



'ELEPAIO

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For the Protection of
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

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The Nature of Community (Excerpt from an invited presentation to a community group)

By John T. Harrison, Environmental Coordinator, UH Environmental Center

In one of his many memorable portrayals, Mel Brooks as King Louis XIV said, "It's GOOD to be the King!" In a similar vein, it's GOOD to be an ecologist, particularly on a panel discussing communities, for we ecologists know a thing or two about community dynamics and what causes natural systems to wax and wane. So, in the brief 10 minutes I've been allotted, I'd like to share with you some observations on the nature of community. Hopefully, generalities drawn from natural communities may offer constructive perspectives for the empowerment of human communities.

How do we define communities? From the dawn of life on earth some 3.7 billion years ago, the principal organizing force in the biosphere has been cooperation. From the earliest bacterial stromatolite communities up to and including human society, the Kansas School Board notwithstanding, natural selection has made winners of individuals and groups of species whose genes were best coded for getting along. Granted, inter- and intra-species comity must be recognized as an integral rather than an instantaneous trait, but nature has always worked in the long rather than the short term. Thus, the terms and conditions of cooperation are far reaching and entail intricate and finely tuned feedback loops of functional communication. The multiple stacked condominiums of microorganisms comprising the algal mat communities of tidal marshes are a good example. Each layer, comprising billions of tenants, provides a required metabolic product for the next layer up, while making its living from the effluvia of the next layer down. As particular needs arise, chemical signals are emitted, received, and exchanged, resulting in releases of additional nutrients or signaling the

encroachment of neighbors. Through metabolic industry and commerce, with constant signals calling for more or less or different, a community derives the connections that define it. That's what a community is, three C's: cooperation, communication, and connection.

What makes communities empowered, or in an ecological sense, competent and sustainable? Certainly, the notion of balance is central to community stability. Even our peculiar human legal terminology ascribes significance to this, in calling for policies and actions to ensure "balanced indigenous populations." Balance arises from diversity, which is simply competence conveyed through a vigorous breadth of individual strategies of adaptation, collectively engendering harmony with habitat. Balance also implies resilience, the capacity to respond effectively to disruptions of harmony, both in a short-term reflexive sense and in a longer-term evolutionary adjustment. A community's competence, then, may be measured by its integrity in the face of adversity. Thus, as derived earlier, whether we're talking about microbial mats, tropical rainforests, termite colonies or Malama Manoa, the integrity of a community is a function of the strength of its cooperation, communication, and connection.

What, then, threatens a community? The short answer is anything that disrupts its integrity and balance. We in Hawai'i have an awful familiarity with assaults on community, and we know all too well the pain of loss. Oceanic island ecosystems are fragile to begin with, and our biogeographic isolation has made our delicate systems even more vulnerable. Our indigenous

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Legislative Representative Needed

For the eleventh consecutive year, the Society is seeking a part-time legislative analyst to advocate the Society's positions on bills affecting native wildlife and habitat. Following selected bills concerning agriforestry, endangered species, and land use planning, the position provides a much needed voice for conservation interests. The position runs roughly concurrent with the legislative session, December 2002 through May 2003.

Duties include:

- * extracting matters of concern to the Society from the 3,000+ bills, resolutions, and departmental funding requests;
- * consulting with appropriate Society officers and communicating with other environmental organizations to develop and present testimony at hearings;

- * following certain bills and resolutions through the process, lobbying legislators and governmental resource personnel as needed;
- * submitting verbal and written reports at monthly Society Board meetings; and
- * preparing a written summary of activities within two weeks of session's end.

The contractual position is compensated at \$4,000 for the period. Past experience with Hawai'i's legislative process is a plus.

To apply, please send a letter of interest, resume, and short writing sample to: Hawaii Audubon Society, 850 Richards St. #505, Honolulu, HI 96813. Applications will be accepted until December 3rd, 2002.

species evolved without having to develop defenses against the multitude of predatory and pathogenic opportunists that inhabit much of the rest of the world. As technology has brought more of the world to our shores, the refuges of native habitat, and the unique communities therein contained, have receded steadily.

Occasionally, a community may sow the seeds of its own demise by expanding beyond the capacity of the habitat to support it, as in the rampant explosion of deer populations on coastal barrier islands, or the disappearance of the indigenous human population of Easter Island. More commonly, an external factor stresses the balance of the community and triggers a response. One of the more interesting findings in this realm has been that there are threshold levels of perturbation beyond which communities are sufficiently disturbed that they never return to the equilibrium state that existed prior to the disturbance. For instance in studies of hurricane damage to coral reef communities, it has been shown that up to a certain level of severity, the community rebuilds itself completely following the passage of the storm. However, for particularly severe storms, the level of damage is so profound that what develops in the years after the storm is a coral reef community, but distinctly different from what was previously there.

