

THE ELEPAIO

Journal of the HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

For the Better Protection of Wildlife in Hawaii

Volume 7 Number 82

August 1946

VACATION BIRD NOTES

By Lorin Gill

From the very beginning, birds have played an important part in our trip - three black albatross followed our ship all the way from Honolulu to San Pedro. Their flight seemed effortless. Hardly ever flapping their wings, they would drift lazily back and forth over the ship's wake - skimming low over the water at one moment and soaring high on the wind the next.

After a pleasant, but uneventful trip, we pulled into the "smog" covered port of San Pedro - hardly a pretty harbor. Swarms of gulls and two ungainly pelicans greeted us as we neared our berth.

Friends of Father's met us and whisked us off through oil fields and mudflats to their home at Three Arch Bay - a lovely little cove resembling Hanauma and situated just south of Laguna. Their home is very aptly called "Cliff Swallows". Besides their name sakes, they have mocking birds, gulls, blackbirds, cormorants, pelicans, song sparrows, linnets, orioles and several types I could not identify. In the late afternoon, we drove down to the San Juan de Capistrano Mission. While there were no swallows at this time of the year, there were innumerable white pigeons. The moment they saw that you had any feed, they flocked to you, landed on your arms, your shoulders, and your head; they pecked at your scalp, and cooed in your ears - demanding food and attention. The mission, however, would still have been intensely interesting for its own sake. The buildings, though partially destroyed by an earthquake, are in fairly good condition and, from the chapel to the school and workshops, are still in everyday use. The chapel is simple, with Indian decorations and a magnificent, finely carved and handsomely gilded altar, which, like the mission's bells, was brought all the way from Old Spain.

We were fortunate to have fine clear weather without the slightest trace of fog during our entire sojourn (3 days) in San Francisco. San Francisco was awe-inspiring to me in many respects - the splendid and beautifully landscaped parks, the tall buildings, the stupendous bridges, the quaint little cable cars, and the size of the bay.

When we drove out to Muir Woods and Mill Valley on the 9th (of June) we heard several birds but were unable to make them out among the titanic redwoods. As we were driving through the Presidio on our way back, however, we saw three robins (I-don't-know-about-the-red-breasts) hopping about. One even had the proverbial worm in its bill!

We boarded the train at the Berkeley station after spending the night with "in-laws" at Piedmont. At present, we are an hour east of Reno, which we passed through at dusk. So far, we have had a very pleasant trip through the high Sierras - great stone mountains covered with dense woods of fir, birch, and assorted pines. The last vestiges of the winter snows still lie in crusty blanket-like patches on the hill-sides, catching the soot from the trains and feeding the crystal-clear stream that seems to have attached itself to our route.

About four o'clock, while still in the California Sierras, I saw two peculiar birds skimming over the brook. They were about the size and shape of the tropic bird (with orthodox tails, however) except they were black. Their bodies seemed to be set below their wings, like the hull of Martin Patrol bombers, and they had a red spot on the tops of their wings about three-fourths of the way to the tip. Odd!

My best to you...and the Society in general. (This article was in the form of a letter.)

FIELD NATURAL HISTORY DIARY - CORNELL UNIVERSITY

By J. d'Arcy Northwood

Continued from last issue.

March 29. Field Natural History trip with Miss Gordon, across Pole Field, along Dryden Road and up Judd Falls Road to the Fish Hatchery. A warm day, trees and shrubs fast coming into leaf. I remember rue anemone, a very delicate little flower; a tiger beetle colored a brilliant metallic green; the flash of a cardinal as he flew across our path; and the maroon tips on the anthers of the flowers of the American elm.

March 30. Agassiz Club trip to Ringwood with Dr. Hamilton. Amphibians were very active, we swept about 3 cubic feet of water in a pond and caught 20 newts. We seined a small stream and caught a brook snake in the stream, it could open its mouth until the jaws were in the same plane, 180 degrees angle. Later we went to Dryden Lake and saw scaup, black duck and mallards, also heard a snipe "bleating".

March 31. To Stewart Park, spikes of skunk cabbage leaves are a foot high in the wood, numbers of grackles and a few redwings were busy on the ground. Gulls, heron and ring-billed, were resting on a sandbar in the lake.

April 1. Watched some juncos feeding on the buds of larch. Two goldfinches in winter plumage tried to feed in the same tree but were chased away by the juncos.

