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STORM TOLL ON MOKU MANU

By Frank Richardson

David Woodside and I visited Moku Manu off Ulupau Head on January 11 again, and with Paul Breese and Larry Richards on February 28 - before and after the severe wind and rain storm of January 24-25 and other heavy rains as those of February 7. At the time of our January visit several species of birds were breeding in numbers: perhaps 10,000 sooty terns had eggs over much of the top of the island and even down the south side almost to the water, and some few hundred young sooties had already hatched; there were about 100 red-footed booby nests, some with young at least 2 months old; brown boobies were less common but they had several dozen nests chiefly with eggs. A few noddy terns were nesting but the great numbers of sooties seemed to leave little room for them.

On February 28 the picture was tragically different. The whole island was ominously quiet as less than 1000 sooty terns were present and they did not stay near the island. Several hundred sooty eggs had been deserted before our January visit because of the storms, but actually thousands had now been washed from their nest spots and deserted. Many hundreds of dead young sooties, often partly buried in rocks and soil, were added evidence of the sheets of water that must have swept the top and sides of the island. A bare handful of young sooties survived but not a single undeserted or newly laid egg was found.

A good-sized flock of adult red-footed boobies was present but not more than 6 large nestlings were to be found. Apparently, even adults were not able to stay on their nests during the blasts of wind. Consequently, almost all young and all eggs were lost, and little remained of many of the nests. All but one or two of the brown booby nests had been destroyed, but a few birds of this species were renesting.

Noddy terns were more numerous than in January but they were not nesting. Hawaiian terns, at least 100 of them, were on the island and some were nesting. Six gray-backed terns were seen near one region of Moku Manu and 2 incubated eggs of this species were found. They were well back under rocks (sooties' nests occupied the surrounding open ground in January) and thus may have been able to survive. Two pairs of wedge-tailed shearwaters and one Christmas Island Shearwater were discovered on the last visit - the earliest arrivals of their species. These are the encouraging aspects of the situation at Moku Manu, but it seems all too likely that the sooty tern especially, and the boobies, have suffered setbacks this season that will require favorable years in which to recover.

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FOOTNOTES ON NATURE, by John Kieran. Wood engravings by Nora S. Unwin. Doubleday and Co. 1947. This is an account of bird walking at its superlative best; that of four men, joined from time to time by other illustrious friends, all gifted and knowledgeable observers. To read the book is to join them in all weathers, to rejoice in the sight of rare and common birds, to enjoy the trees and the flowers. Here, too, is the companionship that is so much a part of the excursions of those who love nature, the laughter and the fun of those who have no need for pretentions.

Frequent quotations scattered through the text add to the charm of John Kieran's easy flowing prose. The wood engravings of Nora S. Unwin are delightful. They have caught the spirit of the out-of-doors. In short, this is a book to be cherished by all devotees of the gentle sport of bird walking.

G.H.

REPRINTS OF PAUL H. BALDWIN'S ARTICLES, as follow, have recently come to the attention of the editor: "Foods of the Hawaiian Goose," Condor v.49, My-Je, 1947, number 3, pp 108-20. Lists foods actually identified in Baldwin's study and also those attributed to the diet of the Nene by other authors. "Bulwer Petrel Breeding on Eastern Hawaiian Islands," Condor v.48, Ja-F, 1946, number 1, pp 42-3. "The Life History of the Laysan Rail," Condor v.49, Ja-F, 1947, number 1, pp 14-21. This latter is a compilation of information from all sources, since further observation of the living bird is now not possible.

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FIELD NOTES: Bird walk, January 11, 1948. Cuddled garrulously together, it so seemed, were nearly a score of bird enthusiasts praising with rich, infinite exuberance, different aspects of the weather and the promising day. Amazingly enough - the group hastened toward Kawailoa at 8:30 sharp in the three waiting cars and jeep. The Audubon Society started the year off with a bang!

