participants from Rota, as well as Guam and Saipan, for many years to come.

(Editor's note: the full count breakout is available from the HAS office.)

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The 'Elepaio is printed on recycled paper and published nine times per year: February, March, April, May, June/July, August/September, October, November, and December/January.

E kala mai...for the lateness of this issue. Although the Society will have co-Managing Editors beginning with the April issue (it does rain sometimes!), this issue fell again on already busy shoulders. Mahalo to Michele La Rue Corbo for the graphic design skills she has exercised to put together this and the February issue!

1997 Education Committee Activities

by Wendy Johnson, Committee Chair

The HAS Education Committee activities focus on providing opportunities and motivation for learning about Hawaii's native wildlife and environmental issues. Paradise Pursuits, our quiz program for high school students, completed its sixth season in 1997, with thirty public and private schools represented statewide. Play-off competitions included games between five O'ahu teams and three outer island teams which have been broadcast regularly throughout the year by 'Olelo. Final competitions were televised in April by KITV. Kahuku High School was the Paradise Pursuits champion for the second consecutive year, winning with a team of students who had not competed in 1996, and who displayed an impressive depth and range of knowledge about the flora, fauna, and natural history of Hawai'i.

Hawaii Audubon Society received funding from the Environmental Protection

Agency for the presentation of a teacher workshop on local environmental issues and problem-solving strategies. Twenty-five dedicated teachers completed the five-day workshop held in April and May of 1997 and acquired information and skills necessary to help Hawaii's students become actively involved with issues and decisions unique to our island environment.

A team of Education Committee representatives acted as judges at the 40th Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair and presented two awards for outstanding research relating to Hawaii's natural history. One project described the effects of herbicide runoff on Kauai's native limpet populations, while the other combined laboratory work with field observations defining introduced apple snails as a threat to aquatic ecosystems in Hawaii.

Hawaiian Electric Continues Paradise Pursuits Funding

By Sylvianne Yee

On February 3, 1998 a small envelope arrived at the Hawaii Audubon office with a very large check and a warm letter of congratulations from Scott Shirai, Director of Community Relations for HECO. Hawaiian Electric Charitable Foundation has once again honored us with a very generous grant of \$20,000, enabling us to continue offering the Paradise Pursuits program to high school students statewide. We are so pleased that the partnership between HECO and the Hawaii Audubon Society has resulted in seven seasons of the popular environmental quiz program.

Thank you, HECO, for continuing to give the youth of today the tools to make environmentally sound decisions for tomorrow.

The Natural and Cultural History of Kailua Ahupua'a Second Lecture/Tour Series - 1998

(As noted in the President's report, HAS is working with several other organizations, including the Kawai Nui Heritage Foundation, to raise funds for and begin to implement the development of an education and cultural center at Kawai Nui Marsh. The tours & lectures listed below are open to interested HAS members. For more information, call contact person; if none listed, contact organizer Chuck Burrows (Kawai Nui Heritage Foundation Board member) at 595-3922(h) or cburrow@aloha.net.)

CULTURAL HISTORY

April 18, Saturday -

Time and place: TBA

Topic: The Cultural History of Kawai Nui and Mokapu from Hawaiian Chant & Dance

Resource Speaker: Kumu John Lake

ARCHAEOLOGY

May 14, Thursday, 7-9 p.m. Evening Lecture,

Place TBA

May 17, Sunday 1-4 p.m.

Tour of Maunawili sites

Meeting place for tour: Windward YMCA/Ulupo Heiau

Topic: Archaeological & Historical Sites of Maunawili Valley

Resource Speaker: Dr. Paul Brennan, Anthropologist

WETLAND & MIGRATORY BIRDS

June 6, Saturday, 9-12 a.m.

