

First Nesting Behavior of Released ‘Alalā, Almost Two Years Post-Release

This article is a composite of news releases by the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) published on 5/8/19 and on 9/23/19 on <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/alalaproject/2019/>.

Two ‘Alalā in the Pu‘u Maka‘ala Natural Area Reserve (NAR) have reached a new milestone, one not seen in the forests of Hawai‘i for almost 20 years. They have built a nest. In early April, team members observed two birds, Mana‘olana and Manaiakalani, beginning to build a nest platform structure near their 2017 release site. Recently the female, Manaiakalani, has begun what appears to be sitting behavior on this nest structure.

As exciting as this development is, biologists, caution there are a lot of factors involved that may impact the success of this first nest. First-time parents are not usually successful, and it is not uncommon that birds in the wild will make several attempts before they can successfully fledge their chicks.

The ‘Alalā, a native Hawaiian crow that went extinct in the wild nearly a quarter of a century ago, have been hatched and reared at the Keauhou and Maui Bird Conservation Centers as part of a partnership between the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife, San Diego Zoo Global, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Over the past two years, twenty one birds have been released into protected forest areas on the island of Hawai‘i.

“While it’s difficult to see exactly what’s in the nest from observations on the ground we do believe that Manaiakalani is likely sitting on eggs and we’ve observed her male partner, Mana‘olana, bringing her food regularly,” said Dr. Alison Greggor, Postdoctoral Research Associate, with the Institute for Conservation Research, San Diego Zoo Global. ‘Alalā typically lay between three and five eggs and will incubate them for

an average of twenty one days. If these eggs hatch, the chicks would be the first ‘Alalā hatched in the wild in two decades.

Another formed pair, Kia’ikūmukuhālī’i and Ola, have been seen placing sticks in the nook of an ‘Ōhi‘a tree.



Nesting ‘Alalā, photo credit: San Diego Zoo Global.

Although, the structure of it and the amount of sticks was not enough to call it a nesting platform yet, Dr. Greggor notes that it’s very encouraging to see the beginnings of nesting behavior by at least two pairs of ‘Alalā.

This breeding attempt is the first made by these two birds. Since there are no adult ‘Alalā in the wild to learn from, the reintroduced birds have had to learn how to build nests, breed, and incubate, also guided by instincts.

Jackie Gaudioso-Levita, the ‘Alalā Project coordinator and a wildlife biologist with DLNR/DOFAW, commented “While these are exciting and encouraging steps in the reintroduction process of ‘Alalā, the journey is far from fledge; the pair encounters over. There are many stages in the process, before the young natural and introduced threats, as well as environmental challenges. The team tries to help nesting birds as much as possible without causing

disturbance.” Currently, team members are monitoring the nest discretely, from a far distance, and documenting observations of the behaviors of Mana‘olana and Manaiakalani.

“Hawaiian forests are family; there is a shared ancestry among the people, plants, animals, and landscapes. By returning the ‘Alalā to the wild, we are welcoming home a family member that has been away for a long time” said Rachel Kingsley, Education and Outreach Associate for The ‘Alalā Project. She continued, “The fact that these birds have been able to build a nest on their own shows that these birds are comfortable in the forest they live. Our family is growing.”

The outcome of this nest will help to guide future reintroduction efforts for the ‘Alalā. Another release of birds took place in September, see the following update. “Regardless of the success of this particular nest, the fact that there is a nest at all is an encouraging and inspiring milestone in the long term success of this project,” said Michelle D. Bogardus, Maui Nui & Hawai‘i Island Team Manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Additional ‘Alalā Released into Reserve

Update on the Released Pairs

This September, seven additional ‘Alalā were released into the Reserve on the windward slopes of Mauna Loa. The project team released five young males and two young females.

One of the male birds, Kalokomaika‘i, was first released in 2017 but had to be recaptured, and rehabilitated following an injury in the wild. The birds will join several groups of ‘Alalā already living in the forest. Since 2017, recovery efforts have led to about twenty birds surviving and thriving in the forests of Pu‘u Maka‘ala NAR.

The newly released birds were given Hawaiian names by students from local schools on Hawai‘i Island – Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u, Mountain View Elementary School, Kamehameha Schools Hawai‘i Campus, E.B. DeSilva Elementary School, Connections Public Charter School, and Kamehameha Schools. Their names are Keolamaulua, Eola, Kamanuolamau, Kalā‘au, ‘Alohi, and Kana‘i. “The naming contest is an exciting way for keiki to connect to these birds and be a part of conservation efforts happening within their island home,” explained Rachel Kingsley, Education and

Outreach Associate for The ‘Alalā Project.