Those traveling with Miss Hatch were fortunate to have seen the Hawaiian stilt, tattler and the plover leisurely loitering on the scanty aquatic remains of Mokumoa. Further on, beyond Wahiawa, Kauai was seen by privileged and observant eyes with great satisfaction. This was an intangible delight to all.

On the slopes of Kawailoa, Nature pleased everyone with her array of beauty - the crisp socky song of the Chinese Thrush, neat rows of pineapple fields, glittering tassels of sugar cane, strong sweet odor of the Eucalyptus, wild orchids among arm-stretched grasses - all contributed to a lasting memory filled with joy and made possible only by Nature herself.

Parking the cars at a suitable distance, the party soon entered the trail (which was a road during the War) and perceived the beautiful contents of the forest. Seen, as the hike progressed on over ever changing grades of land, were the ever abundant Koa trees standing lazily in the sun. Staghorn ferns crawling about the hillsides, a clump of Sandalwood trees and the sweet smelling fragrance of flowers of the naupaka plant which adorned the trail on every side.

At first, the notes of a bush warbler were heard, a sparrow, some white-eyes - then silence for a moment. That moment must have retained all of its vitality, for it seemed to have prolonged itself more into that predicament, leaving all in a depressing situation. Only at long intervals were birds to be sighted - most of the time by careful scrutinization; if heard, at a disgusting distance. Time and again the soft "wheet" of the amakihi could be heard - but was not seen; also, the apapane managed to sneak a note or two to prove its presence. None of these instances, however, destroyed the value of the trip which was not to be denied - for members busied themselves with butterflies, botany, observation periods, flourishing conversations, even a spectacular sight of a white-tailed tropic bird flying in the heavens, not to mention at all the early lunch period which Unoyo wonderfully originated all by herself. Here was a day, remembered by all!

Harlen Chong

"The Elepaio" for February announced a bird walk to Kipapa, but the vagaries of a Hawaiian winter sent us in search of a solid road bed, and we climbed high into the Waianaes to Pa Lehua where a kindly Signal Corps captain approved our journey through his camp. Along the way we saw the usual mynahs, English sparrows, Chinese

and barred doves. One party stopped to observe a night heron as we skirted the Pearl Harbor area. Away from the main highway and into the foothills we added Brazilian cardinal, Kentucky cardinal, a linnet and a small flock of ricebirds to our list.

While we waited for all to assemble at the Signal Corps area, there was much excitement over the song of a skylark, which only a few were fortunate enough to hear, but that was a good beginning. (Perhaps the driver who suffered a flat tire soon thereafter would disagree on this point!) Once on foot some of us were put to it to keep from "freezing" in the chill wind, but the sun soon warmed the lee side of each little valley and only one brisk shower marred the day.

If the sun was constant the birds were persistently elusive. Song was everywhere; elepaio, amakihi, hill robin, white-eye, bush warbler, and above them all the cheering whistles (should I say trumpeting) of the Kentucky cardinals in all variations - a bit confusing on occasion, if a novice may confess. Never have I heard so many cardinals in the woods areas, perhaps because we remained at a lower level, guava-kukui predominating. So much for songs - the number of birds seen was not great; a few elepaio, an amakihi or two, a hill robin, ricebirds and Kentucky cardinals. The bush warblers were particularly tantalizing and successfully evasive. But when we tired of searching the distance there was lunch and such earthbound creatures as a leaf hopper to amuse.

Just to include everything in the day, we came home via Waipio Point - another night heron and some golden plover - and Moanalua Ponds, which added only two coot to the day's count: a total of seventeen species for Feburary 8, 1948.

Margaret W. Clark

Bird walk, March 14th. Again we said "Kipapa, and again the weather was uncooperative! However, shepherded by Unoyo Kojima, thirteen of us headed for Kalena where she guaranteed dry weather, if any were to be found on the island. We reached Kalena safely, though not without incident - but if jeeps go into ditches, at least our jeep did not - to find it dry as promised and teeming with birds. As we stopped, a chorus greeted us, bush warblers, apapane, hill robin, thrush, and amakihi, whilst an elepaio added his call to the music.

