

**VOLUME 69, NUMBER 8** 

**NOVEMBER 2009** 

## CRY OF THE PEACOCK By Ron Walker

On August 3, 2004, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin posted a story entitled "Waimea Center Sorry for Killing Peacocks" after staff of the Waimea Valley Audubon Center on O'ahu admitted eliminating nine birds. The purpose was to address an overpopulation of peafowl which were becoming a nuisance and a health hazard around the food service area. As a result of the story, the Hawaii Audubon Society received many irate calls from members who, not realizing that Waimea was run by the <u>National</u> Audubon Society, threatened to cancel their membership.

More recently, in June 2009, a woman living at a Mākaha Valley town house was charged with animal cruelty for killing a peacock with a baseball bat (Honolulu Star- Bulletin, June 27, 2009). Her reason was that she was frustrated by the incessant cries of peacocks in the vicinity that interfered with her sleep at night. Controversy involving peacocks in the valley has been ongoing for years with some residents enjoying their attractive presence, while others wishing they would shut up or go away.

Peafowl have been present in Hawai'i since 1860 when Francis Sinclair brought them to the Island of Kaua'i, the first introduction of this species to the United States. Peafowl were brought to Ni'ihau (1890s), Island of Hawai'i (1909, 1928), and in subsequent years, to O'ahu, Maui, Lana'i, and Moloka'i. (Kannan and James, 1998; Long, 1981).

Their present distribution is somewhat cloudy, primarily because no statewide inventory has been made in recent years. The Hawaii Audubon Society lists them as present only on Hawai'i Island, Maui and O'ahu (Anon. 2005). Due to access restrictions, it is unknown whether they are still present on Ni'ihau. According to Maui biologist, Dr. Fern Duvall, peafowl are present only on East Maui and not on Moloka'i or Lana'i (personal communication, 7/23/09). Biologist Thomas Kaiakapu states that they are still found on Kaua'i, mostly on the East side Testil of the island (personal communication, Peacock 7/24/09). On the Island of Hawai'i, peafowl are established at Kapapala Ranch, Wood Valley,

Pu'uwa'awa'a and the Pana'ewa Zoo near Hilo (biologist Joey Mello, personal communication, 7/24/09). Scott et al (1977) shows peafowl in the forests of Kona, south of Hualalai. On O'ahu, peafowl are found in colonies on both the windward and leeward sides of the island.

In dealing with peafowl, it may be useful to delineate their status in Hawai'i law and rules. Peafowl are not listed as game

birds in Chapter 122 of the Board of Land and Natural Resources ("Board") Administrative Rules (Anon. 1997). However, they may be so designated by the Board upon recommendation of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. Currently, it is being proposed that peafowl be opened to hunting on O'ahu and the Island of Hawai'i. But until it becomes a game bird, it is classified as an "introduced wild bird" by Chapter 124 of the Board Administrative Rules (Anon, 1998).

An introduced wild bird is "...any non-domesticated species of birds introduced or imported to Hawai'i by humans and living in a wild state other than game birds..." (S.13-124-2). Peafowl may not be caught, possessed, injured, killed or destroyed without a permit (S.13-124-3). With a permit, they may be controlled or destroyed if they (1) pose a threat to human health and safety, (2) are destructive to agriculture, or (3) harm native plants or wildlife. No permit is required to merely scare or herd depredating peafowl (S.13-124-7). Peafowl may be collected, possessed, killed, sold or transported for "scientific, or educational purposes including cultural activities or for activities which will enhance the survival of the wildlife species" (13-124-4). With a permit, peafowl may be kept in captivity "...for the protection, treatment for injury or disease, propagation, and other purposes consistent with the preservation protection and conservation of the animals"

(13-124-6).

The State Department of Agriculture (DOA) Administrative Rules (Anon. 2006) include all species of the genus *Pavo* (peafowl) in its "List of Conditional Approved Animals" which means they may be imported into Hawai'i with conditions such as proper inspection for disease and parasites before shipment. Peafowl are not considered restricted animals which might cause harm to agriculture as they have been implicated in few crop damage complaints. The DOA classifies them as "non-domesticated" animals, thus, introduced wild birds.

