

Laysan Duck Translocation Project

Source: USFWS News Release dated 10/12/04 Contact: Barbara Maxfield at (808) 792-9530

The residents of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge are always happy to have newcomers to their island, but now they have some very special guests. Twenty endangered Laysan ducks will be calling Midway their home. This landmark event, translocating birds to Midway, seeks to create a second wild population of Laysan ducks and is a high priority for the recovery of the species.

The endangered Laysan duck (*Anas laysanesis*) had the smallest geographical range of any duck species in the world and until now consisted of a single population of approximately 500 birds on Laysan. The duck's risk of extinction is very high as long as it is limited to a single population. The species' disappearance from the main Hawaiian Islands was most likely due to the introduction of rats. Mammalian predators, such as mongooses, cats, and rats may be the most important limiting factor in the reintroduction of the duck to other sites. Rats were accidentally introduced to Midway during World War II, but were eliminated from the island in 1997 after the atoll became a National Wildlife Refuge.

Midway Atoll NWR is located about 1,250 miles west-northwest of Honolulu. The five-mile diameter atoll was chosen as a reintroduction site because it lies within the presumed prehistoric range of the species, is free of rats and other predators, and provides the logistical feasibility for post-release monitoring of translocated ducks and for habitat restoration.

A team of project scientists and managers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey, Pacific Island Ecosystem Research Center, captured 27 birds on Laysan, and selected 20 of these birds to make the 2-day long boat ride to Midway. All personnel on the island worked through the night to capture the birds. The candidate ducks were selected after six months of monitoring. Those that made the trip were chosen based on weight, sex (relatively even male-female ratio), health, age, and family history (a single duckling from each brood). Removal of the 20 birds from Laysan Island was not deemed a threat to the health of that population. The birds were then

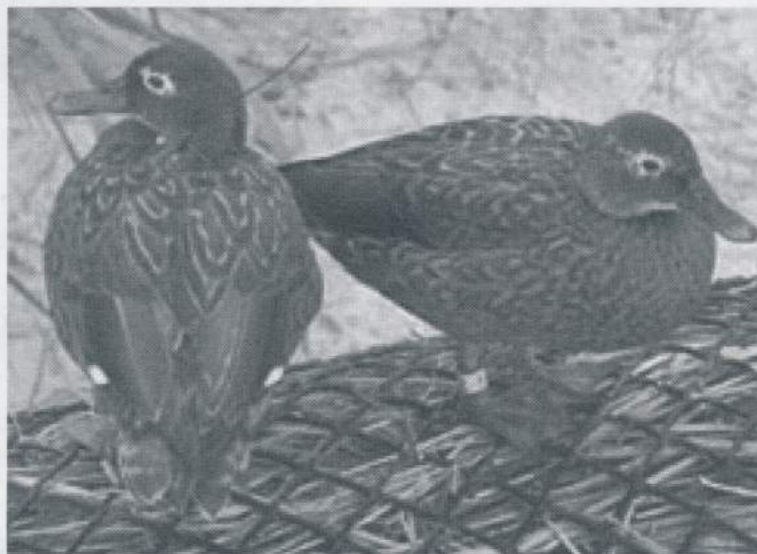


photo by S. Middleton

transported on the *American Islander*, a vessel contracted by the FWS for transport of the ducks and to change out field crews on Laysan. Each bird had its own transport cage, and the ducks had their own private cabin aboard the vessel. During this critical step of the translocation phase, the birds were fed, watered, and treated by USGS veterinarian Dr. Thierry Work.

The young ducks have adapted well to their new home on Midway, some have increased their body weights 10-20% since their capture

on Laysan. Ducks are released two pairs at a time and are monitored closely for 48 hours before the next group is released. The ducks within the aviary have begun feeding on local foods such as emerald beetle grub and button sedge seeds

FWS staff and volunteers at Midway Atoll NWR spent 18 months preparing the site for the arrival of the ducks. The first step in site preparation was the removal of nonnative ironwood trees and verbena plants followed by the excavation of nine shallow freshwater seeps. In addition, 1,400 native bunch grass plants that are used by the ducks for nesting were planted at the site. Two separate aviaries were constructed using shade cloth and steel pipes. The aviaries have compartments measuring 100 square feet each. Two ducks occupy each compartment.