April 2. Spoke to Dr. Love of the Plant Breeding Dept., who is in charge of the experimental garden in which the killdeer's nest is situated. He said the nesting area will be plowed soon, but that he will do all he can to save the eggs.

Ornithology classes yesterday and today visited the nest, at least they had a lesson in protective coloration, one or two of the students could not even see the sitting bird at fifteen feet, although it called plaintively.

April 3. The yellow blossoms of the forsythias are a beautiful sight in the gardens.

In itself the robin's song is disappointing to me, it has no great musical quality, "teedle-oo, teedle-ee" repeated four or five times, then a pause and some more of the same. Its fame must lie in its association with spring and as the voice of a handsome, friendly bird.

April 4. Nearly every day I watch the killdeer for half an hour as it sits, usually the other bird is not present. Today it left the eggs for a short time, as if to stretch its legs, and then returned. Then I heard the killdeer's call from the sky and saw the other bird come swerving down rapidly. I was not able to see any transfer.

April 5. In addition to starlings and house sparrows we now have a robin coming to our window sill feeding station. He is fond of raisins.

Field Natural History trip with Miss Gordon up Six Mile Creek. Saw my first trilliums, dutchman's breeches, bloodroot. Very wonderful to see such delicate beauty springing from the rough untidy old earth.

April 6. Up Six Mile Creek again to see the flowers we saw yesterday.

April 7. Again up Six Mile Creek. Watched a winter wren catching aquatic larvae along the banks of a little stream. Juncos were numerous, feeding on the ground, also saw several golden-crowned kinglets and field sparrows.

April 8. The killdeer's nest has survived the hazard of manure being spread over the field. A small oval area, about four feet long by two wide, has been left. The nest is in the center. Heavy fall of snow in the afternoon. It did not lie long.

April 9. We have a bog garden in a soup tureen on the window sill, just a handful of moss from the side of Six Mile Creek. The most prominent plant is a stonecrop (Sedum), with fleshy stalks about two inches high and groups of three fleshy round it at intervals. The tiny white flowers are at the tips of the stalks, in groups of three, with horseshoe shaped purple stamens.

April 10. The red-berried elder flowers are nearly out at the back of Fernow Hall.

April 11. I hope the recent frosts at night have not done too much damage. March was warm and plant life was well advanced, so far April has been cold.

April 12. Pond life trip to the Fish Hatchery with Dr. Palmer. Collected in the ponds and creek, it is remarkable how many of the forms are the same as those I collected and watched in England. Also saw how the fish are reared from the egg in the tanks indoors.

To Brooktondale in the evening for supper at Miss Gordon's and Miss VanDuzer's home. Perfect place, eight acres, two little ponds, a stream, a bog and woodland. Afterwards gave talk on watching birds to Boy Scouts and judged nest boxes.

April 13. Up Six Mile Creek, fire was running through the carpet of dead leaves on the south side, between Greentree and Vanatta Dams. Early spring flowers are a beautiful sight, bloodroot and hepatica being the most plentiful. Heard and saw a pileated woodpecker, its diggings in the dead trees are very evident.

April 14. Walk along Beebe Lake, through Forest Home to the Rifle Range. A beautiful day, warm and sunny. Students in swimming suits at Beebe, sunning, but not swimming. Caught a garter snake, found trailing arbutus and many other flowers and saw a nice lot of birds.

Visited the killdeer's nest near Fernow, for the first time since they started sitting neither was on the eggs. One bird was not far away. Heard a goldfinch sing.

April 15. Watched a song sparrow picking up scraps of grasses on the bank near Fernow. As soon as she had a nice beakful and must be at the point of taking it to the nest she was building, she dropped it. Then she scratched about and found some bits of food. When her appetite was satisfied she collected more grasses, only to drop them too.

The diary at this point was handed in for grading. It graded 100, and the comment "A perfect diary". Nothing has pleased me so much at Cornell. I would rather be a field naturalist than head of the American Museum.

April 16. The horse chestnut on the corner opposite our window is coming into leaf. The flowers are not far behind, we look forward to seeing those white spires.

April 17. Ornithology class to Stewart Park and Renwick. Three tree swallows and a barn swallow seen flying north, there were 100 herring gulls on a bar in the lake.

April 18. Business trip to Newark, N.J., managed to get a birding trip along the Passaic River, a poor, muddy ditch. Saw a killdeer's nest with four eggs and a black duck sitting close.