Koa trees were in bloom and filled with amakihi. Two particularly brilliant ones were seen during the day, almost pure golden yellow upon the breast.

We settled down upon the steep hillside with a grim determination to stay there until we took root, if necessary, but to stay until we saw the bush warbler. Amakihi came and went, apapane sang sweetly, elepaio looked us over, the bush warblers came closer and closer, with a fine variety of songs, then mockingly vanished without giving us a glimpse. Unless - were the two birds who slipped into the underbrush warblers, or thrush? The sight was too fleeting for identification.

Our intentions were still excellent, but when Clifton returned from the higher slope, with a tantalizing tale of birds in the blossoming ohia, we abandoned the location, to join the rest of the group watching iiwi in the ohia. This was a treat and a thrill. For nearly two hours we sat near the tree, while iiwi, apapane and amakihi worked busily in the branches. Iiwi were there almost continuously. We marvelled at the extreme fearlessness of this rare bird. Although we were but a short distance away, the birds paid no attention to us, even when we changed positions, better to see the long curved pink bill. One iiwi was a young bird, the greenish yellow of the juvenile plumage showing clearly in spots.

One point, however, troubles the writer of this account - the books mention the white abdomen and undertail coverts of the apapane in contrast to the scarlet body of the iiwi, yet these iiwi showed a distinct gray under the tail coverts.

On the way to town, plover, tattlers and a lone night heron were observed. It had been, we all agreed, one of those perfect days seldom granted to mortals.

Grenville Hatch

On Saturday, March 13, 1948, one of my students and I visited the colony of red-footed boobies at Ulupau Head, but to our great disappointment found very few of the birds left. From the end of the road near the top of the Head, the only birds we could see were seventeen resting in the haole koa on the far side of the gulch. We worked our way down to these birds as this was Betty Lou's first experience birding and I was anxious for her to see one at close range. Among this group was one in brown plumage. From here we could count about fifty more birds on the Ulupau side of the gulch in a spot more or less protected from the wind. No doubt the recent storms have destroyed many of these birds, but we did not go far enough down into the gulch to search for dead ones. However, we did see one which had died in its nest, and also saw a few bones.

We did not have glasses with us but could see many white birds on the side of Moku Manu. Could it be possible that the colony has moved?

In the pools along the highway we saw several stilt and ruddy turnstone. Several times we stopped the car to watch plover along the roadside, our presence disturbing them not at all although at times we were only a few feet from them.

Blanche A. Pedley

The following letter from Chester Fennell has been received by the Paul Porters:

"Have added several new species to my list of observations as well as some twenty-two skins to my collection. Among the observations are: the North China Alpine hedge sparrow or accentor (prunella collaris erythropygius), the Daurian redstart (phoenicurus ochruros rufiventris), the upland buzzard (buteo rufinus hemilasius), the Japanese buzzard (buteo buteo burmanicus), and the white-tailed sea eagle (haliaeetus albicilla albicilla). The redstart, a single male, is spending the winter in a small wooded, brushy area behind the Capitol Building in company with yellow-throated buntings, Korean tits and brown breasted meadow buntings. The body is a rich, russet red both above and below; the forehead, crown and nape, white. It presents a very striking appearance in spite of its moderate size. The eagles frequent the streambeds on the outskirts of the City sitting on the frozen, snow-covered sand bars or along the banks in company with the carrion crows, magpies, mallards, golden-eyes and wagtails. Strangely enough the other species give the eagles little heed and go right on feeding, sleeping, etc. all within a few feet of them. An occasional crow flying overhead now and then swoops at them, or two or three gather around to bow, squawk, scrape their wings on the ground and pay homage in general to their regal highnesses. They truly do display a majestic mien and are exceedingly handsome in their light brown body plumage and pure white tails.

