



'ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

VOLUME 62, NUMBER 4

MAY 2002

Results of 2000-2001 Christmas Bird Count

We don't have an accompanying article for the count results yet- It will be printed in a future issue-

Species	Kaua'i		O'ahu		Moloka'i Kualapu'u	Maui		Hawai'i	
	Waimea	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu		Pu'u O Kaka'e	'Iao Valley	N. Kona	Volcano
Laysan Albatross	7	62		5					
White-tailed Tropicbird	6	4			18				
Red-tailed Tropicbird					2				
Brown Booby	5	1		16	10				
Red-footed Booby		571		1,085					
Great Frigatebird	3	21		34		10			
Cattle Egret	119	65	100	158	69	12	62		
Black-crowned Night Heron	36	8	11	70	4		HC - 69	35	
Canada Goose (sm-races)		1							
Nene		65						5	1
Green-winged Teal		1	24						
Mallard	3		7	139			4	2	
Koloa	12	151		2					
Koloa x Mallard hybrid			23	11					
Northern Pintail		80	17		19			15	
Northern Shoveler					40		8		
Eurasian Wigeon			3		1				
American Wigeon			2					1	
Canvasback								US- 1	
Ring-necked Duck								1	
Greater Scaup								1	
Lesser Scaup					1			3	
Osprey			US - 1						
'Io								1	
Merlin			US - 1						
Black Francolin	2				5			3	
Gray Francolin			US- 1		10	3	9	11	
Erckel's Francolin	7		10					6	
Chukar					cw				
Kalij Pheasant								13	30
Red Junglefowl	203	14				25			
Ring-necked Pheasant		1			2	1			
Common Peafowl					US-2	1			
Wild Turkey								6	
Hawaiian Moorhen	11	9		19					
Hawaiian Coot	3	20	75	95	43		277	88	
Black-bellied Plover				1					
Pacific Golden-Plover	19	195	305	1,075	142	18	77	56	7
Semi-palmated Plover				US- 1				1	
Hawaiian Stilt	8	44	84	139	148		278	81	
Wandering Tattler	4	6	8	17	4		6	13	
Bristle-thighed Curlew					1				
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper			1						
Sandpiper ssp.			1						
Ruddy Turnstone			69	HC - 409	18		12	38	

cw = reported count week

HC = high count

US = unusual sighting

CONTINUED...

Field Trips for 2002

All trips with an * are still in the process of being planned. Details will be provided as the scheduled dates get closer. A donation of \$2 per participant on all field trips is appreciated.

May 8 (Wednesday) Starwatch at Hanauma Bay with Dr. Samuel Rhoads, author of "The Sky Tonight — A Guided Tour of the Stars Over Hawai'i." We will meet at 7:00 PM at the gate to Hanauma Bay. Please call Alice Roberts to register 538-3255.

May 19 (Sunday) Honolulu Zoo Although the Native Hawaiian Forest Bird Captive Propagation Unit is temporarily closed, Linda Santos will give us a tour of the South American aviary and the walk-through aviary (your editor was there several weeks ago - a fantastic close-up look at some very beautiful and unusual birds!) at the back of the zoo. This trip is limited to 15 participants. Call the HAS office to register, 528-1432 or register by email, hiaudsoc@pixi.com.

June 22 and 23 (Saturday and Sunday) Paiko Lagoon Another visit to check for shorebirds and sea critters. Wear old tennis shoes or reefwalkers, and bring sunscreen, water, and lunch. We will meet at Paiko Lagoon at 7:30 AM. Call Alice to register, 538-3255

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Developing Partnerships to Conserve Hawai'i's Natural Resources

The Hawaiian Islands are home to thousands of plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. Protecting these native species against the many threats to their survival — including habitat destruction and invasions of alien species — is a significant challenge, but also an important goal.

Landowners and natural resource managers realize that the management of large, continuous areas of native ecosystems is an effective and cost-effective means to conserve and protect Hawai'i's native species. Since ecosystem boundaries rarely coincide with land ownership boundaries, partnerships between private, state, and federal landowners are playing a critical role in conserving native habitats. This allows for the opportunity to manage the natural resources and control threats to their conservation across the landscape without regard for political or ownership boundaries within the designated partnership area.