April 19. Good day birding in Troy Meadows with Judge Colic and Edward Chalif. List of forty birds, special items: a marsh hawk doing stunts in nuptial flight, four woodcock flushed, tufted titmice seen and heard, swamp sparrows singing, yellow palm warblers wagging their tails, ruby-crowned kinglets, a phoebe diving under a bridge where we found its nest, white-throated sparrows singing just as the book says - Poor Sam Peabody Peabody Peabody. It sounded much better than that, and he had a little yellow patch between the eye and the base of the bill. Louisiana water thrushes singing, a heavenly stream of cascading notes. Returned to Ithaca.

April 20. The arbutus patch at the head of Beebe Lake is still in flower. Dozens of people must have admired it - and left it for others to enjoy.

April 21. To Watkin's Glen, quite a spectacular effect of the water writhing through the narrow cleft in the gorge. Rue anemone plentiful, why do people tear up handfuls of flowers, only to throw them away soon afterwards? Why do they come to beauty spots, only to sit in their cars and listen to the radio? Why do I go to such places?

April 22. Song sparrows, white-throated sparrows and juncos singing at the back of Fernow. The juncos shake out a bunch of notes. The purple finches are very pleasing birds, though they are not purple. The color is really pink, richer on the head and neck, and the song is a pretty warble.

April 23. 5.30 a.m. trip with the ornithology class to Stewart Park. Saw five red-breasted mergansers flying and later watched them fishing. A loon was far out on the lake, diving at intervals. A Bonaparte's gull was preening itself on a sandbar. A northern water thrush was feeding along the edge of a little pond, in the wood we saw myrtle warblers and a robin flew up to its half-built nest in a stump.

The Killdeers' eggs have hatched, in the morning there were three dark gray downy young crouched in the nest, with one egg. The bird slipped off and ran a little way, did the "broken wing" act with vocal accompaniment and then returned and brooded the young. On another visit a couple of hours later the egg had hatched and the chick was lying on its side, the egg shell was still in the nest. The other three chicks crouched flat. The old bird was 50 yards away, very different behavior between the two birds, evidently they had relieved each other between our visits. Incubation period was 26 days.

April 24. The killdeers' nest was plowed under today. I hope the young are safe. No sign of them or the old birds when I went there midday.

Walk along the south side of Six Mile Creek. Several ruby crowns seen, and watched a Louisiana water thrush singing. Returned along the valley floor, now white with a carpet of flowers, it is hard to avoid treading on them.

Lawn mowing starts on the campus, how smells bring back memories. I am not far from tears these beautiful days.

A robin is building in a fork of the horse chestnut across the road, soon we shall not be able to see the houses on the opposite side of the valley, now we see them through a green haze of young leaves.

THE HAWAIIAN BIRD SURVEY OF 1935-37

By George C. Munro

Continued from last issue.

STRAGGLERS: I visited a pond near Kailua where I had collected specimens of the spoonbill duck (Spatula clypeata), pintail duck (Anas acuta), and a straggler (one of a pair) of the white fronted goose (Anser albifrons gambeli) in 1891. Large flocks of ducks were there at that time and also at Kekaha on Kauai and later on Molokai. These flocks are now fearfully reduced. I was informed that only about 20 came to Kailua last year and I saw but 16 on the Kanaha Pond at Kahului. Mr. Ward Walker informs me that two flocks came there this year in September, much earlier than usual. Mr. Childs writes from Wailuku that there are on the Kanaha Pond three white-faced ibis (Pelegadis guaruana); also two geese have been there for several weeks. Mr. James G. Munro gives information that eleven geese frequented the shores of Molokai some weeks ago. Those on Maui may be of the same lot, as the flock is now reduced in number. One reported by Mrs. Shiras Baldwin of Hilo is, I think, different and probably is the white-faced species. Mrs. Baldwin also saw what she took to be a Pacific godwit on the shore there last year. I saw on the coast by Kohala in February a Point Barrow gull. The Bishop Museum is always glad to get notes of this kind so that they can be put on record. Some of these stragglers might become regular visitors is encouraged. There are a number of records of the ibis coming here. Mr. John Fleming saw six on the Kaelepulu Pond on Oahu a few years ago. On James G. Munro's small pond at Kanalu, Molokai, a goose stayed for 18 months. Mudhens and herons also frequent this pond. The smallest pond becomes a bird sanctuary and the birds are very tame if not disturbed. The Kanaha pond at Kahului, Maui, and the pond at Kahuku, Oahu are examples of the larger ponds where the birds are becoming tame. The migratory waders also resort

