



# 'ELEPAIO

Journal of the  
Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of  
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

VOLUME 65, NUMBER 7

OCTOBER 2005

## Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge Celebrates Anniversary with Annual Open House

Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge will be celebrating its 20th anniversary during its annual open house on Saturday, October 15. Reservations are now being accepted to participate in hikes through portions of this first of its kind Refuge set aside to protect Hawai'i's unique rainforest birds and their habitat.

"It's hard for me to believe the Refuge will be 20 years old in October" said Refuge Manager Dick Wass. "With a lot of help from volunteers and environmental organizations, I'm proud to say we've made good progress in reclaiming habitat for these rare plants. We look forward to a day of celebration and learning."

Residents and visitors are invited to hike through the Pua 'Akala Tract, which harbors a high-elevation rainforest, many native birds such as 'I'iwi, Creeper and Hawai'i 'akepa. A historic 110-year old koa cabin also will be open for viewing.



Visitors will be met by refuge staff and tour leaders at the Pua 'Akala Barn anytime between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. They will receive a briefing on refuge management objectives and strategies and hikes of varying lengths will be offered. The hikes will be led by biologists and staff familiar with native Hawaiian flora and fauna. Visitors will have the opportunity to tour the refuge greenhouse and learn about the forest restoration program. Cultural resource protection, weed control projects and the University of Hawai'i's field station will also be highlighted.

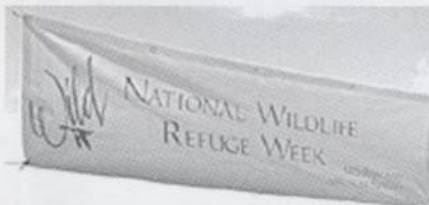
Participants must arrange their own transportation to the Refuge. A four-wheel-drive vehicle is required for the two-hour drive from Hilo, Waimea, or Kona. "We don't recommend this trip for young children or those who lack an adventurous spirit due to the long rough ride, rugged terrain, and primitive facilities," said Wass.

Visitors should come prepared for wet chilly weather and bring their own lunch, water, binoculars, and rain gear. Reservations are required and may be obtained

by calling the refuge office in Hilo at 933-6915 by October 12. Directions and additional information will be mailed to all participants.

Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge consists of 32,730 acres of native forest and grassland on the windward slope of Mauna Kea between the elevations of 2,500 and 6,500 feet. The Refuge was established on October 28, 1985, to protect and manage endangered forest birds and their habitat, and contains some of the finest stands of koa-'ohi'a forest in the state.

Richard C. Wass  
Refuge Manager  
Big Island NWR Complex  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
32 Kinoole St., Suite 101  
Hilo, HI 96720  
(808) 933-6915 x23  
(808) 933-6917 fax  
richard\_wass@fws.gov



## November 14th Special Program Meeting: "Why the Endangered Hawai'i 'Akepa Will Likely Go Extinct in the Next Ten to Twenty Years" by Dr. Leonard Freed

Dr. Leonard Freed, Dr. Rebecca Cann, and their graduate students, undergraduates, and interns have been studying this bird continuously since 1987 at a site of high density at Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge on the Island of Hawai'i. Dr. Freed will introduce the bird and its basic biology, emphasizing information acquired from individuals nesting in artificial cavities. The main portion of the talk will involve comparison of demographic parameters between 1987-1993 and 1999-2005. This will show that there is 1) lower nesting success, 2) lower survival of fledglings, 3) lower adult male survival, and 4) lower adult female survival. In addition, most of the surviving fledglings are males with a sex ratio in second-year birds of 29 males to 3 females over the last 5 years. Adult females are dying at a higher rate and are even less likely to be replaced by young females. Consistent with this decline in demographic parameters, there are fewer breeding pairs and lower captures of Hawai'i 'Akepa in mist nets. If this pattern persists for 10 more years, there will be virtually no females left. Any increase in avian malaria, as he and his collaborators have documented in the core area of highest density of this bird, will accelerate the time to extinction.