The dilemma here is in definitions. To be considered truly "wild", peafowl must not be under the control of or dependent upon humans for their survival ("non-domesticated"). Indeed, in truly wild environments such as remote forests, peafowl are wary of humans and depart

drawing by Ron Walker

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their presence quickly (Kannan and James op cit, Anon. 2005). But peafowl were originally brought into Hawai'i for their decorative attributes, mostly by wealthy landowners and were considered domestic animals. Then there is the inbetween category of "feral" which usually means domestic animals reverted to the wild. Others have referred to them as "semi-feral" by which it is assumed that they mean peafowl lead a dual life in the wild as well as among humans. Peafowl continue to be associated with human environments such as ranch headquarters, parks, cemeteries, and residential areas (Lewin, 1971, Scott et al, 1977).

In summary, peafowl are: (1) highly decorative; (2) wild birds protected by law;

(3) manageable by rules, (4) mostly harmless to agriculture; (5) potential game birds; (6) distributors of alien plants; and (7) somewhat pestiferous. It is the latter-most category that most concerns society. Their raucous cries drive people to distraction and worse. And peafowl can become aggressive around humans begging for food, causing health hazards. But there are legal, effective and humane ways to control them.

## COMMON PEAFOWL: Pavo cristatus VITAL STATISTICS

#### Names, Other:

Indian Peafowl, Blue Peafowl, Paon bleu (French), Pfau (German), Pavo-real Comun (Spanish), Mayura (Hindi), Pikake (Hawaiian).

#### **Distribution, World-wide:**

India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ceylon, New Zealand, Australia, West Indies; possibly introduced to other parts of the world.

Distribution, North America (U.S.):

## California, Florida

Distribution, Former, Hawai'i:

Kaua'i, Ni'ihau, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui, Hawai'i Island.

## Distribution, Present, Hawai'i:

Kaua'i: Kipu/Lihu'e, Kipu Kai Ranch, Wailua/

Tropical Paradise Resort.

Oʻahu: Waiʻanae Mountains, Mākaha Valley, Mānoa, Ahuimanu, Koko Crater.

Maui: Haiku, Makawao East to Kaupō, Haleakalā, Kahikinui.

Hawai'i Island: Kapapala Ranch, Wood Valley, Pu'uwa'awa'a, Hualalai, Kona, Pana'ewa Zoo, Hilo.

### **Dimensions:**

Male (peacock): 100 to 115 cm (39 to 45 inches) long to end of tail; 195 to 225 cm (77 to 89 inches) long to end of full train; weight 4 to 6 kilograms (9 to 13 pounds).

Female (peahen): about 95 cm (37 inches) long; weight 2.75 to 4 kilograms (6 to 9 pounds).

#### Habitat, Worldwide:

Open moist and dry deciduous forests near streams; thin scrubby woodland interspersed with cultivated areas; villages with cultivation.

#### Habitat, North America (U.S.):

Semi-wild land at edges of cities and cultivation, large estates, suburban gardens, arboreta, farms, ranches.

## Habitat, Hawai'i:

Open dry lowlands, kiawe flats, alien plant associations at sea level, edges of rainforests at higher elevations, areas with passionflower (Passiflora) species.

#### **Reproduction:**

Polygamous. Harem averages one peacock to 3 to 5 peahens. Breeding season varies in native range, linked to rainy seasons. In Hawai'i, probably year-round due to equitable climate. Nests in scrub/brush, on the ground. Nests: shallow depression in

ground lined with vegetation. Averages 3 to 6 but up to 8 light brown eggs. Incubation period: 27-30 days, female only. Chicks are precocial, fledged at 9 weeks.

**Predators:** 

Worldwide: foxes, hawk-eagles, raccoons, eagle-owls, jackals, dogs.

In Hawai'i: Small Indian Mongoose(*Herpestesauropunctatus auropunctatus*), possibly feral dogs.

## Food Habits:

Gallinaceous (ground scratching/feeding),

Peahen drawing by Ron Walker

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850 Richards Street, Suite 505 Honolulu, HI 96813 Phone/Fax: (808) 528-1432 E-mail: <u>hiaudsoc@pixi.com</u> Website: <u>www.hawaiiaudubon.com</u>

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### Vocalization/Sounds:

Peacock: "may-awe", "ka-aan", "pehaun" (peahen?), "peeow", "ka-yoo", "minh-ao". Train feather quills of male produce

a "rattling" or "zizzing" sound while on full display. Peahen: "kok-kok", "kha-kha-kha".