One such partnership — the 'Ola'a-Kilauea Management Area on the island of Hawai'i — offers an unparalleled opportunity to preserve a large continuous area with relatively intact native ecosystems. This management program will not only help ensure the survival of a large number of endangered plant and bird species found in the 'Ola'a-Kilauea area, but will help keep the populations of other native species from declining.

The 'Ola'a-Kilauea Management area includes approximately 32,000 acres of land in the upper sections of the 'Ola'a and Waiakea Forests above the town of Volcano. The partnership includes lands owned or controlled by four different entities: Kamehameha Schools, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Kulani Correctional Facility under the Hawai'i Department of Public Safety, and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Other members of the partnership include the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service, who among them provide both research and management resources to the project.

The partnership area includes some of the best remaining intact native forest ecosystems on the island, with large tracts of koa and 'ohi'a rain forests and a series of upland bog communities. These highly diverse natural communities provide essential habitat for four endangered forest bird species, including 'akiapola'au, Hawai'i creeper, Hawai'i 'akepa, and the 'o'u.

Additionally, two other endangered birds — the 'io or Hawaiian hawk and nene — and Hawai'i's only native land mammal, the *ope'ope'a* or Hawaiian hoary bat, also frequent the area. Twenty-two rare plant species, including ten endangered species, are also found within the project area.

Management efforts within the 'Ola'a-Kilauea partnership area have been focused on control of impacts of alien species on the native ecosystems, restoration of rare plant species found in the area, and restoration of the plant communities that form the matrix in which both the rare and common native species of plants and animals are found.

An added benefit of the partnership is the opportunity to provide both vocational training and environmental educational opportunities for the staff and inmates of the Kulani Correctional Facility. Kulani inmate crews have been instrumental in constructing the many miles of fencing that are necessary to keep the management areas clear of feral pig populations. The inmates have also worked on many of the weed control projects and have recently become involved with the growing and out planting of both rare and common native plant species as part of the species and ecosystem restoration programs. Over the past two years, they have helped with the reintroduction of over 2,000 rare Mauna Loa silversword plants into the bog and open forest habitats in the Kulani Correctional Facility.

Despite the many challenges involved with conservation of the natural resources in Hawai'i, the partners involved in the 'Ola'a-Kilauea partnership agree that the commitment of time and energy to this project is well worth the effort. Their hope is that these endeavors will not only result in the protection of the important natural resources within this priceless piece of native Hawai'i, but also will serve as a model for use in other equally deserving areas of the islands.

This article was written by scientists at the Kilauea Field Station (ph. 808-967-7396), Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey and was taken (with permission) from "Volcanowatch" January 18, 2001. Volcanowatch is a weekly feature provided by scientists at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

Australian Birds Slide Show Presentation

Saturday, May 18 at 10am

Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden, end of Luluku Road, Kane'ohe

Claudia Gaber, daughter of former Board member Mary Gaber, will be visiting her childhood home, Kane'ohe and giving a slide presentation of birds of Queensland, Australia. Claudia was raised in Hawai'i and studied Recreation at College of The Redwoods California. She has lived in Australia for 17 years. Claudia is a natural history and environment writer and has worked as an Interpretive Ranger at Noosa National Park in Queensland. She is involved in many conservation groups and activities.

Noosa is a popular, coastal town in South Queensland, in a sub-tropical zone with very rich bio-diversity due to the overlap of geographic and climatic zones. The area has many rare and

endangered birds, many of which will be shown in the slides. Photos by Adrian Walker, a well known Queensland naturalist, writer and tour guide will feature Red Goshawk, Cassowary, Golden Bower Bird, Tooth-billed Catbird, and the Paradise Riflebird.

