



'ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

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JUNE/JULY 2009

Results of Audubon's 109th Annual Christmas Bird Count

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world. For over one hundred years people have gathered together during the winter holiday season to count birds, and in the process they have created a vast pool of information on the status and distribution of early winter bird populations. This year's count took place between December 14, 2008 and January 5, 2009. The valuable data gathered will help the National Audubon Society and others to examine how birds are being affected by global warming and how their habitats will shift in the future. More information and

results from 1900 to the present are available through National Audubon Society's website, www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

Hawaii Audubon Society would like to sincerely thank David Bremer, Arlene Buchholz, Shayna Carney, Arleone Dibben-Young, Jennifer Higashino, Michelle Ho'okano, Pete Leary, Maile Melrose, Eldridge Naboa, and Cynthia Rehkemper for generously volunteering to organize, lead, and compile data for this past winter's Hawai'i Christmas Bird Counts. Many thanks also to all those who participated in the collection of this important data during this 65th annual CBC for Hawai'i!

Species	Kaua'i		O'ahu		Moloka'i	Hawai'i	
	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu	Kualapu'u	North Kona	Volcano	
Laysan Albatross, Mōli	120			1 US			
White-tailed Tropicbird, Koa'e kea	2						
Brown Booby, 'Ā	2			1			
Red-footed Booby, 'Ā	1346		347				
Great Frigatebird, 'Iwa	13			2			
Cattle Egret	71	135	165	38 LC			
Black-crowned Night-Heron, 'Auku'u	16	10		18	10		
White-faced Ibis	2						
Cackling Goose	CW						
Hawaiian Goose, Nēnē	213				4		
Brant			1				
American Wigeon		2	3				
Mallard		2	55				
Hawaiian Duck, Koloa	552						
Hawaiian Duck X Mallard (hybrid)		35	155				
Blue-winged Teal			4				
Northern Shoveler, Koloa mōhā				1 LC			
Northern Pintail, Koloa māpu	82	10		62 HC			
Green-winged Teal		8					
Canvasback				1 US			
Ring-necked Duck				2 LC			
Lesser Scaup				24			
Gray Francolin		8		3 LC			
Black Francolin				5			
Erckel's Francolin	3	1			1		

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Species	Kaua'i	O'ahu		Moloka'i	Hawai'i	
	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu	Kualapu'u	North Kona	Volcano
Red Junglefowl	83			15		
Kalij Pheasant					2	4 LC
Ring-necked Pheasant	1					
Wild Turkey						4 LC
Hawaiian Hawk, 'Io					4	
Hawaiian Moorhen, 'Alae 'ula	143	4	17			
Hawaiian Coot, 'Alae ke'oke'o	70	159	31	85 LC	70	
Black-bellied Plover		1				
Pacific Golden-Plover, Kōlea	177	451	553	62 LC	28	1 LC
Hawaiian Stilt, Āe'o	65	161	181	84 LC	55	
Wandering Tattler, 'Ūlili	3	8	20	6	3	
Whimbrel				1 US		
Bristle-thighed Curlew, Kioea			1	5		
Ruddy Turnstone, 'Akekeke			180	47	10	
Sanderling, Hunakai		58	12	16 LC	7	
Dunlin		1				
Curlew Sandpiper		1 US				
Long-billed Dowitcher		5		4		
Snipe sp.		1 US				
Ring-billed Gull			2			
Black Noddy, Noio			3			
White Tern, Manu-o-Kū			5			
Caspian Tern			1			
Rock Pigeon		109	125	48 HC		
Spotted Dove	63	283	302	119 LC	2	
Zebra Dove	150	1054	340	176 LC	7	
Mourning Dove		8				