During the reintroduction process, The ‘Alalā Project monitors the birds’ behaviors and movements regularly. Observers documented several major milestones this summer, when birds that were released in 2017 began to show breeding and courtship behaviors like feeding and preening one another, making territorial vocalizations, and nest building. Three pairs of birds developed pair bonds this breeding season: two of these pairs were seen nest-building, and one of the females, Manaiakalani, sat on her nest for several weeks. During that time, the male, Mana‘olana, was seen providing her with food on the nest.

After there was no hatching observed, the birds remained in the nest tree area and continued defending their territory around it. “‘Alalā form complex bonds as breeding pairs and must work together to build their nests. Having released ‘Alalā engage in the full suite of breeding and nest building behaviors in their first season as adults represents a huge step forward for the program and their recovery as a species,” commented Dr. Alison Greggor.



‘Alalā, photo credit: San Diego Zoo Global.

Each milestone brings additional lessons learned. As the birds mature and grow their territories, project members must adjust and adapt their techniques to changing conditions. Since 2017, two birds have been confirmed deceased, one from ‘Io (Hawaiian Hawk) depredation, the other showed signs of an undetermined predatory attack and scavenging. “While the potential for loss in reintroductions is a reality, reasons for loss may be part of the current ecological system or are unknown, so an adaptive approach is crucial to refining and improving the reintroduction strategy” commented The ‘Alalā Project Project Coordinator Jackie Gaudioso-Levita.

“Recovering threatened and endangered species is bigger

than any one community or agency. It takes everyone working together. Together we can ensure a healthy future for not only these birds, but the forest ecosystem as a whole,” said Michelle Bogardus, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Geographic Team Leader for Maui Nui and Hawaii Island.

The birds will continue to be monitored and tracked to observe their foraging, social interactions, spatial range, and breeding attempts as well as the success of the program, overall. Meanwhile, the project is planning for the future. “It’s a privilege to be part of the effort helping ‘Alalā return to the forest once again, which is beginning to reveal what an intact forest ecosystem was once like here in Hawai‘i,” said Martha Kawasaki, Senior Research Coordinator, Hawai‘i Endangered Bird Conservation Program, San Diego Zoo Global.

The recovery of ‘Alalā in the wild will take many years and the partners of the project are working diligently to continue to bring ‘Alalā home.

-END-

Following in the footsteps of first HAS president J. d'Arcy Northwood and his group of bird enthusiasts, HAS will offer a Kahuku Nature Walk on November 11; find details on the upcoming field trip on pg 47 of this ‘Elepaio.

Read about their adventures in the following article from 1940, which was first published in ‘Elepaio 1:3.

Bird-walk at Kahuku, January 14th

By J. d'Arcy Northwood

Seventeen of us arrive at Kahuku, including four prospective new members. At the lake nearby the first bird we saw was a stranger. At first we thought it was a tropic bird, then a sooty tern, but the experts decided that it was a visiting tern probably the Arctic. Since such fine points as the color of the bill could not be decided definite identification was not settled, but as the Arctic tern nests inside the Arctic Circle and migrates to Argentina and Patagonia, a distance of 11,000 miles a little side trip to Hawaii is nothing unusual.

Luckily for bird observers the railroad track crosses the lake, from there we watch coots lovemaking, a noisy business with quaint attitudes of raised wings and chasing each

other over the water. Both coots and gallinules were also leading broods of chicks about the marshy edges. Out in the middle of the lake was a flock of 17 pintail upending as they fed. They are winter visitors from the coast. Some of us splashed about looking for nests. Empty ones of coot and gallinule were found and two dropped eggs, both of which had been pierced. There were gathered as specimens, this is the only kind of egg collecting the Audubon Society countenances by its members.

After the lake we went on in cars. Plover skimmed away on pointed wings as we followed the track across the pasture lands and at each marshy spot were parties of turnstones and sanderlings. At the small pool where two northern phalaropes were seen three weeks ago a good watch was kept and as we approached a white spot was seen on the water.

One of them was still there. Soon observers were posted around the pool, in their interest respectable females even crawled on their stomachs to get a closer view. All agreed that the phalarope is one of the most dainty birds, gray and white floating high in the water like a tiny gull. Plover, turnstone sanderling and tattler had left the pool at our approach but this bird stayed. At first it was a little nervous but was soon preening itself or snapping at flies with its bodkin of a bill.

