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EXCERPTS FROM LETTER OF DR. R. C. L. PERKINS¹
Dated January 1, 1946, and received January 10, 1946

"In the former you quote from Greenaway. Like yourself I no longer enter into any controversies and of course anyone can do as he pleases in the matter of species and subspecies. What is a 'species', 'subspecies' or 'race' is merely a matter of opinion. I consider the vast majority of the species as described in Wilson's and Rothschild's books perfectly good species as also did Henshaw. In his descriptions or classification of animals Linnaeus' genera so far from corresponding to our species frequently represent creatures belonging to totally different families, superfamilies or even different Orders! Why the different species of Paroreomyza and other genera should be sunk as subspecies and those of Acrulocercus retained as species I cannot imagine! The genera of Hawaiian Drepanids seem to me singularly well defined with very constant characters (except that as I said some of the thick-billed finchlike forms might be sunk) and when the species are placed in their proper genera this at once indicates that they are of common descent and their relationship is evident without any need of trinomials! It is quite wrong to say that in the nineties we were not interested much in similarities. The whole fauna shows this by the difficulties one has to find any tangible differences of structure to separate species which have totally different habits, even though they inhabit the same area. As you know I am absolutely opposed to the view which some have held that the many species in the big genera of Hawaiian creatures or even the closely allied genera themselves are the descendants of numerous ancestors. It only requires sufficient time for the whole Hawaiian fauna to have produced from a very few natural immigrants. When one looks at the remoteness of the islands and what minute areas they are in the vast ocean one can imagine that there is a very poor chance for any bird, insect or mollusc to reach the islands, always excluding those birds and insects which are known to migrate in great numbers together as a habit, e.g. the larger dragon flies, some butterflies, hawk moths and others, as well as ducks, plover, etc., for which no distance is too great. As to the two series of Drepanid genera I naturally was not able to properly examine the primaries of Ciridops and the Mamo as the only material I saw was mounted and could not be handled - one of each bird only! - but the example of the Molokai Mamo of which I spread the wing must have had some of the primaries truncated and I assumed the Hawaii bird would be similar.

If you take the full-fledged males of Drepanis (2 spp) Palmeria, Vestiaria, Himatione, and Ciridops and then by their side place those of all the other species of the family I should think the utterly different character of their plumage would appeal to anyone. It looks as if the Hawaii mamo got the yellow plumage through some ancestor which retained in part a yellow color as in the young iiwi. Black

¹ These comments of Dr. Perkins, authority on Hawaiian natural history, and author of Fauna Hawaiiensis, are contained in a letter written to George C. Munro, after examination of Contributions to the Ornithology of the Hawaiian Islands, by E. H. Bryan, Jr. and J. C. Greenaway, Jr. (See also The Elepaio, vol. 6, No. 5, p. 32.) Dr. Perkins, who is now retired, lives in Devon, England.

and white color is retained in all birds of this branch of Drepanids. Green and olivaceous coloring is dominant in most adults of the other branch and when these are altogether red (or nearly so) as in male Loxops the females and young are largely green and olivaceous. But I have gone into this matter at some length in 'Ibis' 1901, p. 564 and 5 and in Fauna Hawaiiensis 'Aves' 1903 and could have said a good deal more. I have all Wilson's plates detached from the text and if these are laid out, the Melanodrepanine section side by side and all the Chlorodrepanine species adjoining these the utter difference between the two sections is obvious. Any few slight discrepancies from the normal are easily explained.

Your figure plate 15, Fig. 3 female hopue¹ does not look right to me -? is this *R. flaviceps*. - I cannot remember any female like this, the color looks too bright and extends too far back on the head. The young, as also, if I remember rightly. the Palila young is a green or olivaceous bird. It is 45 years since I have seen any large collection of Hawaiian birds! The failure of Wilson to figure young specimens of all the Hawaiian birds was a great mistake. I sent back to England young of nearly all species. One might expect some alteration in colour in Laysan birds, for think how different the conditions there from the fine forests of Hawaii. I have seen only a few Telespiza from Laysan (caged birds in Honolulu) and I think none of the Himatone nor of the 'miller bird'. "

¹ Reference is made here to Birds of Hawaii, by George C. Munro.

Footnote to original letter: "When I hazarded any theories about the birds I always carefully considered the phenomena exhibited by the insects and mollusca. I gave a good deal of attention to the latter but never published as there were others who made a specialty of these."

