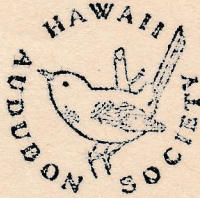


THE ELEPAIO

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of Wildlife in Hawaii

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RANDOM NOTES FROM HILO By Grenville Hatch

It has been my good fortune to spend six weeks this summer in a beautiful home five miles out of Hilo, located directly upon the ocean. The rocky shore is composed of pahoehoe, with tiny islets scattered close inshore. At almost any time of the day, a small flock of noddy terns, never more than twelve in number, are to be seen resting upon the little islands or searching the water for food. Upon one occasion, a school of small silver fish, leaping from the water in haste, was pursued by the flock of noddies. The birds did not attempt to seize the fish, but followed the school for some distance out to sea. When fishing, the movements of the noddies are so fast that it is difficult to tell when and how they enter the water for food. They fly close to the surface for some distance, then swoop quickly, and resume a somewhat higher position in the air. I was surprised, recalling the incessant cries of the birds at the nesting place, to find them almost entirely silent at the feeding ground.

This little flock of noddies remained so constant in number that I wondered whether they might be nesting somewhere close at hand. Mrs. Helen Shiras Baldwin tells me that they nest along the cliffs on this island, but a search of the nearby cliffs and observation of the larger islands showed no indication of nesting places.

At the extreme edge of the water the wandering tattler searched the rocks for food, flying from one rock to another as the incoming wave threatened to engulf him, and uttering his pleasant fluty call as he flew. Only a short distance from the ocean were a number of shallow pools, looking to my eye like ideal tattler haunts, but he evidently preferred the rocks, as at no time did I find a tattler at the little pools.

Bird notes greeted us when we first went into the house, and I was astonished to recognize among them the song of the hill robin. A few days later, while waiting in a garage near the center of town, I heard them again, and so found that they have taken over the town. Is it, perhaps, the greater number of trees on Hawaii which has led them down from the forests?

The house which we occupied is surrounded by a beautiful garden. A screened lanai opens out upon a terrace about fifteen feet wide leading to the lawn, banked in tropical foliage, hala trees, and rows of blossoming orchids. The birds, as ever, responded quickly to the lure of papaia and crumbs scattered over the steps leading from the terrace to the lawn. It was a fine opportunity to study the hill robin at close range. They very soon become fearless, as Lorin Gill has told us before, and in less than a week were coming to meet me - or rather, coming to meet the food!

The terrace was a source of endless amusement. Two mynahs established their claims to it as their private property. If any other mynah dared snatch a crumb or two, in an instant the "owners" were down, squawking indignantly, and chasing the intruder to the farther end of the garden. They did not secure their proprietary rights without a struggle. In the beginning some twenty birds disputed their claim, so that at times the two were compelled to march up and down in front of the food, while the rest snatched a bit as they could, and the hill robins finished it. The mynahs did not drive the hill robins away - perhaps they considered them too small to bother about - nor did they disturb the cardinals to any extent. In the end, the rest of the mynahs conceded the valiant two the sovereignty of the terrace, and if by chance one came upon food unguarded, ate with a guilty air. Only one mynah fought for his rights to the end. He obviously had fought for something many times. He had lost so many feathers that his markings were most peculiar, his head was battered, and he walked with a limp. But he never gave up the battle!

Cardinals brought their families. I do not know whether the Hilo cardinal is really brighter, or if it were closer proximity, but these seemed more brilliant than any I have ever seen before. The papaia drew the linnet and the white-eye, which concluded the roster of the boarders. The absence of the sparrow seemed a bit odd.

At long intervals the spectacled thrush might be seen, going across the lawn, or slipping into low shrubbery. Once, as I watched the birds feeding in a rose apple tree, the hill robins spied me, and set up their furious scolding. The thrush, also feeding upon the rose apples, passed silently from limb to limb, so that for a time I was unaware of his presence, while he, in turn, disregarded mine. I believe that there was but one pair of thrushes, so that apparently they are not common there.