to the ponds and if these birds can be protected as they ought to be the pond life would become very spectacular and a pleasure to the owners. The stilt was at one time very common on Oahu and other islands, but there is fear now that will be gone entirely in a few years (unless on Miihau) if something is not done to save it. Grasses are coming in on the ponds, bringing shelter for predaceous animals closer to its nesting places out on the dry mud. It can fight off enemies on the open mud, but will be helpless in grass. It still frequents Kaelepulu pond at Kailua, where I counted over 75 on July 31. Dr. Fricks has informed me that they are sometimes to be seen near Sand Island. They probably go between the two and perhaps other suitable places, though inquiries as to this have given no results. John Fleming thinks it migrates and possibly it does from Oahu to Miihau.

IMPORTED BIRDS: The recently imported birds that have taken a good hold and are increasing rapidly are: The peaceful dove (Geopelia tranquilla), Chinese thrush (Trochaloxyta canorum), Kentucky cardinal (Richmondia cardinalis), Brazilian cardinal (Paroaria cucullata), Japanese white eye (Zosterops palpebrosus japonicus), Pekin nightingale (Leiothrix lutea), The yamagata (Parus varius varius), has taken a good hold on Kauai. A number of others, the bleeding heart dove, western meadow lark, Japanese bush warbler, shama thrush, military starling and others seem to be doing fairly well but are not well established yet.

The Australian willie wagtail does not seem to be increasing. I saw one near Koko Head Crater.

The first five will enliven the lowland forests. The cardinals and small dove of the well established species so far have kept out of the main forests. It would have been ideal if we could have retained the native birds in their former numbers and imported birds that would stay out of the mountain forests, as the Chinese dove, mynah, ricebird and linnet have done. The thrush, white-eye, Pekin nightingale and Yamagata penetrate to the depths of the forest and will probably be of service there. Their effect on the native birds is a subject for an ornithologist to study.

BIRDBANDING: As the Hawaiian Bird Survey was drawing to a close and the work confined to the small coastal islands, I offered the Biological Survey to co-operate and band some of the birds. The survey responded heartily and sent me 700 aluminum leg bands for shearwaters and boobies. Sixty of those for boobies I gave to Mr. R. B. Black of the Department of Interior, who is in charge of developments on Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands. He suggests that co-operative banders form a circuit of all the surrounding islands with the Bishop Museum as a center. If the Biological Survey takes this up it will give us a wonderful study of the movements of the birds of our seas. Information of banded birds returning after three months is forwarded to the Biological Survey. Notices received by the Biological Survey of banded birds from distant parts are forwarded to the co-operative bander who placed the band. Banding so many birds from year to year will give a tremendous insight into their lives and habits. This year the survey was much helped by this work.

On the twin islands of Moku Manu in the breeding season is a real bird colony. In numbers the birds rival anything I have seen on the islands to the northwest, the south or the coast of New Zealand. Hundreds of the red-footed booby (Sula sula nebulosa) were sitting on their built-up nests which were scattered over most of the western island. On May 29 and June 18 they were on eggs and with young birds. Many of the young were full fledged on August 20th, and there were but a few young on the nests on November 19th. The brown booby (Sula leucaster platus) were fewer in number and their young were further advanced. Two hundred of the first and one hundred of the latter will be banded next year. There were hundreds of frigate

birds, iwa (Fregata minor palmerstoni), sitting on the brink or faces of the cliffs. None could be caught and their nests were not seen. They can be easily taken on their roosts on dark nights with a flashlight and next year one hundred will be banded by night. Few young birds, which are marked by white heads, were to be seen. Their nests were probably on the ledges of the cliff faces.

Bulwer's petrel (Bulweria bulweri), nests on several of the islands. It is a gentle little bird nesting on the bare ground under shrubbery and rocks. They had eggs on June 24 and the young were nearly full fledged on September 5. I hope to band one hundred next year. Rats were killing them on Popoia. There were a number of picked skeletons and I saw but one live bird on its egg. On Mokulua they seemed to be undisturbed.

One specimen of the Christmas Island shearwater (Puffinus nativitatus) was taken on Moku Manu. This species nests much earlier than the wedge-tailed shearwater and earlier visits next year may reveal its nesting place if it really nests here. It has not been recorded near Oahu before. We saw it at the French Frigate Shoals in 1891. We may also find one or two species of the small petrels (Oceanodroma) of which young birds have been picked up dead on the beaches from time to time. One found on Lanai and one on Kauai are in the Bishop Museum. I think Mr. Francis Gay told me they nested in the cliffs, but I have no other information as to their breeding habits.