## TRIVIA

- **1.** Fossil records go back to Pleistocene era in California and Tertiary period in Europe.
- 2. Largest member of the pheasant family (Phasianidae).
- **3.** Oldest known ornamental bird and world's most popular bird.
- 4 The national bird of India.
- 5. In India, believed sacred as a symbol of the god, Krishna.
- **6.** Kept as ornaments, 3,000 years ago by Kings of Egypt; revered by the Greeks and Romans.
- 7. Indians say "minh ao!" call means that rain will be coming.
- **8.** The train of the peacock has 20 feathers; that of the peahen, 18.
- **9.** The train of the peacock is not attached to the tail; it rises from the muscles of the back.
- **10.** Captive males known to display to people, animal topiary, pigs, poultry and fireplugs.
- **11.** In Hawai'i, it has long been a custom to give peafowl as gifts to neighboring ranches.
- **12.** Implicated in spread of Banana Poka (*Passiflora mollissima*), a serious forest pest in Hawai'i.

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## Another Wonderful Saturday Morning "Meet at the Penguins" HILTON HAWAIIAN VILLAGE – FLORA and FAUNA

Saturday, June 20, 2009, 10:00 a.m. With Wildlife Staff Member Lisa Goya-Nishikawa

HAS Field Trip Report by Alice P. S. Roberts

If you've never been to the HHV, there are 10 ponds, lots of birds, many wondrous plants, and gorgeously maintained grounds.

Daughn, Deena, and I drove to Waikīkī, parked at Fort DeRussy, walked over to the huge sausage tree on the corner of the HHV entrance. Eight others joined us at The Penguins! The South African Black Footed Penguins still seem content to be in Hawai'i (they're not polar); a couple were in various molting phases. Lisa got Icarus to come over to her; she lifted her out of the water and we were able to feel the feathers - outer waterproof and inner downy. We learned about her penguin booties and heard her raucous call – why they are often called jackass penguins. The enclosure also is home to some turtles including a softshell, grass carp, some Tilapia, and a couple large albino fish.

Lisa gave us a couple of handouts: HHV Self-Guided Wildlife Tour "Take a Walk on the Wildside", a fun question sheet: "Are You Smarter than an Animal Trainer", several pages of pictures of birds and fish, and a Hawaii Audubon Society Personal Wildlife Encounter to be used during a staycation at the HHV.

We toured several ponds, some with waterfalls, we saw several "resident" (uninvited) Black-Crowned-Night Herons (one caught and ate a large cichlid), Lesser Flamingos (sadly all males), Sacred Ibises (adults and young), one Black-Necked Swan "Ānuenue" (she was born here many years ago, I remember when she was an egg!), and many ducks. The White Faced Tree Ducks (like the Eyton Tree or Whistling Duck) sounded like squeaky toys; there were several hybrids (White Faced Tree Duck X Whistling) who also squeak! The Mandarin Ducks (Asia) were in plain everyday plumage, while the male North American Wood Ducks "Woodies" were partly in courtship feathers with green hoods. The many mallards of last year no longer parade around the grounds from pond to pond, pool to pool (especially the Super Pool); they have disappeared.

The Parrots, as usual, were "off on Saturdays" (to get bathed and clipped), but Kimo was out on a perch, he's transitioning to an out-of-cage double yellow headed amazon. I really missed seeing the other pretty parrots, guess I'll have to go to lunch on a weekday!

In the ponds were many gorgeous koi (including 1 or 2 butterfly koi – hard to keep pretty with cichlids nibbling fins), really big blackish grass carp (wonderful filter feeders who help keep the water clear), black Pacu (vegetarian piranha) which like bananas, Liberty Mollies, electric blue (male) and yellow (female) Cichlids, and Tilapia (another cichlid) of many sizes (wild gray and orange). There were 2 new knifefish (donated pets); they were huge (I've only seen little ones in pet stores) in a pond without koi!

Along the pathways, many beautiful plants were blooming.