We made several trips to the Volcano. It is always a joy to see the native birds in such numbers. On one stop at Lua Manu, one of the craters on the Seven Craters Road, in the moment that I stood beside the car, taking the binoculars from the case, I counted nine apapane and two amakihi. Lua Manu remains my favorite observation point for non-strenuous, easily accessible watching. The crater is shallow enough so that the trees are on a level with the eye, and the birds often are almost within arm's reach of one. Two hours in the bird park resulted in complete frustration. The lofty tree tops were full of birds, and one unfamiliar note sent me into a frenzy. I emerged with a permanent kink in the neck, and a bitter disappointment because I was never able to determine whether it was an unfamiliar bird, or merely an unfamiliar note. How I longed for an observation tower!

The shrine at the entrance to the bird park now has excellent colored paintings of the native birds, done by Sarah Baldwin.

Interest was added to the great dormant pit of Halemaumau by four tropic birds which circled about it, part of the time so far down that they looked like tiny figures of birds. We saw the tropic birds repeatedly on trips up the Hamakua coast, flying toward the cliffs in which they nest.

Tomorrow we shall bid a fond aloha to this island, with a feeling of gratitude for a vacation so full of beauty.

Hilo, Hawaii
August 2, 1947

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KAUAI NOTES
By Chester Fennell

The writer, in company with Dave Woodside, spent the night of July 5th and early morning hours of July 6th at the Coast Guard Station at Kilauea Point, observing the small colony of wedge-tailed shearwaters, frigate birds and Hawaiian noddies which frequent that area.

The wedge-tailed shearwaters principally inhabit the small island, Mokuiaea, which lies only a few hundred yards off the Point. Though it was not possible to land on this island, a close scrutiny of the area through seven-power field glasses revealed the entire visible soil surface to be fairly well honey-combed with burrows and a goodly number of adults actively flying over and around the island. Some were in and around burrows located on the steep slope of the Point itself, which faced the Island and directly below the lighthouse. A total of three eggs were found on this slope. Other burrows were discovered at various spots along both upper flanks of the Point, though the majority of these were empty and had remains of dead adults lying near their entrances. According to the lighthouse attendants, this destruction has apparently been done by several dogs which frequent the district.

The shearwaters frequently crash into the white-coated column of the lighthouse tower at night and drop into the window wells at its base. Since they are unable to scale the smooth cement sides of these depressions, the men on duty make regular rounds to check on and release any birds so hopelessly imprisoned.

Again with the aid of field glasses, we counted 13 frigate birds on Mokuiaea, all resting on the ground on one corner of the islet.

A single Hawaiian noddy appeared to be nesting on a rock shelf of the more precipitous side of the Island and a group of thirteen were seen flying low over the water of the channel between the Point and the Island.

In spite of careful searching and constant alertness, we failed to find any signs of the Newell's shearwater reported from this locality by Gordon Pearsall in September of 1946.

Continuing on up the coast to Haena, we parked our car and hiked into Kalalau Valley.

White-tailed tropic birds were nearly always in view from the trail, soaring gracefully high up along the verdure-clad cliffs or attempting footholds at some nesting cranny in the sheer rock walls. Several times we were thrilled to watch the exciting chase of a stray frigate bird in full pursuit of a tropic bird. The unfortunate koae, in all cases, hardly had a fair chance against the masterful flight control of the larger bird. Once attacked, it gave up all idea of soaring and broke into a panicky retreat of rapid wing-beating. The frigate often continued to soar and with full utilization of the air currents, rapidly gained on its victim, swooping upon it time after time, till finally weary of the game, it turned back down the valley and gracefully glided out again over the blue of the ocean.

All along this seven mile stretch of the Na Pali Coast, we saw small groups of Hawaiian noddies flying low over the water near the base of the cliffs, which led us to believe that they probably nest along this entire coastline. A short distance beyond Kalalau Valley, we explored two large caves opening directly onto the sandy beach, in which we found several pairs of noddies nesting. The nesting sites were situated in small cavities high in the rock ceilings of the caves. In one of the

caverns, a large pool of fresh water filled the floor depression to a depth of approximately four feet, immediately below the noddies nesting site.