In one of his last public lectures, Lewis Thomas, past president of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Editor of the New England Journal of Medicine, worried that humans have "lost sight of, lost track of, lost touch with, and to some almost measurable degree, lost respect for nature...." He goes on to say,

"We assert a duty to run the place, to dominate the planet, to govern its life, but at the same time we seem ourselves to be less a part of it than ever before.

"We leave it whenever we can, we crowd ourselves from open green countryside on to the concrete surfaces of massive cities, as far removed from the earth as we can get, staring at it, when look we must, from behind insulated glass, or by way of television half-hour clips. The urbanization of the world's human population is one of the strangest aspects of our species' recent behavior, and, along with overpopulation, one of the most potentially disastrous. Lemmings over cliffs, we move to town."

Thomas was renowned for his unflagging faith in the human capacity for change. Perhaps, in the dawning moments of this century, we are starting to see communities justify this optimism by choosing to exalt rather than to dominate nature.

'ELEPAIO

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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.

November 16 (adults) and 30 (children welcome!) Our annual trip to the 'Ewa Plains sinkholes to look for fossils of extinct Hawaiian birds with Dr. Alan Ziegler. Two trips will take place this year, one for participants over 12 years of age, and one for children (accompanied by adults). Bring hat, sunscreen, water, and, if you like, a picnic lunch to eat at Barber's Point Beach Park. To register, please call Alice at 538-3255.

December 15 – January 5 Annual Christmas Bird Count. See page 163.

Holiday Shopping at HAS – New Items!!

We now have a fresh stock of HAS t-shirts in great new colors! These white, natural, Pacific blue, and jade tees feature our logo, the 'Elepaio, on the back, with small logo on the front. Also added are HAS tank tops in white and grey, with the large logo just on the front. Kolea Research Hawai'i tees were reordered in all sizes, including XXL. Tees and tanks are \$12.00.

A new item this year is the Sibley Bird Calendar 2003, written and illustrated by David Allen Sibley. It features one or two birds each month, showing various views of the bird (male and female as juvenile and adult). Text describes habitat and voice, and range maps are also included. The calendars are 10.95 each.

Other great gifts include:

- Hawaii's Birds book (\$9.95)
- Voices of Hawaii cassette tape set featuring all of the calls of birds in Hawaii (\$12.50)
- Patrick Ching notecards of endangered birds of Hawaii (\$7.00 set of 8)

Stop by on Annual Mailout Day Saturday, November 23 between 10am and 3pm or Monday through Friday from 9:30 to 4:30 to buy items. Items can also be mailed.

December Program Meeting – Monday, December 16

Dr. Eric VanderWerf will give a talk on the history of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Hawai'i, the importance of the Count, and an introduction to birdwatching and identification of species that may be seen on this year's Count. Dr. VanderWerf is a wildlife biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and is the compiler for the Honolulu Christmas Bird Count.

This meeting is also HAS's **Annual Membership Meeting** at which the election results will be announced and the 2003 officers and directors introduced.

Program meetings are held at Henry Hall Room 109 on the Chaminate University campus, 3140 Wai'ala'e Avenue, Kaimuki. Meetings are from 7:30 to 9:30pm. Refreshments are served, and HAS publications, T-shirts, and maps are available for purchase.

Audubon Releases List of America's Most Imperiled Birds

Despite the exciting recovery of Endangered birds like the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, more than one-quarter of America's birds are in trouble or decline, according to the National Audubon Society. In a report released today, entitled "WatchList 2002," Audubon identifies 201 species that show either significantly decreasing numbers or restricted range, or are under other threats.

"Audubon WatchList 2002 is a warning system that shows us where to focus our attention and resources if we want to help the survival of a vast number of bird species," says Frank Gill, Audubon's chief ornithologist and senior vice president for science, and author of the comprehensive reference, *Birds of North America*. "It is also a powerful tool that policy-makers, businesses, and the general public can use now to take positive conservation action."

Based on a stoplight model, WatchList places selected bird species in green, yellow, or red categories, depending on the danger they face. A centerpiece of conservation efforts at Audubon, the WatchList aims to halt the declines of America's birds and to rebuild their populations to healthy, green-light status.

WatchList serves to underscore some disturbing trends; since 1970, many songbird species have declined by as much as 50 percent or more. The California Thrasher and the southeast's Painted Bunting both show declines in excess of 50 percent, while the Cerulean Warbler of the eastern U.S. has declined by more than 70 percent and the Henslow's Sparrow from the Midwest has dangerously dropped by 80 percent. The Hawaiian 'Akikiki from Kaua'i has dropped from about 6,800 birds in the early 70's to only 1,000 individuals today.