Meeting place for tour: Windward YMCA/Ulupo Heiau

Topic: Wetland & Migratory Birds of Kawai Nui, Mokapu, & Kaelepulu Pond

Resource Speaker: Dr. Bob Pyle, Hawaii Audubon Society

Contact: Larry Abbott, 254-4951

MARSH PLANTS and AQUATIC LIFE

July 5, Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

Meeting place for tour: Windward YMCA/Ulupo Heiau

Topic: Plants, Insects & Aquatic Life of Kawai Nui Marsh

Resource Speakers: Dr. Steve Montgomery & others

Contact: Larry Abbott, 254-4951

KAWAI NUI WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT & EDUCATION CENTER

August 13, Thursday - Evening Lecture,

Place TBA

August 15, Saturday, 9-12 a.m.

Site tour

Meeting place for tour: Windward YMCA/Ulupo Heiau

Panel Speakers: Benton Ching, Paul Conry, Dave Smith, Linda Paul, Keali'i Pang & Chuck Burrows

Conservation Committee Report: June-December 1997

by Dan Sailer, Conservation Chair

Statewide Issues

Wildlife Take Permits Administrative Rulemaking: The Society recommended that incentives to find alternative control methods and education be offered to those seeking to take (i.e. destroy) native wildlife and flora impacting their agricultural or aquacultural operations. As an example, easier and cheaper alternatives are often available to those seeking means to eliminate auku'u predation on fish pond stocks.

Midway Atoll

An expanded recreation plan prompted HAS concerns regarding by-catches (inadvertent hooking of birds and turtles), potentially inadequate marketing efforts to sustain research needs, and alien species introductions to the main Hawaiian Islands.

Kauai

The Society recommended (and the Department of Forestry and Wildlife concurred) that more monitoring for Pueo was needed before, during, and after improvements to the game bird habitat at the Kekaha Game Management Area.

Oahu

HAS raised the need for performance criteria and monitoring for auku'u predation on other waterbirds before the finalization of a waterbird restoration plan for Kawai Nui Marsh. HAS, in close cooperation with several other environmental organizations, is moving forward in our efforts to secure an environmental education center at the Marsh. Also, discussions have begun on the possible designation of the Marsh as a State Wildlife Sanctuary.

At a benefit concert for KTUH Radio, HAS collected signatures and had participants write letters to congressional representatives supporting a stronger Federal Endangered Species Act. After much delay, Congressional action on the Federal Endangered Species Act is expected this Spring.

Maui

The Society supported The Friends of Haleakala's efforts to designate a new

Natural Area Reserve in the Papa'anui ahupua'a on the South West Rift Zone of Haleakala. Additional protection of nesting 'U'au or Dark-Rumped Petrels as well as the area's superb geological features are some of the issues being raised in ongoing deliberations.

Along with the Sierra Club and the Native Hawaiian Plant Society, Renate Gassmann-Duvall, our Maui HAS Representative is assisting in efforts to replant thirty acres of recently cleared mixed native forest in the Kahakuloa Area. Native seeds are currently being collected for a proposed one acre test plot.

Kahoolawe

The Society impressed upon the Kahoolawe Island Reserve Commission the need to deal with underwater as well as surface and subsurface ordinance. The potential loss of native lowland invertebrates due to trail and road construction and strategies for faunal restoration were the other main HAS concerns regarding the draft Kahoolawe Ecosystem Management Plan.

Hawaii

Saddle Road: Along with the Sierra Club, the Society focused its comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Saddle Road Project on the much needed Palila Mitigation Plan. As several of the proposed routes bisect designated Palila Critical Habitat, the Palila Mitigation Plan if implemented would restore far more suitable areas of mamane forest on the slopes of Mauna Kea. Since hunter opposition to the plan and its high cost places the mitigation plan at risk, concerted efforts from the environmental community will be needed in the coming months to ensure its full approval. Protection of the Palila in general will again be a priority issue for the Society in 1998.

Coming Up...

Other priority issues for the next six months include facilitating the conservation and protection of aquatic resources, opposing efforts to maintain feral ungulate populations on State lands other than Game Management Areas, and strengthening the recently amended State Endangered

Species Act during this year's legislative session.