Radio transmitters have been attached to each bird so that they can be easily tracked after release from the aviary. The birds will be closely monitored with spotting scopes and radio telemetry to prevent disturbance. An additional translocation of 20-30 young ducks is planned for 2005.

Laysan ducks are between 15 and 17 inches in length, are brown with a bright green-blue to purple speculum (the distinctive feathers on the secondary wing feathers), and have a white area eye ring. Males have a bluegreen bill with black spots along the upper mandible (bill). The female usually has more white around the head and neck, and has a dull brownish yellow bill. Both sexes have orange legs and feet. The ducks are primarily insect feeders, but may also feed on leaves and seeds.

December 13 Annual Membership/Program Meeting: Bird Identification Lecture and Slide Show in Preparation for the Christmas Bird Count

Board member and retired wildlife biologist Ron Walker and amateur wildlife photographer Dr. Tom Dove will join forces to give a presentation on common (and uncommon) birds found in Hawai'i. This is will be a perfect opportunity to brush up on your avian identification skills in time for the 105th Christmas Bird Count. Ron's knowledge is legendary, and Dr. Tom's photography is truly fantastic, so you won't want to miss this unique presentation.

Results of the Board election revealing our 2005 Board of Directors will also be announced.

Program meetings are held from 7:30 to 9:30pm at Henry Hall Room 109 on the Chaminade University campus, 3140 Wai'alae Avenue, Kaimuki. Holiday refreshments will be served, and HAS products will be available for purchase.

October's Late 'Elepaio

Many apologies for the late mailing of the October 'Elepaio. The company that prints and bulk-mails each issue had a last-minute and completely unexpected (by us, anyway!) change of personnel, resulting in a much longer than usual turn-around time. Hopefully this problem will not be repeated. We are sorry for any inconveniences that the late arrival of the October issue must have caused our members and readers.

'Elepaio

ISSN 0013-6069

Managing Editor: Linda Shapin

Scientific Editor: Ron Walker

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

850 Richards Street, Suite 505

Honolulu, HI 96813

Tel: (808) 528-1432 Fax: (808) 537-5294

E-mail: hiaudsoc@pixi.com

Website: www.hawaii Audubon.com

Pacific Fisheries Coalition (PFC)

(a project of HAS)

Tel: (808) 262-6859 Fax: (808) 537-5294

Website: www.pacfish.org

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Website: Stephen Bibbs

Field Trips for 2004

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. Field Trip information is also available on the HAS office answering machine (528-1432) and on our website, www.hawaii Audubon.com

November 13, Saturday, James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge see Hawai'i's endangered waterbirds and other migratory waterfowl at one of O'ahu's few remaining wetlands. This is a good place for unusual sightings! In past years we've seen the Red Knot, Semi-palmated Plover, Common Pochard, Black-tailed Godwit, and even a Peregrine Falcon. Bring water, snacks, binoculars, spotting scope if you have one, and sunscreen. This is a non-strenuous field trip, very little walking is involved. Limited to 15 participants. Please call the HAS office to register, 528-1432 or email us at hiaudsoc@pixi.com.

December 14, 2004 to January 5, 2005 Annual Christmas Bird Count. See page 51 for detailed information and coordinator contact information.

November is Annual Mailout Month

All HAS-only members will be receiving their Annual Appeal letter, membership renewal forms and Board Election ballots by mail at the end of November. Please remember to mail us your ballots by December 15, 2004 and your renewals by January 15, 2005.

Joint HAS/National Audubon members' renewals are handled by National. Joint members, please remember to send in your ballots. As usual, donations are very welcome, immensely appreciated, and help us to continue to do our work in conserving Hawai'i's native species and their habitat.

And on that note, please come and help stuff and seal envelopes Saturday, November 20th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the HAS office - come for the whole time or just a few hours.

Please call the HAS office - 528-1432 (or email at hiaudsoc@pixi.com) and let us know you'll participate.