Ironically, these declines come at a time when bird watching is hitting an all-time high in popularity; the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment tallies 71 million Americans participating in 2001, up 250 percent from 1982, making birding the fastest-growing outdoor activity in the U.S. And, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Americans spent \$40 billion on wildlife watching in 2001, up steadily from \$30 billion in 1996 and \$21 billion in 1991.

"WatchList is preventative medicine," continued Gill. "It will be used first and foremost to enlist federal, state, and local governments to focus their resources towards protecting these birds before they become endangered or threatened – when they would demand more serious action and major taxpayer support to recover."

Audubon WatchList is a unique project that filters information on bird populations compiled by field scientists in the U.S. and overseas. The final product recognizes three levels of concern:

RED: Species in this category of global conservation concern are declining rapidly, have very small populations or limited ranges, and face major conservation threats. Audubon identifies several red-listed species as probable candidates for inclusion on the Federal Endangered or Threatened Species Lists.

YELLOW: Category includes the majority of species identified. Yellow-list birds are declining, but at slower rates than those in the red category. These typically are birds of national conservation concern, and those that can be saved most cost-effectively.

GREEN: species in this category are not declining, have unknown trends, or have very large population sizes. These species are not included on the Audubon WatchList. For the first time in 2002, the Audubon WatchList includes birds of Hawai'i and Puerto Rico, in addition to the birds of mainland North America. "The reasons for identifying species on the WatchList is not entirely altruistic," concluded Gill. "Like the proverbial canary in the coalmine, birds are primary indicators of environmental health, and what hurts birds also hurts the people who share the same space. We should in no way take WatchList birds for granted; we should rather listen to what their declines are telling us about the ecosystems we both inhabit."

Methodology used in the WatchList was developed in conjunction with Partners in Flight, a coalition of North American ornithological groups of which Audubon is a leading member. Bird Life International developed global methodology; Audubon is the U.S. partner designate for BLI.

To view the Watchlist (lots of interesting information) go to National Audubon's website, www.audubon.org, and go to Watchlist.

source: News Release from National Audubon dated Oct. 22, 2002.

Annual Mailing

Saturday, November 23rd,
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the HAS office

We Need Your Help

Please come and help us for a couple of hours to stuff and seal envelopes so that you and your fellow members can receive 2002 HAS ballots, local membership renewals, and the President's annual report/appeal.

YOU WILL BE REWARDED with lunch and other refreshments, good company, and endless gratitude! In addition, a 10% discount on all HAS products will be given to those that volunteer on mailout day.

Please call Linda Shapin at the HAS office - 528-1432 (or email at hiaudsoc@pixi.com) and let her know when you can come by on that day.

HAS Annual Awards Dinner 2002

Hawaii Audubon Society members, friends and distinguished guests gathered October 22nd at the Hawaii Imin Conference Center on the University of Hawai'i Manoa campus for the Society's ninth Annual Awards Dinner. Eight notable individuals and groups were recognized for their contributions to environmental education and the protection of Hawai'i's wildlife and habitats. Dr. Phil Bruner, professor at Brigham Young University Hawai'i and reknowned Kolea researcher, presented a fascinating slideshow and summary of recent research findings on the Kolea, or Pacific Golden Plover. The appreciative audience learned new information about the habits and migration of these remarkable birds which are universally admired by Hawai'i residents and visitors alike. The following Annual Awards for 2002 were presented with great appreciation from the Hawaii Audubon Society Board of Directors:

President's Award: Representative Hermina Morita, Chair of the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection, was recognized for her commitment to a thorough investigation of data and options in making decisions regarding Hawai'i's environment. Representative Morita exemplifies the high standards of environmental stewardship which are vital to Hawai'i's future.

Charles Dunn Lifetime Achievement Award: David Woodside, a charter member of the Hawaii Audubon Society, was recognized for his life-long contributions to the conservation of Hawai'i's birds and other wildlife. David Woodside is admired and appreciated by his peers for his vast knowledge of the natural world and his firm dedication to its protection.

Conservation Award: Robert Shallenberger was recognized as former Refuge Manager for the USFWS in Hawai'i and the Pacific. He has continuously worked to further the protection of wildlife and habitats in the nation's protected areas, most recently at Midway and Palmyra, where he demonstrated a unique and vital ability to promote enjoyable experiences for humans in these areas.