Try to join us next June; the HHV trip is always interesting and beautiful or take yourself to Waik $\bar{k}\bar{k}$ , walk the HHV grounds, visit the many stores, have a great meal at one of the over 20 restaurants, and get your parking ticket validated. We 3 had to leave without lunch this Saturday; we had much to do for our Mermaids Hawai'i's Father's Day performance at the Outrigger Reef on the Beach Hotel for their 2nd Annual Mermaid Festival.

Aloha, Alice

## My Hawai'i Celebration and Fundraiser Saturday, November 14

The Hawai'i Conservation Alliance Foundation, The Pacific Writers' Connection and ING DIRECT are pleased to announce a Fundraiser and Celebration of "My Hawai'i" Story Project, to be held on Saturday, November 14, 2009 at the ING DIRECT Cafe.

A free "My Hawai'i" Fair will take place from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. featuring activities and exhibits for all ages. A celebration and reception will be held from 4:30-6:30 p.m. to honor extraordinary young writers with a passion for Hawaii's environment, along with a public reading by "My Hawai'i" student authors.

A silent auction featuring books, art, special nature tours, hotel packages, and other special offers will be on display and open for bidding at the ING DIRECT Cafe from November 7, 2009. Funds raised will support the 2010 writing contest.

For more information on the "My Hawai'i" Story Project, including a list of winning entries and a PDF version of the anthology, visit http://hawaiiconservation.org/myhawaii.asp

## **HAS Field Trips**

Contact the HAS office at: (808) 528-1432, hiaudsoc@pixi.com

Saturday, December 5, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

# Windward Wetland and Waterbird Field Tour with Ron Walker

Kawainui Marsh, Hamakua Marsh and Kaelepulu Wetland Bird Preserve. Sponsored by the Hawaii Audubon Society and Ahahui Malama i ka Lokahi.

Gather at the Ulupo Heiau parking lot (behind the Windward YMCA) and plan to carpool. Bring binoculars, sunscreen, water, rain gear and sturdy shoes. Limited to 30 people; call the Hawaii Audubon Society at (808) 528-1432 to reserve a place. A \$5.00 donation would be appreciated.

## Hawaii's Ocean Issues Program Series

Thursdays at 8:30 p.m. on Channel 52 ('Ölelo OAHU)

| Sustainability and 'Aina   | 11/19                 |
|--|-----------------------|
| Dr. Carlos Andrade, UHM Hawaiian Studies   | s Dept                |
| <b>Sustainability and 'Aina</b>  | 11/5, 11/26           |
| Dr. Carlos Andrade, UHM Hawaiian Studies   | s Dept                |
| What Should We Sustain?<br>When we talk about "Sustainability"<br>Dr. Carlos Andrade, UHM Hawaiian Studies | 11/12, 12/3<br>s Dept |
| <b>Kumulipo I</b>  | 12/10, 12/24          |
| Nalani Kanakaole, UHM Hawaiian Studies   | Dept                  |

Kumulipo II12/17/12/31Nalani Kanakaole, UHM Hawaiian Studies Dept

| Membership in Hawaii Audubon Society 2009  |   |               |                  |
|--|---|---------------|------------------|
|  | ¢ 25.00   |               | 1. (4. 1)        |
| Regular Member:<br>Student Member:         |   | Foreign Membe | ersnip (Airmaii) |
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| New Membership 🗌 Renewal 🗌                 |   |               |                  |
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## HAS Annual Awards Dinner 2009

Hawaii Audubon Society members, friends and distinguished guests gathered October 19th at Treetops Restaurant in Manoa Valley for the Society's sixteenth Annual Awards Dinner. This year's event featured a raffle and a silent auction which included over thirty books on birds and birding, and many beautiful handmade craft items. Awards were presented to five notable individuals who were recognized for their contributions to environmental education and the protection of Hawaii's wildlife and habitats.

Widely reknowned plover researcher Dr. Wally Johnson gave a fascinating presentation entitled "Golden Plovers Around the World". Describing his investigations at plover breeding and feeding grounds across the globe, Dr. Johnson shared his firsthand knowledge and stunning photographs of the American golden plover, the Eurasian golden plover, and Hawaii's favorite, the Pacific golden plover (Kolea). All the golden plovers are small, elegant birds who migrate over very long distances twice a year to maximise their reproductive success. Their differing ranges, plumage and habits reveal amazing examples of resourcefullness and adaptation. Dr. Wally Johnson's continuing curiosity about golden plovers is always compelling to his enthusiastic audiences.