THE HAWAIIAN BIRD SURVEY OF 1935 - 37

By George C. Munro

Continued from last issue

The wedge-tailed shearwater, uau-kane (Puffinus pacificus cuneatus) breeds on all the islands except Mokulea where it cannot burrow. A very rough guess would place their number at about 10,000. 492 were banded; 1300 will be banded next year. So far as studied they arrive on the islands in April, pair and get ready their nesting burrows. These are sometimes several feet long under the surface of the ground. The pairs sit at the entrance of the burrow and look very innocent, but if taken hold of they bite and scratch viciously. On June 17 of this year they seem to have laid their one egg. My journal on Laysan Island in 1891 records that they laid there bet ween the 16th and 18th of June. It would appear that the male sits on the egg till it hatches at the end of July. I found young hatching out on Mokuhooniki off the coast of Molokai on August 3 last year and this year on Popoia they were coming out on July 29 and 31st. The male probably guards the young for a while and then disappears. The females come in at night and feed the young which have retired into the burrows. I took a pair on Popoia when sitting, and on September 11 at night we banded 169 more, but found only two of those banded before working over the same ground. The difference is so small that I omitted trying to note the sexes in my report of the banding. Next year this work will be done early when the sexes are together and careful records will be kept. On September 5 at night 86 were banded on Mokulua. It was astonishing to note the number of birds that left the island at daylight. Manana or Rabbit Island has the greatest number. On the night of September 14 we banded 160 and could easily have done 300 on a darker night. When the young are fed the old birds gather on the surface of the ground and sing. Their notes are the most weird that could be imagined. They start with a dismal moaning,

work into groans, snarls and snores and end us with a loud wail. To stand on the rim of the crater of Rabbit Island at about 3 AM in September and listen to this medley of mournful cries coming up from all over the crater is quite an experience.

The sooty tern (*Sterna fuscata cahuensis*) were in great numbers on the long flat narrow top of the western island of Moku Manu on May 29. Their young were in all stages and some old birds were still sitting on their one egg. The young covered the ground and the old birds filled the air. On November 19th not one bird of this species was to be seen on the island. I expect them to return next year about May.

The noddy (*Anous stolidus piliatus*) nests on the rim of the crater of Rabbit Island in numbers, on the top of Mokulea and on both islands of Moku Manu. They had all gone from Mokulea on November 19th and were evidently about to leave Moku Manu. 500 of each of these two terns will be banded next year.

The Hawaiian tern (noio (*Anous minutus melanogenys*)) bred in numbers on the steep face of Mokulea. They had eggs at the same time as the noddy which occupied the top of the island. On November 19th all the young of this species were on the wing and no noddies were to be seen except a few dead chicks at the nesting place. There was a solitary chick in the down, of the noio. This species stays the year round along our coasts. There were numbers on the face of the cliff on Mokapu Point and some on Moku Manu on the cliffs and in a large cave.

It is rather remarkable that the native duck, koloa (*Anas wyvilliana*) nests on the grass-covered sides of the two islands of Mokulea. Several nests were seen and as many as six birds were at a time flying round when disturbed. The eggs are generally eight in number. The young have been seen landing on the beach at Kailua, evidently making for the Kaelepulu pond or the Kawainui swamp.

With reasonable care these birds are fairly safe. Natural mortality is exceedingly light on most of the islands, especially on Moku Manu. Most of the species feed at sea away from oil-contaminated waters and human disturbance. The increase of human habitation and camping in the shore-side parks constituted a menace, but by keeping warning notices on the islands and a guard at certain seasons this will be minimized. A patrol in April when the birds first arrive, and for a few days in the middle of June whilst the eggs are fresh, and in September when the chicks are of a size to be used for food should be fairly effective. Thoughtless boys killed some this year and the young are still taken for food, but steps are being taken to stop this. Gradually a respect for the safety of the birds will grow in the minds of the people. With protection will come increase in numbers and they will be quite spectacular, as indeed they are now during the breeding season.

STORY OF THE HAWAIIAN BIRD SURVEY OF 1935 - 37

Being the only person in the Territory able to compare at first hand the condition of the Hawaiian forest birds with their condition in the nineties, and having been interested in them since that time, I felt it incumbent on me to put my former experience on record to be compared with that of today.

To do this effectively I felt it necessary to study their present condition on the different islands. I realized the futility of attempting to put through an investigation of this kind alone. So I invited some local institutions to join me in a survey. Had none seen their way clear to do so I should simply have had to go on alone and taken more time to accomplish it. The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association and Board of Agriculture and Forestry responded and made it possible to put it through in shorter time and more completely than

otherwise could have been done. The Hui Manu made a contribution towards the expenses without invitation.

So we may say that the survey was accomplished by a combination which had interests in the birds in various ways. I might describe these as follows: the Bishop Museum was interested from a scientific viewpoint; the Sugar Planters' Association and Board of Agriculture and Forestry from the bearing on industry; the Hui Manu aesthetically; for myself I think sentiment for the birds and the things of old Hawaii carried the greatest weight. Of course all were interested to some extent on all points, -- scientifically, commercially, aesthetically and sentimentally.

Many persons helped in many ways in this survey. It could hardly have been carried through without such help, and for this I now tender its and my own heartfelt thanks. I owe thanks to the Board of Agriculture and Forestry for permits to work in the forests and on the offshore islands, and to the owners of properties and ponds for permission to examine them. My thanks are also due to the institutions that were associated with me in this work and without whose co-operation it could not have been finished now. I hope that the results justified their co-operation.