Claudia is hoping to organise a 12-day Bird Study Tour to South Queensland, featuring Mr Walker as a guide. He has been certified by the Audubon Society as a guide in Australia, with 13 yrs of touring across the continent, principally with Audubon groups. He is currently conducting research work into status of Coxen's Fig-parrot, once presumed extinct, but recently rediscovered in the Noosa region.

Results of 2000-2001 Christmas Bird Count, continued

Species	Kaua'i Waimea	Kapa'a	O'ahu Waipi'o	Honolulu	Moloka'i Kualapu'u	Maui Pu'u O Kaka'e	'Iao Valley	Hawai'i N. Kona	Volcano
Sanderling	6		14	13	34		HC - 66	27	
Glaucous-winged Gull	6						1		
Caspian Tern				US - cw					
Red-necked Phalarope							US - 1		
Long-billed Dowitcher		2							
Brown Noddy					US - 1				
Hawaiian Noddy				25	US - 3				
White Tern				HC-22					
Rock Dove	8	1	23	219		9			
Spotted Dove	173	68	484	1,307	53	99	27	102	
Zebra Dove	320	82	504	3,474	201	122	10	220	
Red-masked Parakeet				HC - 31					
Cockatiel					US - 1				
Barn Owl								1	
Pueo			1						
Guam Swiftlet				23					
Eurasian Skylark			4			10		35	
Red-vented Bulbul			222	1,146					
Red-whiskered Bulbul			15	298					
Japanese Bush-warbler	10	3	28	4		1			
Kaua'i Elepaio	44								
O'ahu Elepaio			18	14					
Hawai'i Elepaio									26
White-rumped Shama	8	6	47	102	1				
'Oma'o									83
Puaiohi	3								
Greater-necklaced Laughing Thrush		2							
Hwamei	9	2		1		2			
Red-billed Leiothrix			18	HC- 151		cw		3	16
Northern Mockingbird	4			1					
Common Myna	284	251	722	2,124	192	147	178	169	12
Japanese White-eye	47	48	252	709	37	74	2	93	59
Northern Cardinal	50	7	94	111	7	10	9	39	8
Red-crested Cardinal	22	15	74	299	4	2	4		
Yellow-billed Cardinal								17	
Yellow-faced Grassquit			1					125	
Saffron Finch			5			1			
Western Meadowlark		10							
House Finch	24	27	202	425	85	84	HC - 233	163	3
Yellow-fronted Canary				23				59	
Kaua'i 'Amakihi	35								
O'ahu 'Amakihi			26	55					
Maui 'Amakihi						5			
Hawai'i 'Amakihi								57	47
'Anianiau	40								
'Akiapola'au									5
'Akikiki	2								
Hawai'i Creeper								7	
Maui 'Alauahio						cw			
'Akeke'e	16								
Hawai'i 'Akepa									3
'Tiwi	39		1			cw		2	150

Species	Kaua'i		O'ahu		Moloka'i	Maui		Hawai'i	
	Waimea	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu	Kualapu'u	Pu'u O Kaka'e	'Iao Valley	N. Kona	Volcano
'Akohekohe									
'Apapane	236		95	18		cw		45	567
House Sparrow	346		83	475	42	202	43	73	30
Lavender Waxbill								9	
Orange-cheeked Waxbill				9					
Black-rumped Waxbill								US -2	
Common Waxbill			263	524					
Red Avadavat				30				HC - 43	
Warbling Silverbill		2		4	30			HC-157	
Nutmeg Mannikin	1	26	15	48	53	35		270	3
Chestnut Mannikin	173	40	66	10			3		
Java Sparrow	13	36	165	2,012	6		HC-24	136	
Individuals	2,367	1,946	4,183	16,986	1,279	883	1,403	2,228	1,057
Species	43		43	52	34	29	23	43	18
Observers	30	12	17	48	23	3	3	2	14
Party-hours	27	14.5	42.9	101.25	23	8	12.75	8	12
Count Date	12/29/01	12/28/01	12/15/01	12/22/01	12/18/01	12/29/01	12/14/01	01/05/02	12/16/01

cw reported count week HC = high count US = unusual sighting

HAWAII FOREST BIRDS INTERAGENCY DATABASE PROJECT CONTINUES

Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center, Biological Resources Division, USGS