Also, as the Society will be expanding its conservation efforts through more service field trips and other outreach activities, anyone interested in assisting the committee's efforts is encouraged to call me at 955-0100. Please see the Black Point Cleanup article in last month's *'Elepaio* issue for more details on upcoming events. Lastly, if you would like an electronic copy of any of the letters sent to the respective government agencies on the issues listed above, please feel free to e-mail me at dnsailer@aol.com.

Assault On Hawai'i's Environment - Press Conference

A coalition of citizen groups joined together on March 9, 1998 to denounce a series of bills that they felt constituted an "Assault on Hawai'i's Environment." The Hawaii Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, Hawai'i's Thousand Friends, Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, and others charged that nine bills moving through the state legislature "jeopardize public health, the state's natural resources, special places, and native Hawaiian rights." Maile Bay, the Society's legislative analyst, pointed out that "one hundred and seventy years ago, we lost our sandalwood forests to the economic market's demands. Today, economic engines and the Economic Revitalization Task Force are demanding immediate changes to our environmental and land use laws, claiming that this will be a quick fix for our weak economy. They have not discussed or considered the long-term impacts of their proposals on our island ecosystems." Dan Sailer, Conservation Chair for the Society, recalled that "the very mechanisms that signal threats to public health and environmental quality will be removed by the proposed legislation. Hind-sight should tell us that the cost to our health and quality of life will far outweigh any 'gains' in governmental efficiency." Marilyn Bornhorst summed it up best: "The environment is the economy, stupid!"

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

continued from page 1

(Linda Paul), the 'Alala Recovery Team (Reggie David), and the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council Community Development Program Ad-hoc Committee (Linda Paul). Linda also represented the Society on a panel at the Fifth Annual Hawaii Conservation Conference and at the annual State Sustainability Conference. For a detailed report on a myriad of other Conservation Committee activities, please see the Committee Report in this issue.

Other activities during the year included the following:

In May the Society co-hosted the annual Cooper Ornithological Society meeting in Hilo, which included a symposium on the avifauna, biology and conservation issues of Pacific and Hawaiian Island birds, and a number of field trips.

In June the annual Birdathon was held to raise conservation funds for both HAS and NAS.

In September the Society held its annual awards dinner at the Paki Hale in Kapiolani Park, with a presentation by Susan Scott, author of *All Stings Considered*. The President's Award went to Bill Devick, Administrator of the Division of Aquatic Resources, for his courageous watershed restoration advocacy; the Conservation Award went to Betsy Gagne, Executive Director for the Natural Areas Reserves System Commission, for her tenacious alien species eradication advocacy; and the Government Partnership Award went to Gary Gill, Director of the Office of Environmental Quality Control, for making the environmental evaluation process more accessible to the public.

In October Linda Paul conducted an advocacy training session for science teachers in preparation for the 1998 legislative session.

In November the second annual "Birding for Beginners" Workshop was coordinated by Lynnea Overholt. Also in November the Society's Board of Directors took a service trip to the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge.

In December Christmas Bird Counts, coordinated by Arlene Buchholz, were held on Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Maui, and the Big Island. Also in December, the members approved some major updating of the By-laws.

The Society published nine issues of *'Elepaio*, our journal that includes peer-reviewed articles on research and management of Hawaii and Pacific natural resources. The October issue featured an updated *Checklist of the Birds of Hawaii*, a revision of the 1992 Checklist. Individual copies are available for \$3.00. *Hawaii's Birds* was also reprinted in 1997 with minor revisions by Publications Committee Chair Reggie David, and continues to sell well at \$9.95 along with its companion cassette tape set *Voices of Hawaii's Birds* at \$24.95.

Land Trust Project: In October the Society received a grant from the Trust for Public Land and the David & Lucile Packard Foundation to develop a handbook on conservation options and land protection tools for communities and landowners in Hawaii. The proposal was drafted and the work is being done by John and Maile Bay as independent contractors.