The following Annual Awards for 2009 were presented with great appreciation from the Hawaii Audubon Society Board of Directors:

# • President's Award- For a public servant who has had a major effect on conservation in Hawaii:

Dave Smith is the District Manager of the Oahu Branch of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife and Grants Manager on the Board of The Wildlife Society, Hawaii Chapter. Working over many years with a very limited State budget for wildlife programs in Hawaii, he has raised millions of dollars of additional funding through private and Federal grants and through cooperative programs with a variety of State, Federal and private partners. Dave is responsible for the establishment of the Hamakua State Wildlife Sanctuary in Kailua and the acquisition of the Puu O Ehu hillside (above the Hamakua Sanctuary). He was instrumental in the creation of t Watershed Protection and Habitat Restoration projects, along with land acquisition, in both Manana and Moanalua Valleys. Dave also acquired grant money to create three new wildlife protection positions for wetlands, offshore islands and the Kure Atoll State Wildlife Sanctuary.

# • Charles Dunn Lifetime Achievement Award- For an individual who has made a major contribution to the Society and its goals over a long period of time:

**Ms.Betsy Gagne** is a wildlife biologist with the Hawaii Department of Forestry and Wildlife, and was recognized for her long-standing commitment to the protection of Hawaii's native plants and animals. As a student at the University of

Hawaii, Betsy Gagne was a member of the field group which discovered the Po'ouli in Hanawi on Maui in 1973. She has worked as a National Parks Resource Manager where she initiated extensive fencing projects to protect native habitat. Betsy has acted as interim commissioner for the Natural Area Reserve System and is now executive secretary for the NARS commission.

## • Volunteer Service Award- For an individual whose hard work has furthered the Society's mission to protect wildlife and habitats:

**Mr. D.B. Dunlap**'s career as an surf videographer brought him international recognition, but his role as a volunteer Hawaiian monk seal monitor and guardian angel has brought him fame and gratitude in the local conservation community. Beginning with a monk seal sighting at Sandy Beach in 2001, DB's passion and curiosity grew as he made a habit of observing seals around Oahu while connecting with NOAA researchers who were thrilled to have a dedicated man in the field! DB's keen observations on monk seal behavior, interactions and physical features have helped to identify individual monk seals and their distinctive habits. DB is an excellent advocate and educator on behalf of monk seals, graciously convincing beachgoers of the importance of giving monk seals the space and quiet they deserve.

# • Program Award- For an individual who has made a significant contribution to a program of the Hawaii Audubon Society:

**H. Douglas Pratt** is currently Research Curator of Birds at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, but his work as an illustrator, photographer and author has included detailed investigations on birds in Hawai'i. Dr. Pratt was instrumental in the production of the Society's original cassette tape of bird sounds, but in the past year he has been working with the Cornell University Ornithology lab to collect new, digitalized recordings of bird songs and calls to produce the Society's newly available CD, "Voices of Hawaii's Birds". Dr. Pratt's commitment and expertise were vital to the success of this project.

# • Environmental Journalism Award-For a journalist who covers issues that raise public awareness about the need to protect Hawaii's wildlife and ecosystems:

**Ms. Eloise Aguiar**, reporter for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, has done an excellent job of keeping the public informed about environmental topics statewide, and especially those on the windward side of Oahu. Her clear and accurate articles have kept the public informed about activities and issues at Kawainui Marsh and Hamakua Wetlands, where the community has a large degree of involvement and interest in native wildlife protection.

## Two New NARS Nominations Comments Due November 20

The purpose of the Natural Area Reserves System (NARS) is to protect native Hawaiian ecosystems and geologic sites for future generations, and has been used as an important conservation tool in Hawai'i for over three decades. Two areas have recently been nominated for inclusion in NARS: 'Ilio Point on Moloka'i and a parcel next to the existing Kahauale'a Natural Area Reserve on Hawai'i. Please submit written testimony in support of these additions. Written comments are due Friday, November 20, 2009. For More Information contact Deborah Ward, DLNR Public information specialist, (808) 587-0320.