Volunteer Service Award: Susan Miller was recognized for her role as volunteer curator of membership files. Her donations of time, expertise and attention to membership records, however, are only a small part of her contribution to the Society over the years. Every aspect of the mission and business of the Hawaii Audubon Society has benefitted from Susan Miller's care and interest.



President Wendy Johnson presents a lei to Awardee Rob Shallenberger



At the center is Awardee Dave Woodside

photos by Cliff Hand

Organizational Conservation Award: The Keauhou Bird Conservation Center was recognized for its outstanding work in breeding endangered native birds for reintroduction into safe habitats in conservation areas throughout the state of Hawai'i. Tracey Goltz accepted the award on behalf of the team working at this reknowned facility on the Big Island.

Program Award: Dr. Alan Friedlander, fisheries ecologist at the Oceanic Institute, was recognized for his expert and vital assistance to the Hawaii Audubon Society's Pacific Fisheries Coalition project. He co-authored a full-color booklet, entitled "The Importance of Refuges for Reef Fish Replenishment in Hawaii," which has been distributed locally by the project.

Environmental Education Award: Lorin Gill was recognized for his unique ability to share his vast knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Hawaiian natural history. Lorin was travelling abroad at the time of the dinner and his award was accepted on his behalf by his friend and colleague, Paul Higashino.

Educational Partnership Award: 'Ohi'a Productions was recognized for its colorful, vibrant theatrical productions promoting the protection of native plants, animals and habitats. These educational programs are both informative and entertaining, introducing important ecological concepts and issues to a wide range of audiences. Lisa Matsumoto, Managing and Artistic Director for 'Ohi'a Productions, accepted the award.



Give Hawai'i's native birds a future.

Make a donation to Hawaii Audubon Society
850 Richards St., Ste. 505 Honolulu, HI 96813
808-528-1432 hiaudsoc@pixi.com

Christmas Bird Count 2002-2003

The Christmas Bird Count is a coast-to-coast annual bird census. Volunteers count every bird and bird species over one calendar day. Birds are indicators of the overall health of the environment. Christmas bird count data in any given area can provide valuable insight into the long-term health of bird populations and the environment.

Over 45,000 people from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America and the Pacific Islands participate in more than 1,700 counts held during a two and a half week period!

Join our Christmas Bird Counts during the official count period from December 15, 2002 to January 5, 2003. If you want to do something good for birds and meet other "bird people," contact one of the coordinators to sign up. There is a \$5.00 charge per person to support compiling and publication of the nationwide results. Note: Special information is needed by the coordinator of the popular "Kulani Prison" count, so contact the Big Island Volcano coordinator by December 1 to ensure your spot.

<u>Island</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>	<u>phone/email</u>
Kaua'i			
Waimea	12/28	Michelle Ho'okano Marsha Ericson Koke'e Natural History Museum	808-335-9975
Kapa'a	12/27	Barbara Stuart	808-826-9233
O'ahu			
*Honolulu	12/21	Arlene Buchholz	988-9806 or snovakz@juno.com
*Waipi'o	12/14	David Bremer	623-7613 or bremerd001@hawaii.rr.com
Maui			
Pu'u O Kaka'e (East Maui)	12/28	Lance Tanino	808-280-4195 or lancemanu@hotmail.com
'Iao Valley (West Maui)	12/14	same as above	same as above
Moloka'i			
Kalaupapa	12/28		
Kualapu'u	12/29	Arleone Dibben-Young	808 553-5992 or nene@aloha.net
Hawai'i Island			
**Kulani Prison (Volcano)	TBA	Larry Katahira	808-985-6088
North Kona	TBA		

*Dr. Eric VanderWerf will give a presentation on the history of the CBC and on Bird Identification at the HAS Program Meeting on December 16th. See article on page 160.

**The public may not be able to participate in the count this year for security reasons. See December's issue for an update.

Critical Habitat Proposed on Guam and Rota

A critical habitat proposal for three endangered Mariana Island species (the Mariana fruit bat, Mariana crow, and Micronesian kingfisher) was released October 16, 2002 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for public review and comment. The proposed units include native limestone forest areas in northern and southern Guam for all three species, and one unit on Rota for the Mariana crow only.

"Although we continue to believe that coordinating efforts through our Guam National Wildlife Refuge and the potential Rota Habitat Conservation Plan offer the best strategies for saving native species in the Mariana Islands, the Endangered Species Act does require that we designate critical habitat for threatened and endangered species if it is prudent to do so," said Anne Badgley, Pacific regional director for the Fish and Wildlife Service. "We have developed a proposal based on existing scientific knowledge; now we are seeking the public's input on our proposal so that we can further refine it."