Program Development: In December the Society drafted a grant proposal seeking funding for a Hawaii Aquatics Resources Secretariat and an Aquatics Resources Management Conference to be held in 1998, the Global Year of the Oceans. There is currently no Hawaii conservation organization that has taken the protection of our aquatic resources under its wing and, given the interaction of seabirds, shorebirds, and wetlands birds with aquatic ecosystems, as well as the experience of several board members in this area, it is a good direction to expand the Society's conservation efforts. The Secretariat, if funded, would eventually be merged with the Secretariat for Conservation Biology to provide research and management facilitation from a complete island ecosystem perspective.

Unsung Heroes

By Sylvianne Yee

The Paradise Pursuits Environmental Quiz Program is indeed fortunate to have many volunteers to help with the games. Most work behind the scenes and are our "unsung heroes." There are two particular groups of volunteers that deserve special recognition for volunteering their time and expertise.

One group is the professionals who reviewed all of the questions needed for eight games. These individuals spent many hours poring through the 1998 questions, editing the questions and answers to make them as clear and correct as possible. Our heartfelt gratitude to **Reginald David**, Hawaii Audubon's resident bird expert; **Naidah Gamurot**, high school science teacher; **Dr. Samuel Gon**, Ecologist for The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii; **Wendy Johnson**, Hawaii Audubon Vice President and HCC environmental health lecturer; **Dr. Mark Merlin**, author and UH biology professor; and **Scott Rowland**, UH assistant researcher in planetary geosciences. Their contributions made a huge difference in the quality of the games. Many thanks also to question writers Kimberly Welch and Kelly Perry of the Hawaii Nature Center for taking on the huge task of writing 600+ questions and doing such a great job.

Another group of heroes is our outer island coordinators. Year after year, when asked if they'd help with Paradise Pursuits again, they respond with an enthusiastic "yes." We are so grateful to have **Renate Gassmann-Duvall** on Maui and **Julie Williams** and **Nan Hiraoka** on the Big Island to help. It is due to their efforts that the outer island games run so smoothly.

Reminder: Small Research Grants & Full Tuition Undergraduate scholarships available for 1998-1999

Information appeared in the December 1997/January 1998 issue (page 3) of *'Elepaio* regarding the Rose Schuster Taylor full tuition scholarship to an undergraduate student in the University of Hawaii system for the 1998-1999 school year and the Society's small research grants program.

Applications are available by calling or FAXing the HAS office (see page 2); completed applications must be received by **April 1, 1998** for the research grants and **May 1, 1998** for the scholarship.

Note that unexpected circumstances will allow the Society to give an additional one-semester Taylor scholarship for either the Fall 1998 or Spring 1999 semester. Scholarships will be administered through the University of Hawaii Financial Aid offices.

Calendar of Events

Thursday, April 2

Monthly meeting of the **Education Committee**, 7 p.m. at BaLe Sandwich Shop in Manoa Marketplace (near Safeway). All are welcome. For more information, call chairperson Wendy Johnson, 261-5957.

Wednesday, April 14

Monthly meeting of the **Conservation Committee** at the HAS office at 5:30 p.m. (Note new day, place, and time.) All are welcome. For more information, call chairperson Dan Sailer, 455-2311.

Wednesday, April 14

HAS Board meeting, always open to all members. 6:30 p.m. at the office.

April??

Mary Gaber, our field activities coordinator, has been working on setting up our more-or-less annual **field trip** to view the red-footed booby bird colony on Ulupau Head at Marine

Corps Base Hawaii. At press time, the exact date in mid-to-late April has not been confirmed, so call the office (528-1432, voice mail box 5) after the end of March for the final word. **Reservations required**; call Mary at 247-0104 to reserve and for more information. Participants will be asked to sign a "hold harmless" agreement and to carpool from the Base gate to the colony. Wear walking shoes, bring water and sun protection, and don't forget binoculars.

Saturday, April 25

Join the **1998 Birdathon** and help raise funds for national and local bird conservation! Phil Bruner will be taking a group along the Kahuku-Kuilima shoreline, while Ron Walker will lead a "bird-search" around Kawai Nui Marsh. Coordinator Linda Shapin is looking for at least one more leader for a forest hike. To sign up for your Birdathon trip, contact Linda at 263-5722 (h).

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