Upon entering the caves at night, the noddies uttered strange musical call notes, the like of which we have never heard before. These calls seemed to increase in frequency when the light beams of our flashlights were turned directly on the birds.

We slept on the sand within the sheltering mouth of one of these caves and awoke about seven-thirty the following morning to find the ocean literally teeming with wedge-tailed shearwaters. They were flying back and forth, low over the water, and covered an area which extended from the shore as far out to sea as could be discerned with the field glasses. The general movement seemed to be into the wind towards Haena. The flight lasted for an hour and a half, at the end of which time it gradually broke up and finally disappeared altogether far out over the horizon. We presume this mass congregation was part of the colony which inhabits the off-shore island of Lehua.

Three gray-backed terns and one brown booby were also noted in the midst of this flight.

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CORRECTION: On page 3 of the Elepaio of July 1947, an error is shown in the measurements of the wedge-tailed shearwater's eggs. Mr. Munro, the author of the article, points out that instead of $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ as printed, the passage should read:

"On July 12, 1947, 38 wedge-tailed shearwaters on Kapapa Island were incubating their eggs, most of them in burrows but a few on the surface. There were also some deserted eggs on the surface. Four eggs were measured, one 2.125 x 1.625, another 2.375 x 1.500, and two were 2.4375 x 1.625 inches..."

The editor is grateful to Mr. Munro for pointing out this unfortunate error, as will be readers with scientific interest in the accuracy of measurements.

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FIELD NOTES:

Bird Walk - Poamoho Trail - June 8, 1947. "Sixteen members of the Hawaii Audubon Society gathered under the monkey pod trees at the Library of Hawaii on June 8th for the hike along the Poamoho Trail. Although only three cars were available to transport the members to the beginning of the trail, it was finally successfully managed and all arrived safely at the starting point in the hills beyond Wahiawa. The day proved to be exceptionally beautiful. A recent shower had cooled the air, making walking unusually pleasant, even for this delightful trail. The usual pig hunters with their dogs, were encountered at the turnaround, returning with a large pig killed in the valley which seems to be a favorite haunt of pigs.

"The members proceeded at a leisurely pace through the tree ferns and other rain forest growth, stopping often and waiting until the birds had begun to move around again after being disturbed by the noise of the party moving along the trail. Possibly this accounts for the considerable number of birds seen on this trip. Hill robins were singing all along the trail and several were seen. Amakihi were heard but not seen. A number of apapane were seen, some of them at close range. White-eyes were numerous, but only two elepaio were seen, which is rather unusual since this charming little forest bird is generally fairly numerous. One group of members was fortunate in having a good view of an Oahu creeper, which was working up the trunk of a good-sized tree, examining the bark for insects as it climbed. There were no mynahs seen on this walk, and doves and cardinals were almost entirely absent. At lunch time

the members opened knapsacks and settled along the edge of the narrow trail where the bank fell sharply away to the Poamoho Stream far below, where the survivors of the pig hunt had doubtless gone back to their foraging. Apapane were working in a clump of blossoming red lehua and the members watched them and enjoyed the wide view of the valley while resting and eating lunch. A few light showers had fallen during the morning, but at this time a heavy drizzle began, which put an end to hiking for the day, since the trail, always damp, would soon be too slippery to walk on in comfort. Lunches were hastily finished and the members started back to the head of the trail. The sun came out in a short time and began to dry wet clothing, and by the time the party reached the cars, everyone was sufficiently dry to be comfortable on the ride home. Mr. Kerr pointed out a sandalwood tree to the members, explaining that there are several varieties of trees which are called "sandalwood", and which were cut extensively for export in early times; so extensively, in fact, that they were very nearly exterminated. A member remarked that there was no scent to the leaves of the small tree indicated, and Mr. Kerr explained that only the heartwood of large trees carries the peculiar fragrance which was so highly prized."