Principle Investigators: B. L. Woodworth and T. K. Pratt

Project Coordinator and Analyst: Rick Camp

Modeling Specialist: P. Marcos Gorresen

In 1976-1981, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (now BRD) conducted systematic surveys of forest birds and plant communities on all of the main Hawaiian Islands as part of the Hawai'i Forest Bird Surveys (HFBS; Scott, J. M., S. Mountainspring, F. L. Ramsey, and C. B. Kepler. 1986. Forest bird communities of the Hawaiian Islands: their dynamics, ecology, and conservation. *Studies in Avian Biology* 9:1-431). Results of this monumental effort have guided conservation efforts and provided the basis for many plant and bird recovery plans and land acquisition decisions in Hawai'i during the past two decades. Unfortunately, these estimates and range maps are now outdated, hindering modern conservation decision-making efforts and recovery plan development.

Nearly 400 different surveys of forest birds have been conducted in Hawai'i since the HFBS by a variety of organizations, including the National Park Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Kamehameha Schools, the University of Hawai'i, The Nature Conservancy, and private consultants. These survey data represent a phenomenal informational resource which has not previously been widely available. The Hawai'i Forest Bird Interagency Database (HFBIDP) has as its goal to make these data usable and accessible by creating a centralized, standardized database of all forest bird surveys collected since the HFBS; developing current population size estimates, species-habitat models, and distribution maps for all

native and exotic birds in Hawai'i; examining population trends in species of concern; and presenting these results on a web page which will make them available to cooperators throughout Hawai'i.

Since October 1999, the HFBIDP has gathered, compiled, proofed, and standardized data from all forest bird surveys conducted throughout Hawai'i over the past quarter century. The database now contains over 750,000 bird records from 396 surveys conducted throughout the main Hawaiian Island over the last quarter century. Data analysis, species-habitat modeling, and trend detection analysis are now in progress. Once analyzed, the data will elucidate trends in distribution and density of species of concern, allow us to test hypotheses for the causes of decline and examine the results of management actions, and guide future survey effort, conservation planning and decision-making.

This endeavor would not be possible without the help of the many organizations that generously shared their data, and the financial and in-kind support of The National Park Service; Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center of Biological Resources Division - U.S. Geological Survey, Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Ecological Services; Hawai'i GAP; and Pacific Basin Information Node - USGS. It is a wonderful example of a cooperative interagency effort. Thank you!

Legislative Report for the 2002 Session

by Kim Moffie, HAS Legislative Analyst

This session there were a number of bills introduced by the legislature that were within the Hawaii Audubon Society's mission. These included measures on bird quarantine, protection of marine resources, invasive species and changing language in the State's Endangered Species Act.

House Bill 2262, which was not passed, required birds to be quarantined for at least ten days and found free of the West Nile virus before being imported into Hawai'i. HAS submitted testimony in support of this bill stating "[t]he West Nile virus presents a significant threat to the health of humans, horses, and birds, including the fatal infection encephalitis in humans and horses as well as mortality in domestic and wild birds. Not only do these infected birds pose a possible deadly threat to humans, but can potentially wipe out species of birds found only in Hawai'i. Possibly the greatest threat to native forest birds in Hawai'i is introduced insect-transmitted diseases. Of the 78 bird species native to Hawai'i, at least 26 have gone extinct and over 30 are endangered." The Energy and Environment Protection Committee, however, recommended that the bill be held. Apparently it would impact the poultry industry as it now stands and all the birds they import are already checked and certified as free from disease.