Tour of Kailua Ahupua'a November 6

There will be a geology tour of the Kailua Ahupua'a on Saturday November 6 conducted by Dr. Floyd McCoy, geology professor at Windward Community College. Participants will meet at Ulupo Heiau next to the Windward YMCA at 8:30 am and return by 12:30 pm. The group will car pool to the Pali Lookout, AMERON Quarry and to Na Pohaku o Hauwahine overlooking Kawai Nui Marsh. Reservations can be made by calling Chuck Burrows at 595-3922 or by email chuckb@hawaii.rr.com. A \$5 donation is requested for the tour.

Volunteer Needed!

Can any of our members spare a few hours each week to send out orders for Hawaii Audubon Society products? The work would involve pulling, packing, and mailing about 4 to 10 orders per week, which would take probably no more than 2 or 3 hours. Please call the office if you are able to lend a hand - 528-1432.

Christmas Bird Count 2004/2005

CBC began over a century ago when 27 conservationists in 25 localities changed the course of ornithological history. On Christmas Day 1900, the small group of conservationists participated in an alternative to the "side hunt," a Christmas day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead, Chapman proposed to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, founding what is now considered to be the most significant citizen-based conservation effort and a more than century-old institution.

Today, over 55,000 volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific islands count and record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area. During the 103rd count, about 73 million birds were counted. Last year again saw a record high – this time, 1,981 individual counts. Each count group completes a census of the birds found during one 24-hour period between December 14 and January 5 in a designated circle 15 miles in diameter-about 177 square miles.

Apart from its attraction as a social and competitive event, CBC reveals valuable scientific data. Now in its 104th year, CBC is larger than ever, expanding its geographical range and accumulating information about the winter distributions of various birds, and it is vital in monitoring the status of resident and migratory birds across the Western Hemisphere. The data, 100% volunteer generated, have become a crucial part of the U. S. Government's natural history monitoring database. Articles published in the 103rd CBC issue of *American Birds* helped ornithologists better understand the magnitude of the effects of West Nile virus on regional bird populations. In addition, count results from 1900 to the present are available through National Audubon's website www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

Join our Christmas Bird Counts during the official count period from December 14, 2004 to January 5, 2005. 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. Contact the individual count coordinators listed below to participate.

Kaua'i	
Waimea (date & contact to be announced) Michele Ho'okano 808-335-9975 or kokee@aloha.net	Kapa'a (date & contact to be announced)
O'ahu	
Honolulu 12/18/04 Arlene Buchholz 808-988-9806 or snovakz@juno.com	Waipi'o 01/02/05 Dave Bremer 808-623-7613 or bremerd001@hawaii.rr.com
Maui	
Pu'u O Kaka'e (12/19/04) Lance Tanino 808-280-4195 or lancemanu@hotmail.com	'Iao Valley (West Maui) (12/16/04) Lance Tanino 808-280-4195 or lancemanu@hotmail.com
Moloka'i	
Kalaupapa 12/20/04 Arleone Dibben-Young 808-553-5992 or nene@aloha.net	Kualapu'u 12/20/04 Arleone Dibben-Young 808-553-5992 or nene@aloha.net
Hawai'i Island	
*Kulani Prison (Volcano) 12/18/04 Eldridge Naboa (no phone) enaboa@tnc.org	North Kona (date to be announced)

* Kulani does requires security clearance for everyone so participants need to submit to Eldridge their name, social security number and date of birth by November 29.

KEEPING CATS INDOORS ISN'T JUST FOR THE BIRDS!

Indoor cats are safer, healthier and live longer than freeroaming cats. Millions of outdoor cats kill hundreds of millions of birds and other wildlife in the U.S. each year. Protect cats, birds and other wildlife by keeping cats indoors!

More information: **AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY**
Cats Indoors! The Campaign for Safer Birds & Cats
1834 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-452-1535; Fax: 202-452-1534;
E-mail: abc@abcbirds.org; Web: www.abcbirds.org

HAS Annual Awards Dinner 2004

Hawaii Audubon Society members, friends and distinguished guests gathered October 19th at the Hawai'i Imin Conference Center of the University of Hawai'i for the Society's eleventh 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 of biology at BYUH and renowned Kolea (Pacific Golden Plover) researcher, gave a fascinating presentation on Hawai'i's 'Akekeke (Ruddy Turnstone) in Alaska. Dr. Bruner's photos and data resulted from preliminary investigations conducted in June of 2004 at Woolley Lagoon on the Seward Peninsula in Western Alaska.