"My skins so far include: five (5) Manchurian jungle crows (corvus levaillantii mandshuricus), three (3) eastern carrion crows (corvus corone orientalis), one (1) eastern rook (corvus frugilegus pastinator) one (1) Chinese magpie (picapica sericea), two (2) skylark, either the North China skylark (alauda arvensis pekinensis) or the lesser skylark (alauda arvensis quelpartae), we have not decided which they are, two (2) owls (species as yet undetermined; one probably the long-eared owl (asio otus otus), the other a small species similar to the Stateside screech owl), two (2) brown-breasted meadow buntings (emberiza cioides castaneiceps), three (3) Korean tree sparrows (passer montanus dybowskii), one (1) ruddy sheldrake (casarca ferruginea), and two (2) eastern turtle doves (streptopelia orientalis orientalis).

"Slowly but surely I'm gaining a fairly good technique in the preparation of skins. It takes a lot of time and patience but is well worth the effort. Certainly I

have learned a great deal regarding anatomy, feather arrangement and food habits that I would otherwise never have known. Then, too, collecting is an absolute necessity over here, since so very little has been done in the line of study and research. There is only one book out which helps at all in the identification of Korean species in the field and that is Kuroda's Birds of the Japanese Empire published in 1931 and written in Japanese. It's in three volumes and beautifully done with every other page a color plate. It's very difficult to find now and I consider myself very fortunate in having procured a set thru a Korean friend of mine. But even this work is far from being complete and accurate. As Col. Wolfe has so often said, 'Except for the more common species, one just never knows what he's looking at till he has it in his hand.' Even then we are often unable to identify it. Take this new bunting I purchased some two months ago in a bird store on Chung-no (Bell) Street, for instance. (The first one I had, a yellow-throated bunting, Miyama by handle, finally upped and died. Took too much "whim and vigor" growing a new tail, I guess.) In spite of the fact that I have him - I really believe it should be "her" - at close range and watch him for several hours each evening as he flies around the room, bathes in a pan of water which I place on the floor for him, preens himself, etc., and have clearly marked every head stripe, breast spot and feather outline, in spite of all this, I repeat, I am still unable to identify it. The only thing to do is to collect as many species as we can while we're over here, identify what we can here in the field and take as many notes as possible on nesting habits, actions, range, food habits, etc. Those we cannot identify will have to wait till they are forwarded to the American Museum of Natural History or the Natural Science Museum in the States for correct nomenclature. Believe I shall eventually send my whole collection to one or the other of these institutions. If you get a chance, by the way, ask Dr. Richardson or Dave if they would like me to send them occasional specimens for the University collection there. I cannot promise too much of course, since the time element is as usual a limiting factor. Have them check on any possible pilikia which may arise regarding their entry into the Territory via parcel post; also how I should address them.

"I don't feel too badly about taking bird-life over here for scientific purposes for everytime I happen to stroll thru the market place behind my billet, I see hundreds of bean geese, mallards, sheldrakes, turtle doves, blue hill pigeons, cranes, owls, crows, magpies, pheasants, quail, tree sparrows, and buntings of several different kinds, all strung up by their heads on straw ropes and awaiting purchase. The slaughter is actually a saddening sight to a bird lover and must exact a heavy toll on the bird-life thruout the country. On the other hand, this market has provided me with some excellent specimens and I visit it at least once a week to see if anything new or interesting has come in.

"Last Thursday, February 5th, was the Korean first day of spring and as tho just for proof, darned if I didn't find pussy willows in bloom last Sunday, when Col. Wolfe and I were out in the country some twenty miles east of Seoul. I believe they were the first I had seen in about ten years. You can imagine the wave of nostalgic excitement that coursed thru me upon seeing them.