House Bill 2831, the Coral Reef Protection Act, had full support from HAS. The act essentially would create a marine Natural Area Reserve System: a network of no-take marine refuges called "pu'uhonua" in state waters, particularly in the NWHI. An exception is made for ceremonial take. It also would create a 15 member pu'uhonua committee, composed mainly of biologists, who would assist the Department of Aquatic Resources ("DAR") in identifying the sites to be included in the network and in drafting the management plan that would govern them. Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 188-53, which provides for the establishment of 'Fishing reserves, refuges, and public fishing areas' does not give DAR a clear mandate to establish a network of no-take refuges. The current Natural Area Reserve System is not set up to protect marine areas. This bill also: sets forth clear standards as to what habitats no-take marine refuges should include based on the standards set forth for marine reserves by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in February 2001; mandates protection for 20-25% of essential fish habitat. Currently less than 1% of our coral reefs are designated as no-harvest refuges; mandates that all state waters in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands shall be included in the Pu'uhonua network; mandates that a network of refuges, large and small, be established to give Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems some insurance against catastrophic events such as hurricanes, and mandates the establishment of a committee of marine ecosystem experts to assist DAR in determining appropriate refuge sites and preparing refuge management plans. The House committees passed this measure, however the Senate never scheduled to hear it.

Although the Coral Reef Protection Act was not passed this session, House Concurrent Resolution 52 was adopted, which requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources to

conduct public meetings to identify coastal areas that should be designated Marine Life Conservation Districts or Fishery Management Areas due to over fishing and habitat degradation.

House Bill 2552 weakens the state's endangered species law by allowing the state to enter into Safe Harbor Agreements with itself, thereby allowing the state to destroy endangered species. The bill completely frustrates the state's duty to protect them. The law already requires that all state agencies protect endangered species and do whatever it takes to improve their status. So why would the state need incentives? And we know from past experience that the state cannot be trusted to police itself. The genesis of this bill was the North-South road in 'Ewa where endangered plants are blocking the preferred alignment. HAS submitted testimony opposing this bill. It did however pass through both the House and Senate and is now being held in Conference Committees.

House Bill 2667 pertained to the introduction of invasive aquatic plants and animals. Over 340 alien marine, brackish and fresh water species have already become established in Hawai'i's aquatic ecosystems. These organisms are displacing native species, altering ecosystems and habitat, and causing economic damage. Two years ago the Legislature passed HB 1949, which designated the Department of Land & Natural Resources as the lead state agency for preventing the introduction and carrying out the destruction of alien aquatic organisms through the regulation of ballast water discharges and hull fouling organisms. However, it did not address the problem of alien aquatic organisms that enter Hawai'i by other avenues. At least four out of the six alien seaweed known to be causing serious problems on our reefs were originally brought in through research and aquaculture activities. Once invasive alien species escape into Hawai'i's aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, control is difficult and expensive, and complete eradication is probably impossible. It is far cheaper to stop the introduction of alien species into Hawai'i's ecosystems, than it is to clean them up once they become established. The House Finance Committee did not schedule this bill to be heard because among other things, it provided for an appropriation for a position in the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Other bills supported by HAS that deal with invasive species were House Bill 2212 which established the "Hawai'i Invasive Species Council" to coordinate effort and control and eradicate alien invasive species, and House Bill 2190 which established the pest species task force to develop and implement a program of preventative measures to reduce the introduction of pest species through aircraft or marine vessels. HB 2212 passed both the House and Senate and are now in Conference Committee hearings, and HB 2190 died in the House, not making it to the Finance Committee.

Senate Bill 2613 which Senate Conference Managers passed on April 22nd prohibits the feeding of sharks as part of a commercial activity. HAS supported this bill not only because the feeding of sharks may potentially increase the risk to humans, but primarily because it alters the natural behavior of these sharks creating larger ramifications to the ecosystem.

Hawaii Audubon Society Awards for Student Research

by Wendy Johnson Education Committee Chair

The Hawaii Audubon Society presented two awards for outstanding research relating to Hawai'i's natural history at the 45th Hawai'i State Science and Engineering Fair. In early April representatives of the Hawaii Audubon Society's Education Committee joined other agency judges in studying the exhibits and interviewing students on the subject of their original research.