While the migration and habits of Kolea have been studied for decades, there has been very little work done on the 'Akekeke, which is the second most common migratory shorebird wintering in Hawai'i. The mating and nesting habits of 'Akekeke were documented in Alaska, along with clutch size, chick weights and survival rates. The Awards Dinner audience was delighted with the charming images of these beautiful birds and well entertained by Dr. Bruner's anecdotes relating to his varied experiences observing and banding 'Akekeke. Hawaii Audubon Society members and guests are sure to be on the lookout for 'Akekeke on Hawai'i's shores this winter, noting their unique feeding technique of turning over small stones with their open beaks while searching for insects.

The following Annual Awards for 2004 were presented with great appreciation from the Hawaii Audubon Society Board of Directors:

- * President's Award-Representative Sol P. Kaho'ohalahala was recognized for his sincere dedication to environmental stewardship and protection in Hawai'i. In his role as Vice-Chair of the House Committee on Water, Land Use representing East Maui, Kaho'olawe, Kalaupapa, Lana'i and Moloka'i, Mr. Kaho'ohalahala's knowledgeable and principled decisions serve to protect and nurture Hawai'i's environment and its citizens.
- * Conservation Award-Dr. Diane Drigot, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist for Marine Corps Base Hawai'i, was recognized for her energetic and innovative leadership for ecosystem restoration and environmental protection programs at MCBH. Dr. Drigot's varied accomplishments have resulted in vital habitat restoration for native birds in Hawai'i.
- * Program Award-Michele Corboy-layout designer for the HAS journal, 'Elepaio, was recognized for her skill and generosity in providing technical services for the layout of the 'Elepaio. Ms. Corboy's expertise and cheerful reliability has been an important contribution to the Society's communication and education efforts.
- * Corporate Conservation Award-James Banigan, President of Hawai'i Metal Recycling Company was recognized in this category for the second year in a row. This year, HMR's increased contributions to the NOAA Marine Debris Removal Program in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands have again resulted in a significant conservation achievement in Hawai'i. Our precious marine resources are better protected as a result of HMR's commitment to providing



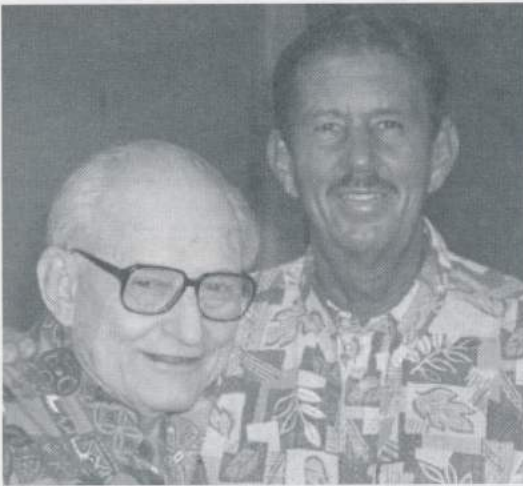
L to R, Board Member Carol Bebb, Linda Paul (Pacific Fisheries Coalition) and Past President Wendy Johnson