Our previous appetiser of Kamani nuts at the lake, to which we were introduced by a kamaina who cracked them between two lumps of coral, had made us ready for lunch, which we ate lying on the soft turf with the skylarks singing above us. By the bye, the kamani nuts are good, tasting rather like hazel nuts.

Mr. Charles M. Dunn had thoughtfully brought his bird book and after knotty points of identification had been settled the party broke up, after a most successful day. A week later I paid another visit. The tern was still there, flying over the lake at a height of about twenty feet with down-pointed bill.

At intervals it swooped, picking a small fish from the surface of the water in its beak.

Out in the middle of the lake was a flock of 15 baldpates or wigeon, up-ending as they fed. The white crowns of the drakes were

noticeable. As I crept round a bed of reeds I was lucky to surprise a party of 14 green-winged teal resting in the weeds and I had a fine view of them before they flew.

Both these ducks, the baldpates and teal, are rare migrants from the coast. As more observers take the field it will probably be found that these and other migrants are not so rare as they have been thought to be.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

2020 Freeman Seabird Preserve Fieldwork Habitat Restoration

When: January through March, Saturdays from 8:30 am to 11:30 am

Where: FSP, located in Southeast O'ahu at Black Point. Meet at Paikau St side of Fort Ruger Park (Triangle Park) at 8:15 am near Diamond Head Road and 22nd Ave to carpool to the Preserve.

Freeman Seabird Preserve (FSP) is generally closed to public visitation to protect sensitive nesting habitat. Reservations may be arranged for work groups that would like to help restore Hawaiian coastal vegetation and seabird nesting habitat.



Shearwater chick at FSP, photo credit: David Hyrenbach, HPU & Oikonos

The above chick is a member of the first generation raised in ceramic nests customized for their safety and comfort. In

a collaboration with HAS, Hawaii Pacific University (HPU), Oikonos, Windward Community College, and Nathan Lynch, 15 nests were designed, hand-built, fired, and deployed at the Preserve.

In November and early December, Wedge-tailed Shearwater adult birds and chicks leave the Freeman Seabird Preserve to forage at sea for several months before returning in the latter part of March to nest.

While the birds are absent from the Preserve, volunteers are needed for habitat restoration. Activities will include maintenance of native plants and artificial landscape features (like the clay module shown in the photo), along with removal of invasive plants, trash, and debris.

Please bring drinking water, sun and rain protection, gloves, weeding tools, clippers or loppers, if you have them. We also have gloves and tools to share.

RSVP: Contact Alice at 808-864-8122 in advance to participate. Leave name and phone number.

Downed Shearwater and Petrel Fledglings Information

From mid-November to December, shearwaters and petrels fledge in the Hawaiian Islands. This is the time the birds leave their burrows and take their first flight out to sea. They will remain at sea for over a year until they return to the Hawaiian Islands to breed. As birds head to sea for the first time, they may become confused by artificial lights and end up on the ground as seabird "fallout". These birds may get exhausted, hit by a car, or in an area where they can't obtain lift to fly.

If you find a downed bird, please contact the appropriate facility, see link below for contact information for each island. Birds should get released near the location they are found. Staff can assess birds on-site to determine health status and release healthy birds. If necessary, birds can be taken to a facility for nutrition and hydration or to recover from injuries. Please do not give them food or water or release birds prior to them receiving an evaluation by staff to determine if there are injuries. If birds need to be moved from the location where they are found and dropped off at a rehabilitation center, please provide your name, contact information, and location where the bird was found.

For more information, go to <https://dlmr.hawaii.gov/wildlife/downed-wildlife-contact-details/>

Kiwikiu translocation holds promise for one of the world's rarest birds

This joint news release was published on 9/30/19: <https://governor.hawaii.gov/newsroom/latest-news/dlnr-joint-release-kiwikui-translocation-holds-promise-for-one-of-the-worlds-rarest-birds-september-30-2019/>.

In a bold action aimed at saving the endangered Kiwikiu (Maui Parrotbill or *Pseudonestor xanthophrys*), in October four conservation partners will begin translocating both, captive-bred and wild birds, to a restored forest with the goal of creating a second, “insurance” population for this species. The Kiwikiu has declined by over 50 percent in recent years, and fewer than 312 birds remain in the wild. This unique and beautiful songbird, with its heavy, hooked bill, is only found in the high-altitude native forests on East Maui. As its one remaining wild population has declined, the species’ range has shrunk to less than 7,400 acres.