The decline of this bird since 1999 is associated with a significant increase in numbers of introduced Japanese White-eyes compared with earlier years in the study. A case will be made that food competition exists between Japanese White-eyes and Hawai'i 'Akepa, and that the 'Akepa is more susceptible to competition than other native birds that also feed on arthropods in the foliage of ohia trees. A choice must be made about Japanese White-eyes: if they are not managed, the Hawai'i 'Akepa will go extinct. Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge, with about 70% of Hawai'i 'Akepa remaining on the Island of Hawai'i, has chosen not to manage Japanese White-eyes. The refuge has also directed Dr. Freed to remove all artificial nesting



cavities, despite the higher nesting success of Hawai'i 'Akepa that used them. Many undergraduate students have been supported by grants from the Hawaii Audubon Society to make the cavities and investigate their use. The reasons given by the refuge for discontinuing their use will be contested.

Program Meetings are held at the University of Hawai'i's St. John Lab (Botany Building Rm. 011) in the ground floor auditorium at 3190 Maile Way, where it intersects East-West Road. The main entrance to the building is at ground level, street side (Hint: the Diamond head side stairs do not lead to the auditorium). Program meetings take place from from 6:30pm to 8:30pm, refreshments are served, and HAS products will be available for purchase.

### Field Trips for 2005

Field Trip information and updates are also be available on the HAS office answering machine (528-1432) and on our website, [www.hawaii.audubon.com](http://www.hawaii.audubon.com).

**October 29, Saturday: James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge** with Ron Walker. 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. Please call the office to register, 528-1432.

**November 5, Saturday: Sea Life Park** with Arlene Buchholz. Although the behind-the-scenes Seabird Rehabilitation Center is under construction and we can't tour it, we will tour the exhibit

in the park where rehabilitated seabirds are housed, and learn about the Seabird Rehabilitation program. Sea Life Park cares for injured and sick seabirds and releases birds after care when possible. Seabirds that cannot be released are often kept at the park. Meet convalescent and non-releasable seabirds and chicks face to face (beak to face, actually!). In past years, we've seen White Terns, Laysan Albatrosses, Red-footed Boobies, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Sooty Terns, Noddies and more. The cost will be \$10.42 per person and includes all-day admission to the park. Please bring cash if possible, as Sea Life Park wants one payment, and not multiple individual payments. Please call the office to register, 528-1432.

**December (dates and schedule TBA) 105th Christmas Bird Count.**

## Hawaiian Waterbirds Draft Recovery Plan Released for Public Review

A draft plan that outlines steps needed to recover four species of endangered Hawaiian waterbirds was released today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for public review and comment. This plan, which updates earlier recovery plans issued in 1978 and 1985, provides detailed guidance for numerous public and private entities engaged in conservation of the Hawaiian duck or koloa maoli, Hawaiian coot or 'alae ke'oke'o, Hawaiian common moorhen or 'alae 'ula, and Hawaiian stilt or ae'o.

"These four species, found only in Hawai'i, were once found in a variety of wetland habitats on all the main Hawaiian Islands except Lana'i and Kaho'olawe," said Patrick Leonard, field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "Loss of wetland habitat is the primary cause for the species' decline, but predation by introduced animals may now be the greatest threat to the coot, moorhen, and stilt."

Five broad recovery objectives are outlined in the draft plan:

- \*increase population numbers to suitable statewide numbers;
- \*establish multiple, self-sustaining breeding populations throughout each species' historical range;
- \*establish and protect a network of both core and supporting wetlands that are managed as habitat suitable for waterbirds;
- \*eliminate or control the threats posed by introduced predators, avian diseases, and contaminants; and
- \*for the Hawaiian duck, remove the threat of hybridization with feral mallards.

Specific criteria necessary for either downlisting (changing from endangered to threatened) or delisting (removing from the list of threatened and endangered species) each of the four waterbird species are identified under these objectives.

Throughout the years, many factors have contributed to the decline of these waterbirds, such as predation by introduced animals, loss of wetlands, alteration of habitat by invasive nonnative plants, disease, and possibly environmental contaminants. Hunting in the late 1800s and early 1900s also took a

heavy toll on Hawaiian duck populations and to a lesser extent on populations of the other three endemic waterbirds.