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	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu	Kualapu'u	North Kona	Volcano
Rose-ringed Parakeet		3 US HC	6			
Red-crowned Parrot		96 HC	42			
Barn Owl		1				
Mariana Swiftlet			2			
O'ahu 'Elepaio		4				
Hawai'i 'Elepaio					11	19 HC
Sky Lark		3			2	
Red-vented Bulbul		170	35			
Red-whiskered Bulbul		17	32			
Japanese Bush-Warbler		8				
White-rumped Shama	10	14	10	4		
'Oma'o						20 HC
Hwamei	1					
Red-billed Leiothrix		8	17			2 LC
Japanese White-eye	48	123	71	15	4	
Northern Mockingbird	2	2		2		
Common Myna	195	1049	725	243	51	
Saffron Finch		49	4		7	
Red-crested Cardinal	84	95	118	15 LC		
Northern Cardinal	5	35	19	4 LC	2	
Western Meadowlark	21					
House Finch	18	232	129	112	3	
O'ahu 'Amakihi		1				
Hawai'i 'Amakihi					245	18 HC
'Akiapōlā'au						6 HC
Hawai'i Creeper						1 LC
'Iwi					23	3 LC
'Apapane		1	7		113	55 HC
House Sparrow	32	213	99	40		
Common Waxbill		298	215			
Nutmeg Mannikin	142	56	7	73 LC		
Chestnut Munia	147	61				
Java Sparrow	43	239	69			
Count Date	1/2/09	1/3/09	12/20/08	12/17/08	1/5/09	12/20/08
Participants	12	21	20	6	13	12
Party-Hours	11.5	35.25	26.5	13.5	7	5
Species	34	51	44	34	26	12

HC - High Count, LC - Low Count, US - Unusual Sighting
 CW - Reported in the area during Count Week, but not reported during the count

Species	Laysan Island	French Frigate Shoals
Laysan Albatross, Mōlī	170091	3238
Black-footed Albatross	22906	3370
Black-footed Albatross X Laysan Albatross (hybrid)		1
Short-tailed Albatross	1	
Bonin Petrel	5000	4
Wedge-tailed Shearwater, 'Ua'u kani	3	
Tristram's Storm-Petrel		31
Red-tailed Tropicbird, Koa'e 'ula	1	3
Masked Booby, 'Ā	19	125
Brown Booby, 'Ā	47	1
(Brewster's) Brown Booby	1 US	
Red-footed Booby, 'Ā	303	1572
Great Frigatebird, 'Iwa	358	816
Laysan Duck	345	
Peregrine Falcon	1 US	US CW
Pacific Golden-Plover, Kōlea	430	84
Wandering Tattler, 'Ūlīlī	112	2
Bristle-thighed Curlew, Kioea	8	
Ruddy Turnstone, 'Akekeke	1523	165
Sanderling, Hunakai	8	
Ruff	2	
Long-billed Dowitcher	2	
Red-necked Phalarope	2	
Brown Noddy, Noio kōhā	1994	319
Black Noddy, Noio	706	1686
White Tern, Manu-o-Kū	68	118
Sooty Tern, 'Ewa'ewa	46	11
Gray-backed Tern, Pākalakala	10	
Laysan Finch	142	
Count Date	12/22/08	12/22/08
Participants	4	6
Party-Hours	9	5
Species	27	17

US - Unusual Sighting

CW - Reported in the area during Count Week, but not reported during the count

Book Synopsis and Review

By Ron Walker

Life List by Olivia Gentile

345 pgs. With Illustrations and Photographs

Bloomsbury USA, New York, NY 2009

This biography of Phoebe Snetsinger is a noteworthy story about a remarkable woman. Her drive to achieve an unmatched life list of birds took her on adventures all over the world, sometimes to the exclusion of her personal safety and family relationships. Author Olivia Gentile has done an excellent job of reconstructing Snetsinger's life through her papers, poetry, letters to and from others, notebooks, and published birding recollections.

Born in 1931, Phoebe Burnett Snetsinger, educated in the sciences at Swarthmore College and mother of four, was lonely and bored when a neighbor showed her a backyard bird, the Blackburnian Warbler. Thus in 1965 began her awakening and quest to eventually be the first woman to list the greatest number of birds in the world.

While she was very creative in interacting with her small children, she found birding her calling and over the years spent more time involved with birds, eventually pursuing birding as a career. At age 49 she was diagnosed with advanced melanoma and spent the next 18 years battling with the disease as she continued her quest. Phoebe encountered an incredible number of hair-raising and death-defying adventures along the way, and she eventually changed as the years went on. Birding consumed

her life to the point that she missed her mother's funeral and her eldest daughter's marriage ceremony, and she wouldn't give up birding for counseling to save her marriage. This was a driven woman with myopic vision in the opinion of the reviewer.

Of interest to readers of the 'Elepaio is that she visited Hawai'i to go birding six times, including a trip to Maui to seek out the Maui Parrotbill. All four of her children are involved in the natural sciences and her son, Tom Snetsinger, was hired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1991 to study the Palila on Mauna Kea.