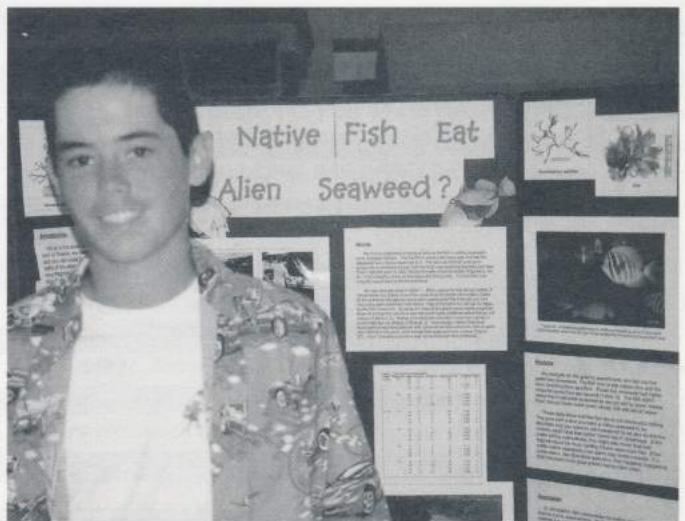
Christine Asinas, Janette Allagonez and Krystle Dulatre from Campbell High School received the HAS Senior Division Research award for their project entitled "Remnants of the Past". Working on, and in, a seven foot deep sinkhole near the Tsunami Warning Center at Ewa Beach, the students recovered soil samples and the skeletal remains of birds and rodents. The deepest soil samples were analyzed for organic content and shown to date back to pre-contact times. Christine, Janette and Krystle uncovered and identified rat and mouse bones, along with sternum and wing bones of the Dark-rumped petrel. This endemic bird, also known as the Hawaiian petrel, once nested in large numbers on O'ahu, but it is now endangered and no longer found on this island. The three students worked long hours at the site, cleaning detritus and rocks from the sinkhole, gathering samples and sifting through the soil and mud to learn about Hawai'i's natural history. Christine, Janette and Krystle showed a genuine fascination for this subject and its implications. They plan to continue their project through their senior year in 2002-03.

The HAS award for outstanding Junior Division Research relating to Hawai'i's natural history went to a project submitted by William Thomas, an eighth grader at Mid-Pacific Institute. Thomas spent many hours making observations and designing experiments which answer the question "Do Native Fish Eat Alien Seaweed?" Working with surgeon fish and other reef fish for several months, Thomas found that these fish readily eat the alien seaweed acanthophora and ulva, as well as the two species of native limu, Gracillaria. His observations led to the conclusion that controls on fishing in near shore and reef areas may serve to control the growth of alien seaweed populations in those ecosystems.

Special mention is warranted for an excellent Senior Research project submitted by Whitney Nekoba, a tenth grader at Waiakea High School. Whitney traveled to Alaska in the summer of 2000 to research her fourth year Science and Engineering Fair project related to her work on the Pacific Golden Plover entitled "Habitat Selection for Nest Cups of the genus Pluvialis at Nome, Alaska." Whitney was the recipient of an HAS Science and Engineering Fair Award in 1999 and received a small grant from HAS in 2000. Her original and research reflects a compelling commitment to natural history in Hawai'i.



Three juniors from Campbell High School received the HAS award for outstanding Senior Research relating to Hawai'i's natural history.



The HAS award for outstanding research in the Junior Division went to this project submitted by William Thomas.

Give Hawai'i's
native birds a
future.

Remember the Hawaii
Audubon Society in your
will.