Based on data from the State's biannual waterbird count, none of these species consistently number more than 2,000 individuals, with the exception of the Hawaiian coot. Population estimates tend to fluctuate depending upon factors such as rainfall amount, and using waterbird counts to estimate populations has proven reliable only for the coot and stilt. Scientists have found it difficult to determine the status of the duck and moorhen due to the difficulty of distinguishing between Hawaiian ducks, feral mallards, and hybrids, and the secretive nature of the moorhen and its use of densely vegetated wetland areas. Trend data collected over the past three decades show that the Hawaiian coot, moorhen, and stilt populations are either stable or increasing.

The small, brown Hawaiian duck is closely related to the mallard, but both sexes are similar in appearance to a female mallard. Currently, Hawaiian ducks are found on the islands of Ni'ihau, Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i. The most serious threat to the Hawaiian duck is cross breeding or hybridization with feral mallards.

The slate-gray Hawaiian coot has a large bulbous frontal shield above its usually all white bill. The sexes are similar in color and have large feet with lobed toes (unlike ducks, which have webbed feet). A small percentage of Hawaiian coots have a red shield and black bill similar to their mainland relative, the American coot. Hawaiian coots currently inhabit all of the main Hawaiian Islands except Kaho'olawe.

The Hawaiian common moorhen is similar to a coot, but has a red shield over its red and yellow bill and very long, slender toes that allow it to walk on floating wetland plants. The sexes are similar in appearance. Hawaiian common moorhens are currently found on the islands of Kaua'i and O'ahu.

The black and white Hawaiian stilt is a slender wading bird with distinctive long, pink legs, and is considered a separate subspecies of the black-necked stilt found in North America. It differs from the black-necked stilt in appearance in that it has

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## Public Comments Sought on Proposed Critical Habitat for Rota Bridled White-eye

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released for public comment today a proposed rule designating critical habitat for the endangered Rota bridled white-eye – a small forest bird with a distinctive ring of white feathers around its eyes – in accordance with a lawsuit settlement. The Rota bridled white-eye exists only on the island of Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

"Designation of critical habitat is one of the early stages of protecting rare species and provides interested parties the opportunity to provide valuable input," said David B. Allen, Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Region. "Critical habitat does not guarantee the survival of a species, but rather the Service looks at this stage as an opportunity to inform the public and foster partnerships with the local government and people of Rota."

The Service proposes that one unit of 3,958 acres be designated as critical habitat for the species on the island of Rota. The unit was occupied by the Rota bridled white-eye at the time of listing and contains native limestone forest and nonnative forest. The proposed designation consists of 94% government land under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and 6% private land. Of this, approximately 1,225 acres overlap with existing critical habitat designated for the Mariana crow in 2004.

Rota bridled white-eye critical habitat was determined by using the best scientific and commercial data available. Information included peer-reviewed scientific publications, Service listing and recovery documents, unpublished reports from the Commonwealth of the Northern

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## Public Comments Sought on Proposed Critical Habitat for Rota Bridled White-eye *continued from page 51*

Mariana Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife, aerial photographs and satellite imagery, and personal communications with local scientists and resource managers. Specific information used from these sources includes estimates of historical and current bird population distribution and abundance, as well as data on resource and habitat requirements.

This critical habitat designation is proposed in response to a lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity. On September 14, 2004, a settlement agreement was filed in the U.S. District Court (District of Hawaii) stating that a critical habitat proposal must be submitted by September 7, 2005, to the *Federal Register* for publication. In addition, the settlement states that final critical habitat be designated and published by September 7, 2006.

Critical habitat is a term in the Endangered Species Act that identifies specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and which may require special management considerations. However, a designation does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve, or other special conservation area. It does not allow government or public access to private lands and does not close areas to all access or use. Federal agencies that undertake, fund or permit activities that may affect critical habitat are required to consult with the Service to ensure such actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat.

In 30 years of implementing the ESA, the Service has found that designation of critical habitat provides little additional protection for most listed species, while preventing the agency from using scarce conservation resources for activities with greater conservation benefits.

In almost all cases, recovery of listed species will come through voluntary cooperative partnerships, not regulatory measures such as critical habitat. Habitat is also protected through cooperative measures under the ESA, including Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, Candidate Conservation Agreements, and state programs. In addition, voluntary partnership programs such as the Service's Private Stewardship Grants and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program also restore habitat.