Doris L. Smith

Notes by the Rear Guard - In Protest. "So you believe everything you read in the newspapers, yes? no? Didn't the newspaper publicity read, "The public is invited to the monthly (July) Bird Walk of the Audubon Society, course, the St. Louis-Woodlawn Trail?" Well, so why couldn't just everybody go? I'll tell you why.

"The trail was long; the trail went up; the trail went down - it was a Hawaiian trail and not a CCC trail, if that means anything to you reading this.

"There was no age limit and no limit to the kind of clothing to be worn, but there was a limit to what some of the legs (or is it limbs) could take, and when the ground comes up and hits one in the face - well, that can wreck one if the contact comes too often.

"As to birds - they were almost an unknown quantity, though the writer saw an apapane, heard a Chinese thrush, and was told about an amakihi. No, those were not Kentucky cardinals leaving that nest, and those are slugs you see on the ground - don't ask me if they live in houses or in a shell. I don't know.

"The ironwoods sang in the wind - scenic views tickled and teased the artist - Job's tears, Hawaiian mistletoe and hawthorn emoted - the capable leader, followed eagerly by some, hesitatingly by others, wearily and falteringly by a few, paced off the miles, seven of them, while the rear guard found that coming down on the okole was the proper way to finish off that Bird Walk. Don't ask me who said so - I do know the paper didn't say so. Pau now."

Ruth Rockafellow

August Bird Walk: "For the August bird walk we journeyed to the edge of Kipapa Gulch, thirteen members in all. It must have been a lucky number, because the trail was clear and the showers only scattered; there had even been more than enough available transportation. And before we left our cars we saw literally hundreds of ricebirds feeding on the tall grasses of the lower slopes. Miss Hatch said it was the largest congregation of these birds she had ever seen.

"As we walked into the forest the valleys beneath were filled with the song of hill robins, and several appeared along our trail. Amakihi could also be heard from time to time but only one was seen. White-eyes, of course, were everywhere,

chattering excitedly over our intrusion into their domain. Although the lehua was in particularly bright flower, only one young apapane was observed; however, each of us had his chance to watch an elepaio. Out of the forest again by 2:00 p.m., we were reluctant to leave but satisfied."

Margaret Clark

David Woodside, now working for the Territorial Division of Fish and Game at Kokee, Kauai, reports the Kauai amakihi, the anianiau, apapane, iiwi, elepaio, and Chinese thrush from the Kumuweia Ridge area; also the Kauai thrush from the Kaholomanu and Waiialae districts.

Bird Refuge Planned on Kauai: Work was scheduled to begin in late July on the 500 acre Makaha bird preserve on Makaha Ridge near Waimea Canyon on Kauai.

The project, under the direction of Associate Forester Albert Duvel of Lihue, is being undertaken on the basis of a wildlife survey made of the islands by Charles Schwartz.

The hilly preserve area will be ploughed and planted with various native fruits and grasses on which the birds thrive, as well as trees. Numerous small water catchment areas will be built.

Birds expected to take advantage of the refuge are chiefly the Ringneck Pheasant and the California Valley Quail.

Walter Donaghho writes from Chinquapin BRC Camp, Yosemite National Park, that further installment of his Journal will be coming along soon for Elepaio readers.

He writes further, "I am working in Yosemite this summer on the Gooseberry eradication (to prevent White Pine Blister Ruse). Each day takes me out into these wonderful forests where I can hear and see all kinds of birds, including Fox sparrows, Calaveras warblers, Wright flycatchers, Western tanagers, Steller's jay, Black-headed grosbeaks, Golden-crowned kinglets, Chickadees, Redheaded sapsuckers, and many others. I heard the beautiful songs of the winter wren and the Tondsend's solitaire, both the loveliest songsters of the woods (the Fox sparrow runs them a close second).

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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES:

BIRD WALK: September 14, to Kawailoa. Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 8:30 a.m.

MEETING: September 15, Monday evening, 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Library of Hawaii. Miss Hazel Peppin will show her colored motion pictures of Hawaiian birds.

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