FINANCIAL: The expenses of the survey were met by a contribution from the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum of \$300.00, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association and myself of \$150.00 each, the Board of Agriculture and Forestry of \$100.00 and the Hui Manu of \$25.00. I also gave a great deal of time to the work, paid my own land transportation on Oahu and the wages of a necessary attendant in the Oahu forests and on the offshore islands. There is a balance on hand of \$50.02 which will be used in further investigation whilst bird-banding on the islands next year. For awhile I feared the funds would run short and so economized. But towards the end of the year a number of boat trips that I wanted to make had to be cut out from stress of weather and other interferences. Some other investigations had to be abandoned for lack of time. However, the larger balance will be useful for next year's banding work combined with further investigation and care-taking of the birds on the offshore islands. Mr. Solomon Mahoe, the boatman who takes me out on the water, has a police commission from the Board of Agriculture and Forestry (without pay) to care for the birds and he takes a keen interest in this. So what modest remuneration he gets for co-operation in my transportation is in the interests of the birds. Only a skilful boatman can effect the hazardous landings on some of those rock-bound, surf-washed shores in anything but the calmest weather, and his craft is really sometimes endangered. His ardor for fishing makes him a good ally in bird study and bird protection. I plan to make at least 28 landings on these islands next year.

I hope to write the story of the Hawaiian birds mentioned, next year. This will be turned over to the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum to be in some way put on record.

To be concluded.

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BIRD NOTES. John Webb reports seeing a curlew on the beach at Punuluu in the early morning of July 5th.

On July 19th, a trip was made to Kahuku pond to look for a flock of unidentified ducks which had been reported there a few days earlier. Unfortunately, no ducks were to be seen. A flock of perhaps fifty coot were on the pond, five stilt and two wondering tattlers were also observed in and about the pond. On another trip to the same locality August 12th, a small flock of 15 turnstones was found feeding along the edge of the pool.

JULY BIRDWALK. On Sunday, July 14th, twenty-one members of the Society and their guests took the short, easy trail up Waimea Valley to the Falls. Ornithologically it was a disappointing day. Few birds frequent the Waimea canyon area, and the group probably saw or heard all the different species that inhabit the region. Along the trail mejiros, Kentucky cardinals, barred doves, rice birds and the little appreciated English sparrow were observed. Those persons who climbed to the top of the Falls were rewarded with a glimpse of a pair of linnets. Lunch was eaten by the side of the pool, while watching some youngsters - and some not so young play in the pool, and dive from the rocks above into the water. Besides being an area which has little flora of interest to birds, one cannot doubt the wisdom of our feathered friends to remain away from such a place - a place so littered with the impedimenta thoughtless, careless humans leave behind, e.g., tossed aside beer cans, broken bottles, and discarded picnic paper plates. Waimea is a beautiful valley, rich in Hawaiian legend and Hawaiian history, and so it seems a sacrilege to allow it to become so needlessly cluttered. - Priscilla Griffey.

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The Report of the Director of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, 1945, by Dr. Peter H. Buck, is now in print. It contains much interesting information on the activities of the Museum during the past year. Bird students will note particularly the report on ornithology by George C. Munro.

Reprinted from The Condor, Vol. 27, 1945, No. 3, p. 128. BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS-ES EATING FLYING FISH.- The Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*) is the bird most frequently and constantly observed from ships plying between San Francisco and Honolulu. For the greater part of the voyage it is the only bird following the ship. Although different individuals of this species were watched many hours, it was not until we were about 600 miles east of Honolulu that I saw them take any other food than kitchen scraps.

In warm waters the malolo or flying fish frequently leave the water or skitter along on the surface in schools often containing as many as fifty individuals. On two different occasions an albatross was seen to catch a small flying fish as the fish moved past the bird resting on the water. The fish in each instance was swallowed immediately. It is probable that such fish living near and on the surface constitute a significant part of the diet of pelagic birds in the warm waters of the world. - Harvey I. Fisher, Department of Zoology and Entomology, University of Hawaii, January 30, 1945.

EXCHANGES: We are happy to report that we are now receiving as exchanges the Wilson Bulletin and The Condor, in addition to the Western Tanager and The Wren, which we have been receiving for some time past.

SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES:

Bird Walk, September 8, to Pa Lehua. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 A.M. This is an easy trail, short but interesting. The secondary road leading to it is reported in good condition.

Meeting, September 16th, 7:30 P.M., at the Library of Hawaii. Mr. Thomas L. McGuire, Forester with the Board of Agriculture and Forestry, will talk on the trails of Oahu.

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

President, Mr. Gordon Pearsall, 322 Green Street; Vice-Presidents, Miss Grenville Hatch, 1548 Wilhelmina Rise, Mr. Francis Evans, 132 A. Royal Circle; Sec- Treasurer, Mrs. Blanche Anderson Pedley, 3770 Sierra Drive, Honolulu 17; Editor, The Elepaio, Miss Charlotta Hoskins, 3212 Loulu St., Honolulu 54, Hawaii.

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