The Rota bridled white-eye is a small (approximately 4 inches in size) yellowish bird with a yellow-orange bill, legs, and feet. Average weight of the bird is about one-third of an ounce. The species feeds primarily on insects and often is found in small flocks of five to seven birds. Related species include the Guam bridled white-eye, which is believed to be extinct, and the Saipan bridled white-eye, which is relatively abundant on Saipan, Tinian, and Aguigan.

## Hawaiian Waterbirds Draft Recovery Plan Released for Public Review *continued from page 51*

black extending lower on the forehead as well as around to the sides of the neck, and by having a longer bill and longer legs. Sexes are distinguished by the color of the back feathers (brownish in females, black in males) as well as by voice (females have a lower voice). Hawaiian stilts are currently found on all of the main Hawaiian Islands except Kaho'olawe.

The availability of the draft recovery plan for a 60-day public comment period was announced in the *Federal Register* on August 24, 2005. Copies of the draft recovery plan are available

Since 1982, the Rota bridled white-eye population has declined by 90 percent, with current estimates numbering 1,092 birds. Possible factors contributing to the decline include degradation or loss of habitat due to development, agricultural activities, predation by introduced rats and black drongos (a bird species from Taiwan), and naturally occurring events such as typhoons.

The Service appreciates all comments on the proposed rule but is particularly seeking information concerning:

- why habitat should or should not be designated and whether or not the benefit of designation outweighs the benefits of not designating critical habitat for the species;
- specific information on the amount and distribution of Rota bridled white-eye habitat, and what habitat is essential to the survival of the species and why;
- land use designations and current or planned activities in the subject areas and their possible impacts on proposed critical habitat;
- any foreseeable economic, or other potential impacts resulting from the proposed designation and any impacts on small entities; and
- whether our approach to designating critical habitat could be improved or modified in any way to provide for greater public participation and understanding, or to assist us in accommodating public concerns and comments.

The Service will consider comments from all interested parties received by November 14, 2005. Requests for public hearing must be received, in writing by October 31, 2005. Comments and materials concerning the proposal may be sent via the Internet to [RBWE\\_CritHab@fws.gov](mailto:RBWE_CritHab@fws.gov). Please include "Attn: Rota bridled white-eye" in your subject header and your name and return address in the body of the message. Comments and information may also be mailed or faxed to Patrick Leonard, Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (Fax 808 792 9581).

The proposed rule was published in the *Federal Register* on September 14, 2005. Copies of the proposed rule may be downloaded from the Service's website at <http://pacificislands.fws.gov> or by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office 808-792-9400.

Source: USFWS News release dated September 14, 2005 *Pacific Islands External Affairs Office* 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 5-311 Box 50187, Honolulu, HI 96850 Phone: 808 792-9530 Fax: 808 792-9583 Contact: Ken Foote, 808 792 9535 or 282 9442 05-86

through the Fish and Wildlife Service's website at <http://pacificislands.fws.gov> or by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office at 808 792 9400. Written comments may be submitted until October 24, 2005 to the Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, HI 96850.

Source: USFWS News Release dated August 24, 2005  
Contact: Ken Foote, 808 792 9535 or 282 9442

## Nominating Committee Seeks Candidates for Board of Directors

At the Board Meeting of September 19, 2005, a Nominating Committee of Linda Paul, Arlene Buchholz, and Sal Pagliaro was formed. The committee is seeking Society members who are willing to serve on the Board of Directors. The bylaws call for fifteen directors to serve two-year terms; five of the fifteen directors are elected by the membership to officer positions. Normally eight directors are elected in even years and seven elected in odd years. This varies, however, as a result of resignations and Board members being appointed to fill unexpired officer terms.

Running for re-election to 2-year terms are President Liz Kumabe, First Vice President Ron Walker, Second Vice President Wendy Johnson, and Director John Harrison. Eight additional Director seats are also open for nomination. Incumbents continuing to serve until 2006 are Treasurer Sal Pagliaro, and Directors Phil Bruner and Arlene Buchholz.