In some ways this is the story of the evolution of birding around the world in that it chronicles the competition between life listers, catalogs bird occurrence and distribution, and fosters the conservation of wildlife. Phoebe was also caught up in the controversy over whether it was necessary to actually see a bird or whether just hearing it would suffice in order to make an official life listing.

This book is highly recommended for not only those who maintain life lists of birds seen but also for people who enjoy an extremely well written real-life story of a most interesting individual.

Membership in Hawaii Audubon Society 2009

Regular Member:	\$ 25.00	Foreign Membership (Airmail)	
Student Member:.....	\$ 15.00	Mexico.....	\$ 26.00
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New Membership Renewal

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PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.

Moonlight and Seabirds

By Annette Kaohelaulii

One of the more delightful evenings I have spent in a long time took place on Friday, May 8, 2009 when the Hawaii Audubon Society hosted a “Full Moon Seabird Adventure” off of the southern coast of O’ahu.

Anxious sailors began gathering at Kewalo Basin at 5:30 pm to board the 40’ sailing catamaran, Kahala Kai to begin our adventure to the Hawaii Audubon Society’s Freeman Seabird Preserve on Black Point. Captain Gaelyn Penberthy deftly maneuvered her craft through the waves and around the variety of other sailboats as we passed world famous Waikiki Beach en route to the other side of Diamond Head.

The exciting pelagic birding tour was everything a birder could hope for, especially if you do most of your birding along the wetlands and in the forests. Pelagic birding on a sailboat is a totally magical experience. We were promised wedge-tailed shearwaters, boobies, noddies, white terns, great frigate birds and pomarine jaegers. All made an appearance during the evening, with the exception of the jaeger.

As we sailed along toward Black Point, we began to see white terns flying low over the water, then wedge-tailed shearwaters made their appearance on the horizon as they headed home to their underground nests on the preserve. Red-footed boobies appeared and the closer we came to Black Point, the more birds there seemed to be.

Small flocks of brown noddies would swoop past us while we anchored offshore to enjoy a wonderful box dinner from A Matter of Taste. Even without any pelagic birds, the creative and delicious sandwiches and ono salad made the lovely evening worthwhile. This food was superb. As we watched the full moon rise, we realized that this indeed was a joyful occasion. Enjoying the company of good friends, a lovely full moon rising out of the ocean and good memories made this an event to remember for a very long time. What a grand way to contribute to habitat restoration on a very important shearwater colony.

As we sailed past the twinkling lights of Waikiki at the end of the evening, we enjoyed the Friday night fireworks from the Hilton and even glimpsed some light colored cranes all lit up high above the tall buildings.

Plan to attend the next fundraiser for the Freeman Seabird Preserve on Black Point. You will be so glad you did.

HAS Field Trips

Contact the HAS Office at:

(808) 528-1432, hiaudsoc@pixi.com

Saturday, June 20, 10:00 a.m.

Hilton Hawaiian Village Bird Tour with Alice Roberts

Come explore the Hilton’s beautiful grounds and ponds where we will discover a variety of fish and water birds. Parking is not validated unless you eat lunch at a restaurant at the Hilton. Meet at 10am at the penguins. Space is limited, call Alice to register, (808) 864-8122.



A wedge-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) forages at dusk off of Black Point, O’ahu.



HAS Director Ron Walker addresses Seabird Cruise participants aboard the “Kahala Kai”.

HAS Program Meeting

Program Meetings are sponsored by HAS and the UH Biology Department, and are held at UH Mānoa’s St. John lab building (Botany Building) in room 011 (ground floor auditorium). The address is 3190 Maile Way. Attendance is free and open to the public.

June 15, Monday, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Gardening for a Greener Future, with Lydi Morgan

Lydi will discuss the benefits of organic agriculture as it relates to environmental and personal health. She will provide gardening tips and discuss local efforts to increase food security for our islands. Lydi is a gardener and educator with The Green House and Kokua Hawai’i Foundation’s ‘AINA In Schools program. She is the Managing Editor for the ‘Elepaio and former Office Manager for Hawaii Audubon Society.