Buffet Line

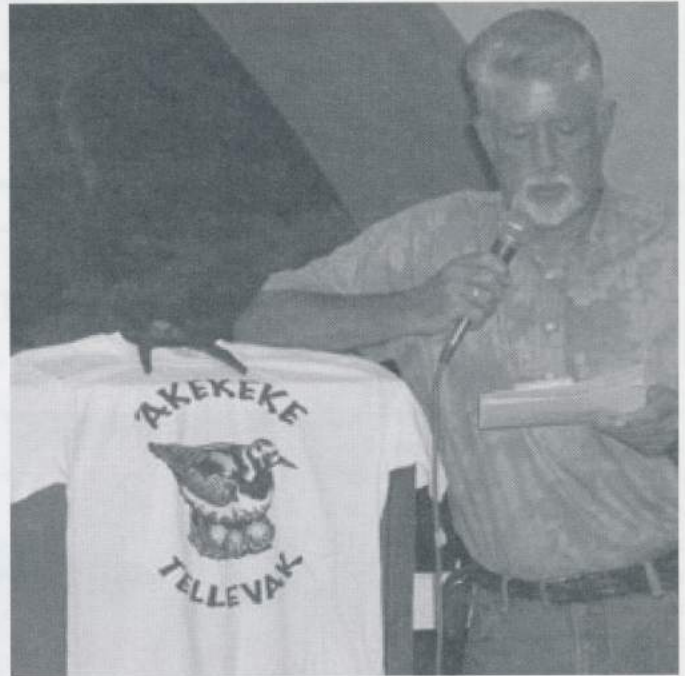
more storage, processing and transportation services for fishing net debris and metal scrap.

- * Volunteer Service Award-Alice Roberts, HAS Board Member and Field Activities Coordinator, was recognized for her donations of time and enthusiasm in organizing, managing and leading HAS Field trips. By creating a detailed monthly schedule of possible HAS hikes and trip sites, Ms. Roberts has provided a valuable resource for the Society and its future.
- * Environmental Education Award-Marion Leong, Education Director for Moanalua Gardens Foundation, was recognized for her organization's excellent achievements in promoting the protection of native wildlife and habitats through education. The unique variety and quality of MGF's school programs, resource materials and activities comprises a remarkable contribution to Hawai'i's environment and its people.
- * Environmental Journalism Award-Bob Krauss, columnist for the Honolulu Advertiser, was recognized for his continuing dedication to communicating information about, and affection for, the Kolea. Mr. Krauss' fascinating columns provide important data and charming anecdotes which inspire readers to further appreciate these unique birds of Hawai'i.
- * Charles Dunn Lifetime Achievement Award: Wendy Johnson, Past President of the HAS Board of Directors, was recognized for her longstanding and steadfast devotion to the Society and its goals. Ms. Johnson had no idea that she would be honored in this fashion, and her longstanding, pivotal role in the planning of the Awards Dinner made this award an authentic and much appreciated surprise for its recipient.



Bob Pyle & Phil Bruner

Award dinner photos by Carol Bebb



Board Member Ron Walker with our new tee shirt. The bird is a Ruddy Turnstone, which migrates between Hawai'i and Alaska, hence the Hawaiian and Inuit names on the tee. The back of the shirt has the HAS logo and "Shorebird Research Fund." A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the shirts will go towards Shorebird research. The Tellevak tee is available in white only, sizes small to extra large, and sells for \$20.00.

George C. Munro Environmental Law Award

Hawaii Audubon Society annually sponsors a monetary award, named in honor of past president George C. Munro, which is presented to the top student in the Environmental Law course at University of Hawai'i. At the annual award ceremony of the William S. Richardson School of Law on August 28, the award was given to Adrienne S. Yoshihara. We wish her the best of luck in her pursuits.

Membership in Hawaii Audubon Society

Regular US Member

(via bulk mail, not forwardable) \$ 15.00
 First Class Mail \$ 21.00
 Junior Members (18 and under) \$ 10.00
 Supporting Member \$100.00

Foreign Membership (Airmail)

Mexico \$ 21.00
 Canada \$ 22.00
 All other countries \$ 28.00

Donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Country, Zip _____

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Membership \$ _____ + Donation \$ _____ = Total \$ _____

New Membership Renewal

Please make checks payable to Hawaii Audubon Society and mail to us at 850 Richards St., #505, Honolulu, HI 96813.
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Calendar of Events

Saturday, November 13 Field Trip James Campbell
 National Wildlife Refuge. *See page 50.*

Monday, November 15 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 20 Annual Mailout. *See page 50.*

Monday, December 13 Annual Membership Meeting.
 Election results tallied and announced. *See page 50.*

December 14 to January 5 Christmas Bird Count. *See
 page 51.*

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