To be continued.

JUNE BIRDING: On June 16th fourteen of us set forth from our meeting place at the Library of Hawaii for Waimanulo. Here Alona, an expert Hawaiian boatman, and his two assistants transferred us and our luggage (three skiff loads in all) to the larger boat which then headed for Manana, or Rabbit, Island, about a mile distant. We anchored just off the island, and, despite huge rollers, the little skiff was successfully beached three times and all of us, surrounded by our blankets, water, food, etc., could look forward to the thrill of a night on the island.

We first built a fire and then put on a large pan of water for coffee, after which we all hiked up to the crater. Enroute we found many shearwaters in their burrows. A tiny mouse ran over the back of one bird, causing her to move and enabling us to see the one white egg, about the size of a large hen's egg. We peered into many burrows, and the birds seemed quite unconcerned.

Reaching the ledge of the crater, we saw literally thousands of noddy terns, beautiful, graceful creatures, a very dark brown, almost black, with the tops of the heads grey. We had to be very careful not to step on their eggs which were right out on the bare rock. These were smaller than the shearwaters' eggs, about the size of a pullet egg, dark grey with large brown spots on them. We also had to be careful not to step on the babies which we saw in all stages from one very newly hatched to almost pure white little fellows, then a little larger black fluffy fellow on to those almost ready to fly. Here, as with the shearwaters, we noticed that these noddies were not much frightened at our nearness. One mother, deciding that her egg was getting cold, came and covered it, and remained on it not more than four feet from us.

We finally made the descent to the beach again, put on the coffee and enjoyed a picnic supper right beside the waves. After talking awhile around the fire and enjoying the soft breezes from the sea, we each chose our sleeping spot and put down our blankets. Then, by moonlight and flashlight, we retraced our steps up to the crater's ledge, but this time went on down inside the crater to listen to the

shearwaters moan. On the way up the path we noted that the shearwaters which had been inside the burrows on the first trip up were now outside in the path. They moved out of our way without too much concern. Sitting down inside the crater we heard the shearwaters moan. They sound very much like cats at night. Two of them were moaning and courting not more than three or four feet from us. They pecked fondly at one another while we trained the flashlights on them. All of the time that we sat in the crater, we saw birds flying. In fact, one almost flew into one of the members of our party.

When we returned to the beach again most of us sat enjoying the beauty of the moon on the white waves, and talking for an hour or so before seeking our hard sandy beds. A few of our party stayed up all night, swimming and talking, and they awakened the rest of us at dawn in order that we should not miss seeing the birds begin their morning flight. Just before breakfast we saw a number of boobies at a distance flying toward the open sea. We also saw two mynahs on the sand nearby and could not help but wonder what impulse had led them to cross the water to this barren island.

After breakfasting, a number of us climbed up to the rim of the crater again, but this time most of us went on up to the top where a magnificent view greeted us. On the way back we passed the same baby birds in their same spots again, and as we went further on we saw many others. At the top, one of our party took pictures of two of us holding two tiny babies, one a fluffy white and the other a little older, a fluffy little black fellow.

Some of us then went on exploring the crater, while others descended to the beach, swimming, gathering shell specimens, or just enjoying the surf and sun. Some of those who explored further reported seeing rabbits. In fact they saw what seemed to be a kind of community burrow shared by rabbits and shearwaters.

When Alona and his two assistants came for us about ten a.m., we found that between the sandy beach where we had landed and the water was quite an expanse of rock. This meant that we had to load our little skiff from one of the rocks which jutted out into the sea. The waves were high, and if the boatmen had not been very skilled, the tiny skiff would have been dashed to pieces a number of times on the rocks, but we were finally all safely aboard the larger boat, bound for Waimanulo where we landed despite many evil looking rocks jutting out of the shallow waters. Thus ended what to most of us was the most exciting and thrilling birding expedition yet undertaken by the Hawaii Audubon Society. - Mary C. Evans.

AUGUST ACTIVITIES.

Bird Walk: August 11th, to Poamoho. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 A. M.
Meeting, August 19th, in the auditorium of the Library of Hawaii at 7:30 P.M.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Dues \$1.00 a year.