“Without intervention, we will lose this species, and we’ll lose it forever,” said Dr. Hanna Mounce, Project Coordinator at the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project (MFBPR). “The Kiwikiu is hanging on in a very small and vulnerable population. We are committed to doing everything we can to save this species, and the partnership has used the best science we have to move forward with these recovery efforts.”

Hawaiian honeycreepers, of which the Kiwikiu is one, make up one of the world’s most endangered bird groups. Over the past few centuries, dozens of Hawaiian species have been lost forever. The committed partnership is dedicated to preventing continued population declines, and another tragic Hawaiian bird extinction. The DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife, MFBPR; San Diego Zoo Global and American Bird Conservancy (ABC) have been working for over a decade to implement an action plan to save this species. These partners have been restoring native forests and preparing to translocate Kiwikiu from the State’s Hanawi



Kiwikiu, photo credit: Zach Pezzillo (MFBPR)

Natural Area Reserve (NAR) to the Nakula NAR, where the birds were previously found on the southwestern slope of Haleakalā Volcano.

“We are excited and proud of all that the partners have accomplished, including planting over 250,000 native plants and restoring the native forest within Nakula NAR in preparation for this October’s translocation of Kiwikiu to this site,” said Dr. Chris Farmer, Hawai‘i Program Director for ABC. “Kiwikiu died out from this site historically, and reintroducing them back here will greatly increase the species’ chances of survival for future generations.”

“Kiwikiu were once found on these slopes in the drier forests, even down to 500’ elevation in the past,” said Dr. Fern Duvall, the DLNR’s Maui NAR Manager. “It is hoped that these new releases will once again allow these birds to prosper in their ancestral home range.” The project partners will release birds captured in Hanawi as well as those raised at the Maui Bird Conservation Center (MBCC). Using individuals from these different sources will increase the likelihood of success, and boost the birds’ chances of doing well at the release site. “Conservation breeding is a critical step in saving Hawai‘i’s most endangered birds,” said Jennifer Pribble, Senior Research Coordinator for the Hawai‘i Endangered Bird Conservation Program, San Diego Zoo Global. “But it is a last resort and a stop-gap measure. The goal is always to return the birds back into the wild where they belong.”

The team will move the birds from the MBCC into temporary release aviaries at the Nakula release site in mid-October. There they will be intensively monitored to ensure that they are adjusting to the environmental conditions. Soon after, the field team will begin capturing wild birds in Hanawi and transporting them by helicopter to the Nakula release site. Inside the temporary aviaries, the wild Kiwikiu will be paired up with the birds from the MBCC and observed daily. After the birds have adjusted to the release site, the pairs will slowly be released into the restored native forest, where supplementary food will be provided to help the birds survive and transition to the newly restored forest. The team will outfit each bird with a small radio transmitter, and the movements of the entire cohort will be intensively tracked. These observations will be used to determine if the birds are surviving and if they start to breed - measures of the overall success of the project - and whether any changes will be necessary in future translocations.

For more information about MFBPR and how you can help, visit <https://mauiforestbirds.org/>.

2019 Hawai‘i Christmas Bird Count

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a bird census proposed by ornithologist Frank M. Chapman and started on Christmas Day in 1900 to thankfully replace a holiday tradition where “competitors” killed as many furry and feathered critters as possible. Beginning with the 101st CBC, all counts are conducted within the same dates, from December 14 to January 5, to be statistically comparable with the rest of the counts in the database.

In the following are the dates for each island. For details, contact local organizers listed here:

Big Island

Volcano: Dec 15, 2018, Thane Pratt,
thane-linda@earthlink.net, 808-443-8160

North Kona: Dec 14, 2019, Lance Tanino,
Lance.Tanino@gmail.com, 808-495-6545

Hilo: Dec 28, 2019, Sherman Wing,
shermanwing1@gmail.com, 303-324-9636

Kaua‘i

Kapa‘a Circle: Dec 14, 2019, Lucy Carr,
cbckauai@gmail.com, 808-639-1388

Waimea (W Kaua‘i): Michelle Hookano,
michelle.hookano@kokee.org, 808-335-9975

Maui County

Hana/East Maui: Dec 18, 2018, Barry Solomon,
barry.solomon428@gmail.com, 808-868-0418