Approximately 24,800 acres in two critical habitat units are proposed on Guam and one unit totaling 6,084 acres on Rota. The Rota unit is only for the Mariana crow since the fruit bat is not a listed species in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Guam Micronesian kingfisher is native only to the island of Guam. "We recognize the recovery of these species will be a challenge," Badgley said. "Scientists are making progress in identifying ways to control the brown treesnake, and if we can protect native habitat for these species, we believe it is possible that future generations may enjoy many native Mariana Island bird and bat species."

Under the terms of a court-approved settlement agreement, the Service will publish a final critical habitat designation for the three species by June 3, 2003. In April 2000, the Marianas Audubon Society and the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against the Fish and Wildlife Service for its 1994 withdrawal of a proposed rule that would have established critical habitat for six species on Guam. The first proposal, published in 1991, was withdrawn because most of the lands within the proposed critical habitat units had been incorporated into the Guam National Wildlife Refuge and the Service believed critical habitat would not provide any additional benefits to the species.

In reviewing its earlier decision, the Service has determined that critical habitat may provide some benefits for three of the six species. Since the other three species (the little Mariana fruit bat, Guam broadbill, and Guam subspecies of the bridled white-eye) are believed to be extinct, the agency determined that designating critical habitat for those three species is not prudent.

"Our staff has been working with potentially affected landowners for several months now," Badgley said. "We continue to seek their input, as well as that of all residents of Guam and Rota, regarding these native species, their habitat needs, ongoing habitat management activities, and potential activities within proposed critical habitat. The public's assistance will help us better develop a final rule."

Critical habitat refers to specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations. A designation does not set up a preserve or refuge. It has

no specific regulatory impact on landowners taking actions on their land that do not involve federal funding or a federal permit; however, landowners still must consult with the Service before taking actions on their property that could harm or kill protected species or destroy their habitat. Badgley said that critical habitat designation generally does not affect activities such as farming, grazing, logging, and hunting on private or local government lands. "On Rota, public lands designated as agricultural homestead lots have been avoided in the proposed critical habitat units to the greatest extent possible," she said. "We are continuing to work with Rota officials to develop a habitat conservation plan that will allow development while still protecting Rota's native species."

Still to be released for public review is an economic analysis of the possible impacts that could occur if critical habitat is designated. "Unlike in a proposed rule to place a species on the threatened and endangered species list, the Endangered Species Act allows us to consider the economic effects of critical habitat designation," Badgley explained. "A private consultant is currently developing the economic analysis for this proposal, and we expect it will be made available to the public within the next few weeks."

Critical habitat is determined after taking into consideration the economic impact it could cause as well as any other relevant impacts. The Secretary may exclude any area from critical habitat if the benefits of exclusion outweigh the benefits of inclusion, as long as the exclusion would not result in the extinction of the species. On Guam, the proposed critical habitat includes 2,138 acres of private lands (9 percent of the total), 2,824 acres of Government of Guam lands (11 percent), and 19,840 acres of federal lands (80 percent). The federal lands are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On Rota, the proposed critical habitat includes 503 acres of private lands (8 percent) and 5,581 acres of government land under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (92 percent). The majority of lands are within Andersen Air Force Base, the Naval Magazine, and the Guam National Wildlife Refuge. Because these are federal lands, the agencies would need to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service if their activities could destroy or adversely modify critical habitat.

In most cases, projects requiring consultation are allowed to go forward with minor modifications designed to minimize impacts to designated critical habitat. The proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Mariana fruit bat, Mariana crow, and Micronesian kingfisher was published in the Federal Register today for a 60-day public comment period. The rule is available on the Internet at or by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office at 808-541-3441. Copies will also be available at Guam National Wildlife Refuge within a week.

Written public comments regarding the proposed rule should be sent to the Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, HI 96850.

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service News Release October 16, 2002
Contact: Barbara Maxfield, (808) 541-2749



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2003 Membership in Hawaii Audubon Society

Regular US Member	(via bulk mail, not forwardable)	\$ 15.00	Mexico	\$ 21.00
First Class Mail		\$ 21.00	Canada	\$ 22.00
Junior Members (18 and under)		\$ 10.00	All other countries	\$ 28.00
Supporting Member		\$100.00		

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Calendar of Events

Monday November 11

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.

Saturday, November 16

Field Trip (age 13 and up) to 'Ewa Plains Sinkholes to find bird fossils. *See page 160.*

Saturday, November 23

HAS Annual Mailout – volunteers needed. *See page 161.*

Saturday, November 30

(children accompanied by adults) to 'Ewa Plains Sinkholes to find bird fossils. *See page 160.*

December 15 to January 5 Christmas Bird Count. *See page 160.*

December 16

Program Meeting. *See page 160.*

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