850 Richard St., Ste. 505
Honolulu, HI 96813
808-528-1432



Results of 2001-2002 Christmas Bird Count – Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Species	Midway Atoll	Laysan Island	French Frigate Shoals
Short-tailed Albatross	1		
Black-footed Albatross	28,526	20,398	5,305
Laysan Albatross	499,173	103,689	3,396
Bonin Petrel	450	400	
Wedge-tailed Shearwater		1	
White-tailed Tropicbird	2		
Red-tailed Tropicbird	20		17
Masked Booby	1	34	186
Brown Booby	4	16	40
Red-footed Booby	48	265	703
Great Frigatebird	73	642	589
Cattle Egret	2		
Eurasian Green-Minted Teal	3		
Laysan Duck		103	
Northern Pintail	2		
Northern Shoveler	2	2	
Eurasian Wigeon	4		
Tufted Duck	1		
Pacific Golden-Plover	448	266	103
Wandering Tattler	5	107	4
Bristle-thighed Curlew	59	12	
Ruddy Turnstone	238	1952	438
Sanderling	5		17
Pectoral Sandpiper	1		
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4		
Dunlin	2	12	
Longbilled Dowitcher	1	4	
Common Snipe	1		
Brown Noddy	45	171	54
Hawaiian Noddy	12	653	918
Glaucous-winged Gull			1
White Tern	346	65	201
Common Myna	1,002		
Island Canary	1,823		
Laysan Finch		175	
Individuals	532,304	128,967	11,972
Species	31	22	16
Observers	12	2	7
Party-hours	11	11.5	10.25
Count Date	12/25/01	12/29/01	12/24/01

Kolea Leave Hawai'i — Kolea Watch Continues to be a Success

Many thanks to all of the donors who contributed towards the purchase of radio transmitters to attach to migrating Kolea, and helped to provide additional support to the research project. Donors include Kamehameha Schools' Hui Lama, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mathews Hamabata, Dennis Stillings, Gus Bodner, University of Hawai'i GK-12 Program, Rick and Erin Caulfield, Lorraine Inouye, and Chad Castle. Thanks also to Gus Bodner, founder of Kolea Watch. Gus traveled to many neighbor islands to teach school children about the Kolea and to enlist their help.

Wally and Pat Johnson, who have been conducting Kolea Research for many years, arrived in Hawai'i in April to begin banding and radio-tagging the birds. A total of 20 birds were tagged in mid-April at Hickam Air Force Base, Bellows Air Force Base, and Punchbowl National Cemetery.

The first migrating Kolea was detected in Alaska at 11:08A (AK time) on April 26 by a Fish and Wildlife Service biologist. It was #340 (Cathryn) and she landed somewhere in the King Salmon region.

From last sighting at Hickam to contact in Alaska was approximately 70 hours. This cuts 20 hours from the previous best estimate of flight time!

The web site for tracking Kolea is <http://www.hawaii.edu/bird>. It's also very informative! On it you will find:

1. the list of radio-banded birds, where they were banded, their frequencies, their names, who sponsored them, who named them, and why they named them that.
2. a day-by-day listing of where the bird was sighted.
3. links to many other bird sites and resources.

Endangered Guam Species Closer to Critical Habitat Protection

On Tuesday, April 16, 2002, the Marianas Audubon Society and Center for Biological Diversity, represented by Earthjustice, formally settled their lawsuit against the Secretary of the Interior and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) over the Service's refusal to designate critical habitat for six endangered species from Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands: the Mariana crow (*Corvus kubaryi*), Guam Micronesian kingfisher (*Halcyon cinnamomina cinnamomina*), Guam broadbill (*Myiagra freycineti*), Guam bridled white-eye (*Zosterops conspicillata conspicillata*), Mariana fruit bat (*Pteropus mariannus*), and little Mariana fruit bat (*Pteropus tokudae*). Under the terms of the settlement agreement, the Service acknowledged that its actions violated the federal Endangered Species Act ("ESA") and agreed to make new critical habitat decisions for these species no later than June 1, 2003. Chief Judge John S. Unpingco of the federal district court on Guam rejected the Government of Guam's objections to the settlement, stressing that GovGuam's "desire to present its arguments ... is outweighed by the public's interest in conserving judicial resources by encouraging settlements" and that GovGuam's claims that the settlement would harm to GovGuam's interests were largely "speculative" and based on "pure conjecture."

The Service listed all six species as endangered in 1984, and their continued survival remains in doubt, due largely to predation by the introduced brown tree snake and continued fragmentation and destruction of their native habitat. While all six species were once common throughout Guam, only two — the Mariana crow ("Âga" in Chamoru) and Mariana fruit bat (*fanihi*) — are now known to occur naturally in the wild on Guam and are restricted to a few distinct forested areas. Captive breeding programs have allowed the Guam Micronesian kingfisher (*sihek*) to avoid extinction, and there are plans eventually to reintroduce it to native forest habitat in the northern part of Guam.