Iao Circle: Dec 23, 2019, Sonny Gamponia,
sgamponia@gmail.com, 808-244-0727

Haleakalā Circle: Dec 30, 2019, Sonny Gamponia,
sgamponia@gmail.com, 808-244-0727

Lanai (Boat Harbor): Dec 16, 2019, Sonny Gamponia,
sgamponia@gmail.com, 808-244-0727

Moloka‘i (Topside & Kalaupapa): Dec 16, 2019, Arleone
Dibben-Young, nene@hawaii.rr.com, 808-553-5992

O‘ahu

Honolulu: Dec 15, 2019, Peter Donaldson,
pdnldsn.bird@mac.com

Waipio (Central O‘ahu): Dec 28, 2019, Dick May,
mayhi02@hotmail.com

Scientists use data collected by CBCs to determine status and health of bird populations. For more information, go to <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>.

Paikō Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary Low Tide Walk, June 15, 2019

by Adele Chong and Alice Roberts

New Hawaii Audubon Society members Adele Chong and Susan Fox-Wolfgramm joined leader HAS Board Member Alice Roberts to enjoy beautiful weather on Saturday morning June 15 at Paikō Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary (low tide of -0.2’).

In addition to seeing several Hawaiian stilts (2 banded), we also saw cattle egrets and Manu-o-Kū (White Terns) in flight at the same time and could easily see the difference in the flying patterns. We saw one female Kōlea (Pacific Golden-Plover) who hadn’t flown to AK.

Of course we saw many urban birds (red-vented bulbuls, mynas, red-headed cardinals, doves, sparrows, lots of ducks and some very young ducklings). In the water, we saw little gobies, a few crabs, many lugworm egg sacks, caught a kūpīpī, and smelled stinky hydrogen sulfide in some black sand. Many ghost crab holes and pyramids were along the shoreline.

The drought had browned much of the vegetation, but several re-planted natives and canoe plants were discussed (‘ākulikuli, ‘ākulikuli kai, ‘aki‘aki, ‘āweoweo, ‘ohai, kīpūkai, naio, pōhinahina, pōhuehue, naupaka, kauna‘oa, milo, hau, coconut) as well as several non-natives (ironwood, kiawe (mesquite), haole koa, and fireweed).



Adele Chong, Alice Roberts, and Susan Fox-Wolfgramm,
photo credit: Meika Nogi.

Hawaii Audubon Society Membership/Donation Form

The mission of the Hawaii Audubon Society (HAS) is to foster community values that result in the protection and restoration of native wildlife and ecosystems and conservation of natural resources through education, science and advocacy in Hawai'i and the Pacific. Founded in 1939, HAS is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and does not receive dues paid to the National Audubon Society. Thank you for supporting your local Hawaii Audubon Society.

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Mahalo for your concern and commitment to protecting Hawai'i's native wildlife and ecosystems.

Upcoming Events and Field Trips

Visit our website for details and regular updates

<http://www.hawaiiadubon.org/get-outside>

Nature walk from Turtle Bay Resort to Kahuku Point

Nov 11, 2019; meet outside the Paradise Helicopters Helipad at 8:45 am

Duration: about 2.5 hours

Distance: 3.7 km (2.3 mi)

Parking: in main parking lot (in designated beach access spaces) next to the Helipad.

Leader: Anthony Leiggi (former HAS Board member)

The trail will lead along a pristine coastline to O'ahu's northernmost point and feature endangered and endemic birds, but we might also see marine life like sea turtles or even Hawaiian monk seals. An expert from North Shore Community Land Trust, which leads restoration efforts in this area, will join the field trip.

Please note that HAS will not coordinate transportation/car-pooling to the site. If you would like to give a ride or need one, please indicate on the google doc that will be sent out before the tour and communicate directly with each other. Mahalo!

White Tern Walk

Nov 16, 2019

Details to be announced

Leader: Rich Downs
(HAS Board Member)

Please text or call 808-379-7555

CBC Waipio Central O'ahu

Dec 28, 2019

Palikea Trail, HAS Cooperation

Leader: former HAS Board member Anthony Leiggi

For details contact: Dick May, mayhi02@hotmail.com



Photo by Rich Downs

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To renew please do one of the following:

- Detach and fill out the "Hawaii Audubon Society Membership/Donation Form" and mail it back to us with appropriate payment.
- Visit www.hawaii-audubon.org/renewals and select the best-fit membership and pay online.

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