The HAS Board is a dynamic group of committed individuals whose energy and expertise involve many aspects of environmental protection in Hawai'i from fund raising to education, and from birding to habitat cleanup. All members of the Board are expected to attend six two-hour Board meetings (one every other month) and a weekend Leaders' Retreat in January. Directors are also expected to be active on one of the Society's two standing committees: Conservation and Education. Persons interested in serving on the Board are encouraged to attend a Board meeting; the next one is listed in the Calendar section on the back page.

If you are a Society member and want to be a candidate, please submit a letter of interest and brief resume of your background and activities (in and/or outside of HAS) to the attention of the Nominating Committee at the Society's address by November 10, 2005. For an information sheet giving more specific information regarding responsibilities of officers and directors, please call the office at 528-1432. Nominating Committee members may be contacted by emailing the HAS office at [hiaudsoc@pixi.com](mailto:hiaudsoc@pixi.com).

## Archipelago: Portraits of Life in the World's Most Remote Island Sanctuary

October 15 through December 18, 2005 Bishop Museum, Castle Memorial Building, 2nd Floor

This stunning exhibit will include rich portraits of marine and terrestrial flora and fauna as well as landscapes and seascapes, and interpretive imagery and information expressing the biological exuberance of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. It will combine artistic and scientific concerns to illustrate the richness and value of this older, more remote and lesser known portion of the Hawaiian archipelago and the importance of its future protection. It will provide a forum for education and increasing public awareness during a critical time of public discourse regarding the future of the Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and its potential National Marine Sanctuary designation.

from Bishop Museum's website, [www.bishopmuseum.org](http://www.bishopmuseum.org)

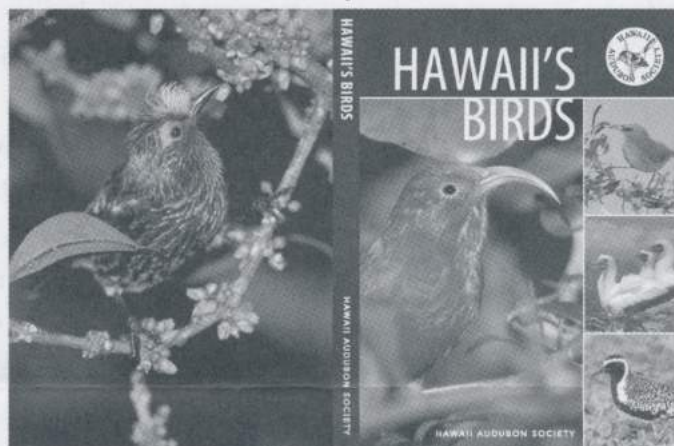
## Volunteers Needed for Annual Mailing 2005 Saturday, November 19th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the HAS office

Please come and help stuff and seal envelopes so that you and your fellow members can receive Board election ballots, local membership renewals, and the Annual Appeal. Come for the whole time or just a few hours.

YOU WILL BE REWARDED with lunch and other refreshments, good company, lots of bird talk, and endless gratitude!

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

## HAS Member Review of Hawaii's Birds 6th Edition by Clifford Hand



Back cover photograph ('Akohekohe) by Eric Nishibayashi Front cover photographs (clockwise, 'I'iwi, 'Amakihi, 'A, Kolea) by T. Dove

If you have been anxiously waiting, wait no more. The 6th edition of *Hawaii's Birds* is now available, and whether or not you have owned and enjoyed previous editions, you're gonna love this one!

Recent taxonomic reclassifications are noted. For example, the new edition tells us that in 2000 the Chestnut Munia (*Lonchura atricapilla*) was split from the Tricolored Mannikin (*L. malacca*). There are more photographs (over 150), and more of the different island races are shown. The 'Amakihi, for example, is pictured in the 5th edition only for Kaua'i and Hawai'i, while in the 6th edition, O'ahu's and Maui's races are also shown.

The most noticeable improvement is in the quality of the photography. Many photos are new, most are larger, and some are truly stunning in their beauty. There is some disagreement among birders as to the relative usefulness of drawings versus photographs for field identification, in that drawings can be better for showing diagnostic field marks. Personally I come down on the side of photographs, primarily because they correspond better to what I can see through my binoculars. In these digital days, photographers (and editors) can select from hundreds of shots to find the very best for field guides. Clearly many, many hours have been put into this effort.