"Today, Guam's forests are silent; their native birds absent," noted Gretchen Grimm, president of the Marianas Audubon Society. "Since critical habitat will help protect the habitat that is essential for reintroduction and recovery efforts to succeed, this settlement provides new hope that, in the future, our forests will once again ring with the calls of Guam's native animals."

"Critical habitat" consists of those areas that must be managed to permit an endangered species to recover to the level where it is safe, in the foreseeable future, from the danger of extinction. Under the ESA, federal agencies may not carry out, fund, or approve any actions that result in destroying or adversely modifying critical habitat. Since the restrictions associated with critical habitat designation are directed solely at federal agency actions, designation generally has little direct effect on private landowners and serves primarily an educational role, informing the public as well as local government officials about areas essential to the conservation of imperiled plants and animals. Moreover, since critical habitat does not depend on who owns the land, designation would not prevent the Navy or Air Force from returning "excess" military lands to the Government of Guam or to local families.

"We are pleased that the Service finally saw the error of its ways and agreed to reconsider designating critical habitat for

these species," said David Henkin, attorney with Earthjustice. "Given the significant federal presence in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, critical habitat is vital to ensure that the countless federal activities taking place here every day — whether they involve a land transfer, road construction, military training, or granting access for resort development — will not destroy the habitat that these endangered species need to survive and, eventually, to recover."

The Guam species face threats from a variety of federal actions, including military training; the clearing and fragmentation of forest habitat for roads, warehouses or other construction projects; the construction of resorts, golf courses, and other recreational facilities where federal permits are required; and the release or exchange of excess military property without adequate assurances for habitat protection.

"Designating and protecting critical habitat makes good scientific sense," said Peter Galvin, conservation biologist for the Center for Biological Diversity. "After all, what's the point of spending millions to rescue a species like the Guam Micronesian kingfisher from the brink of extinction if you don't also protect the habitat it will need to recover?"

The Marianas Audubon Society is a chartered chapter of the National Audubon Society organized in 1983 and is dedicated to preserving the Mariana Islands unique wildlife, plants, and culture.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a science-based environmental advocacy organization founded in 1989 with more than 5000 members nationwide. It is currently working to protect biological diversity and habitat in western North America and the Pacific.

Earthjustice is a non-profit, public-interest, environmental law firm. The Mid-Pacific office opened in Honolulu, Hawai'i in 1988 and has represented dozens of environmental, native Hawaiian, and community organizations.

Bird of the Month — Chinese Laughing Thrush or Hwamei

The Hwamei was introduced to Hawai'i in the early 1900s from China. A large (9") red-brown bird, it has a distinctive white eye-ring and a bar of white skin extending behind the eye. Its legs and bill are yellow. In flight, the Hwamei has a fan-shaped tail.

This thrush is fond of dense forest where it can be found in pairs or rarely in flocks. It feeds on insects and fruit. The Hwamei sounds similar to the White-rumped Shama, but louder and more insistent. It also mimicks the songs of other birds.

Look for the Hwamei on Kaua'i in Waialua River Valley, and Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge, on O'ahu at the Waimanalo end of Maunawili Ditch Trail and at Maunawili Farm, and on Hawai'i at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and at Pu'u La'au.



MAY 2002

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Calendar of Events

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Mondays May 20,

July 8 and August 12

HAS Board meeting open to all members, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the HAS office. Education and Conservation Committees meet at 5:45 p.m. before Board meetings.

Wednesday, May 8

Field Trip, Starwatch at Hanauma Bay. See page 118.

Sunday, May 19

Field Trip, Honolulu Zoo (birds). See page 118.

Monday, June 17

Program Meeting, subject to be announced

Saturday and Sunday, June 22 and 23

Field Trip, Paiko Lagoon. See page 118.

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