Revised Recovery Plan for ‘Alalā Released

Plan Provides Hope for Reintroduction of Hawaiian Crow Back into the Wild

A revised recovery plan outlining the essential steps in preventing the extinction of the endangered Hawaiian crow, also known as the ‘alalā, was released in April by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Described in the early 1900s as impudent, curious, noisy, and numerous, today the ‘alalā is one of the world’s rarest forest birds.

The ‘alalā is found only on the island of Hawai‘i. Revered by many Hawaiians as an ‘aumakua or spirit, the species holds a special place in native culture, and its feathers were used in kahili, a symbol of royalty. For many years now, the ‘alalā has teetered on the brink of extinction, with the last pair disappearing from the wild in 2002.

“With the release of this recovery plan, we reach out to Big Island communities asking for their support in helping restore the ‘alalā to its native forests,” said Patrick Leonard, field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “Wildlife does not recognize property lines or jurisdictional areas. Working together, we hope to bring this charismatic bird back to its rightful place in Hawai‘i.”

The ultimate recovery goal is to restore multiple self-sustaining populations of the ‘alalā within its historical range to allow removal of the species from the list of endangered and threatened species.

‘Alalā recovery actions call for expanding captive propagation to minimize loss of genetic diversity, protecting suitable habitat and managing threats to the species, establishing new populations in managed habitat, establishing a program to increase public support, and continuing research and adaptive management practices for species recovery.

Due in part to the high cost of broad habitat restoration needs, the estimated cost to implement all recovery actions described in the plan over the next five years is \$14,380,000. A total estimated cost and date of recovery for the species cannot be determined at this time since the future of the species depends upon the success of future reproduction and reintroductions back to the wild.

Since 1993, the ‘Alalā Recovery Team has been responsible for recommending management actions to recover the species and developing this revised recovery plan. The plan is based on long-term management of the species with an immediate focus on captive propagation to decrease the loss of genetic diversity.

The ‘Alalā Recovery Team is composed of two private landowners, two avian captive propagation specialists, and representatives from the Hawaii Audubon Society, the Hawai‘i Division of Forestry and Wildlife, the U.S. Geological Survey’s Biological Resources Discipline, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and two universities. All comments received during the public comment period for the draft revised plan were considered in the development of this revised recovery plan.

The ‘alalā is the largest Hawaiian forest bird after the endangered ‘io or Hawaiian hawk, and is the only surviving

member of a group of crow species that once inhabited the Hawaiian archipelago prior to human colonization. The crow is an omnivorous, forest-dwelling bird endemic to dry and moist forests on the island of Hawai‘i. Although ‘alalā were abundant in the 1890s, their numbers decreased sharply throughout the 20th century despite legal protection conferred by the Territory of Hawai‘i in 1931 and the federal and state Endangered Species Acts in 1973 and 1982. By 1987, the wild ‘alalā population was reduced to a single bird in north Kona and fewer than 20 birds in central Kona.



Many parties including the Service came together in the early 1990s to establish a comprehensive recovery program. Between 1993 and 1996, eight clutches of one or more ‘alalā eggs were collected or salvaged from wild nests, yielding 13 chicks in captivity. Since 2002, no birds have been seen in the wild.

Between 1993 and 1998, 27 juvenile ‘alalā from both captive and wild parents were raised in captivity and released in the South Kona district. From these releases, much was learned regarding threats to released birds and the types of management needed to minimize these threats. Due to a variety of causes, 21 of the released birds died, and the remaining 6 were recaptured and reintegrated into the captive flock. The last known reproduction of birds in the wild was in 1996.

Threats to the conservation and recovery of the ‘alalā include predation by nonnative mammals and the ‘io, introduced diseases such as toxoplasmosis (a disease spread by feral cats), and habitat loss and fragmentation. Inbreeding may also be reducing the reproductive success of the captive population, and loss of wild behaviors in captivity may reduce the survival skills of reintroduced birds.

At present, two captive propagation facilities – the Maui and Keauhou Bird Conservation Centers managed by the Zoological Society of San Diego – are maintaining 56 ‘alalā. Within five years, according to population genetic modeling, the population needs to grow to at least 75 birds in order to avoid further loss of genetic diversity and to begin reintroduction into the wild.

Copies of the plan are available on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/> or by calling the Fish and Wildlife’s Honolulu office at (808) 792-9400.

Source: USFWS News Release Dated April 15, 2009.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. They are a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for their scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information visit www.fws.gov.



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