# Submitting Written Testimony (Due Friday, November 20, 2009):

Mail to: DLNR Chairperson, Attn: Emma Yuen, P.O. Box 621, Honolulu, HI 96809 Or email to: dlnr@hawaii.gov

'Ilio Point: The nominated 261-acre 'Ilio Point Natural Area Reserve on west Moloka'i contains significant geological features, such as lithified sand dunes, sea cliffs, subfossil bird bones, and land snails. The coastal vegetation is particularly rich, with 23 native Hawaiian plant species, some of which are extremely rare and found only on Moloka'i. Much of Hawaii's coast and the native ecosystems it supports have been destroyed by land development. The sand dunes and cliffs at 'Ilio Point could support abundant seabird populations if threats to the birds are controlled. The endangered 'ilioholoikauaua (Hawaiian monk seal) also has been seen resting at 'Ilio Point. The area is culturally significant, supporting plants and animals that Hawaiians traditionally collect for practical, medicinal, decorative, and spiritual uses. Designating 'Ilio Point as a Natural Area Reserve will help prevent inappropriate development of this sensitive and special area.

Kahauale'a: The proposed 5,795-acre Kahauale'a extension includes one of the most active volcanic sites in the world, and lava flows of different ages cover the site. The Kahauale'a extension also includes high-quality native forest between the existing Kahauale'a NAR and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. The Kahauale'a extension includes recovery habitat for the endangered Hawai'i creeper and endangered 'akepa; a vital forest bird habitat corridor for the 'oma'o, 'apapane, 'elepaio, 'amakihi, 'i'iwi, and 'io; and critical habitat for 3 endangered Hawaiian plant species. The area is also likely to contain many of the known insects and other invertebrates found nearby. Of particular scientific interest and uniqueness are the Aeolian (wind-blown) lava fields, which are colonized by arthropods quickly after eruptions, and may be the primary habitat for a unique Hawaiian cricket and a native wolf spider. This area has been considered for geothermal exploration, which would disrupt and change the face of this undeveloped area if that were to occur, and put Kahauale'a and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park at risk to further invasion of invasive species and habitat fragmentation and loss.

## Green Community Fair Saturday, December 5

Bring the spirit of aloha back into the holidays at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Green Community Fair!

Saturday, December 5, 2009 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Church of the Crossroads, 1212 University Ave.

Support local non-profits and community organizations that are bringing positive change to our islands. Enjoy arts and crafts, food, music, presentations, booths, and Earth-conscious Christmas shopping! Learn about creating a sustainable home, growing a garden, green-giving, and more! Help to make this a waste-free event by bringing and using your own plate, cup and utensils. Bring new or lightly-used goods for donation to the free-cycle swap tent, and t-shirts for tie-dye and remake or donation. Wishing you peace, joy, and all things GREEN this holiday season!

## New Scientific Editor for 'Elepaio

Dr. David Leonard, wildlife biologist for the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, has graciously accepted the position of Scientific Editor for this publication. He is replacing Ron Walker, currently Second Vice President of the HAS Board of Directors, who has served as the 'Elepaio's Scientific Editor for many years. In that role he has screened incoming manuscripts to determine their relevance and suitability for publication, and coordinated the peer review process for each scientific article that appears here. Ron's wealth of experience and contacts in the realm of Hawai'i conservation issues have made him an invaluable resource to the 'Elepaio, and the Board of Directors is very grateful for his accomplishments as Scientific Editor. Ron Walker has also contributed many original articles and drawings to this journal and we look forward to more of the same. Thank you, Ron.

## **HAS Program Meeting**

Program Meetings are sponsored by HAS and the UH Biology Department, and are held at UH Manoa'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.

#### Monday, December 7, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Passerines and Parasites on the Populated Isle with Kira Krend

Kira Krend, PhD is a student with the UH Manoa Zoology Department. She will be speaking on her research on avian malaria on O'ahu. HAS will also provide an overview of the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, and offer CDs, books, shirts, and more for your Christmas shopping needs!



HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY 850 RICHARDS STREET, SUITE 505 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813–4709

www.hawaiiaudubon.com Phone/Fax: (808) 528-1432 hiaudsoc@pixi.com

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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