"Tuesday, the tenth, was the Korean New Year's Day, year 4281. In spite of black, muddy streets and slush ankle deep, the Koreans, as is customary on this day, garbed themselves in some of the most gorgeously colored costumes imaginable and paraded the city streets on missions of festivity and social obligation. The combinations of reds, yellows, greens, blues, purple and orange worn by the women and children were sincerely breathtaking and I couldn't resist playing hookey from the job for a couple hours in the afternoon just to wander about town with my trusty Kodak 35 shooting scenes left and right. Within only a short time I had used up two full rolls of Kodachrome. One of these days I shall get around to sending you some transparencies. My brother is anxious to see them also so that perhaps I would send them first to you for a Hawaii showing then you in turn could forward them on to him in Cleveland. He has shipped me a Revere 70 eight millimeter movie camera with

several rolls of color film, which I am at present eagerly awaiting. All in all I should have a fairly complete pictorial record of Korea by the time my contract expires. It surely gives one a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction.

"It's good to hear that the boobies have returned to Ulupau and are again going strong on the nesting. Would love to be there to help on the banding again. Am sorry to say that my records do not indicate the total number of boobies in the Ulupau area around the date you request, August 1, 1947. A note of August 11, 1947 reads: 'Roughly seventy-five (75) to one hundred (100) young left; most of them well feathered and nearly ready to fly; all standing up in nests or on koa haole branches exercising their wings. No eggs.' Again on the tenth of June: 'Estimated roughly three hundred and fifty (350) adults. Several young in all stages of growth.' I estimated the colony to contain approximately eight hundred (800) individuals, both young and adults, at its peak around the middle of July. That was before many of the young left.

"The chief of our section, Lt. Col. Teberg, was telling me this morning that he shot a Siberian bustard (otis tarda dybowskii) last Sunday out along the Han River some fifteen miles east of Seoul. He said that there were two together, evidently a pair, and that he shot from a distance of two hundred yards with a rifle. The one he killed weighed twenty-five pounds and was in rather poor condition. They are strange appearing birds with chunky bodies, long legs, a head similar to a turkey and only three toes like an ostrich. They stand about three feet high. C.W. Campbell says of them in his List of Birds Collected in Korea in 1888 and 1889, 'I have shot numbers of this bird during the winters of 1887-88 and 89. In 1887 it was much more plentiful probably because the winter was more severe than in succeeding years; flocks of 30 or 40 were quite common. Its arrival in Seoul varied according to the severity or mildness of the season, from October to December and I have seen it in the open fields between Chemulpo and Seoul as late as the end of March. The largest bustard I shot weighed 26 pounds and the smallest 7 or 8 pounds.

"'The eastern great bustard is extremely timid and difficult to approach. I have never heard it utter a note, even when wounded. Its flight is not swift, but strong and steady and it rarely keeps at a height of more than 30 or 35 yards from the ground.'

"Again, best wishes to one and all and write soon again.

Sunday, 15th February (the foregoing dated the 14th)

"Added a Daurian redstart to my collection today. Found it in deciduous underbrush alongside the road some six miles south of Seoul. It's a male and a little beauty. Also saw two cranes; the first since Nov. 11th. They're probably starting the migration northward already. Noticed several magpies carrying sticks again today. Guess the nesting urge has already hit them. Sure signs of spring."

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The Hawaii Audubon Society has received an announcement of the wedding of Harold Cantlin on April 3rd, at St. Mary's Church at Cleveland, Ohio, to Betty Jane Witwer. Our best wishes to them!

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APRIL ACTIVITIES:

BIRD WALK: April 11th, Another trial for Kipapa. Meet at the Library of Hawaii; 8:30

MEETING: April 18th (Sunday), at 2:30 at the Bishop Museum. Through the courtesy of Mr. Edwin H. Bryan, Jr., this meeting has been arranged so that we can have an opportunity to study the mounted birds and feather work. Take the Kalihi bus, get off at Farrington High School. A guide will be at the entrance of the grounds, and at the entrance of the Museum to direct you. Please be prompt.

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