It's hard to imagine that a birder or other nature-lover would rather have \$10.99 in his or her pocket than the 6th edition of *Hawaii's Birds*. It's a no-brainer for me.

The Board of Directors of Hawaii Audubon Society  
Invite You to Attend the Society's

# 12th Annual Awards Dinner

Monday, October 17th, 2005, from 6:00 to 9:00pm

Bishop Museum - Atherton Halau

\$28.00 per person

Dinner Catered by Kaka'ako Kitchen:  
Mesclun of Greens with Lemon Miso Dressing  
Asian Potato Salad  
Sauteed Mahi with Tomato-Ginger Butter Sauce  
Sweet Chili Chicken  
Grilled Seasonal Vegetables  
Kaka'ako Wok-Fried Noodles  
Double Chocolate Brownies

Reservations must be made and payment received  
no later than October 12th. Make your reservations by calling  
the HAS office at 528-1432 or by emailing us at [hiaudsoc@pixi.com](mailto:hiaudsoc@pixi.com).

Checks may be mailed to Hawaii Audubon Society  
850 Richards St., #505, Honolulu, HI 96813.

## Introducing Hawaii's Birds - 6th Edition

The HAS 2005 Awards Dinner celebrates the much-awaited completion of the 6th edition of Hawaii's Birds. The book will be available for purchase along with prints of several of the beautiful new bird photos. The featured presentation and light-hearted awards ceremony will focus on fascinating facts about the history and production of Hawaii's Birds, which has appeared on Hawaii's non-fiction best-seller list for years. Please visit the HAS website [www.hawaii-audubon.com](http://www.hawaii-audubon.com) for more details.

## 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.*

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New Membership       Renewal

Please make checks payable to Hawaii Audubon Society and mail to us at 850 Richards St., #505, Honolulu, HI 96813.  
 PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.

## Help give Hawaii's native birds a future



## They thrive on your donations

Hawaii Audubon Society, 850 Richards  
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### ‘Elepaio

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**Scientific Editor: Ron Walker**

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850 Richards Street, Suite 505

Honolulu, HI 96813

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

E-mail: [hiaudsoc@pixi.com](mailto:hiaudsoc@pixi.com)    Website: [www.hawaii-audubon.com](http://www.hawaii-audubon.com)

Pacific Fisheries Coalition (PFC) (a project of HAS)

Tel: (808) 262-6859 Fax: (808) 537-5294    Website: [www.pacfish.org](http://www.pacfish.org)

#### Board Roster:

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 Ron Walker, Vice President  
 Wendy Johnson, 2nd Vice President  
 Sal Pagliaro, Treasurer  
 Phil Bruner, Director  
 Arlene Buchholz, Director  
 Jennifer Crummer, Director  
 John Harrison, Director

#### Staff:

Linda Shapin, HAS Admin. Assistant  
 Linda Paul, PFC Executive Director  
 Keiko Bonk, NWHI Communications Coordinator

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Conservation: Naomi Arcand  
 Education: Wendy Johnson  
 ‘Elepaio: Ron Walker  
 Field Trips: vacant  
 Fundraising: Sal Pagliaro  
 Grants & Scholarships: Phil Bruner  
 Membership: Linda Shapin  
 Program: Arlene Buchholz  
 Publications: Linda Paul  
 Website: Stephen Bibbs



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## Calendar of Events

- Monday, October 17 Annual Awards Dinner!**  
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- Saturday, October 29 Field Trip**  
James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge with Ron Walker.  
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- Saturday, November 5 Field Trip**  
Sea Life Park with Arlene Buchholz. See page 50
- Monday, November 14 Special Program Meeting**  
The Endangered Hawai'i 'Akepa with Dr. Leonard Freed.  
See page 50.
- Saturday, November 19 Annual Mailout**  
See page 53.
- Monday, November 21 Board Meeting**  
Open to all members, 6:30 to 8:30pm at the HAS office.  
Education and Conservation Committees meet at 5:45pm  
before Board meetings.
- Monday, December 6 Program Meeting**  
Bird Identification for Christmas Bird Count More info next  
issue.

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