



New Invasive Species Alert: Rose-ringed Parakeets Found on Maui

The following is a press release first published by the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) on August 6, 2021 on <https://mauiinvasive.org/2021/08/18/press-release-new-invasive-species-alert-rose-ringed-parakeets-found-on-maui/>. The Committee explains that this new pest can be told apart from the established Rosy-faced Lovebird population by their long tails (about the same length as their lime green bodies) and red beaks. (<https://mauiinvasive.org/2021/08/18/keep-an-eye-out-for-invasive-parakeet/>).

Rose-ringed parakeets (RRP) have recently been confirmed on Maui. An interagency effort between the Maui Invasive Species Committee, Hawaii Department of Agriculture, Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project, and Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project has led to one bird being captured in Kihei as a result of an online report to www.643PEST.org, a reporting resource made available by the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. At least four more birds remain at large in West Maui. These four birds were reported by a Napili resident who observed them frequenting a bird feeder. Follow-up visits by staff from the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project confirmed their presence.

Efforts were made to capture these remaining birds on July 30; however, the birds were not observed and are assumed to have moved on to another feeding location.

Not to be confused with the Rosy-faced Lovebird, which is already established on Maui, Rose-ringed parakeets are native to equatorial Africa and Asia and have invasive populations in over 35 countries. There are established populations of RRP on O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, and Kaua'i.

They are an agricultural pest that causes extensive damage to food crops, especially fruits and grains. On Kaua'i, they have already successfully invaded farmland and have caused significant losses to harvests. Their high-density roosts, loud calls, and mass accumulation of droppings cause disturbance to humans and are a potential public health risk. If they reach native forests, their impact on native ecosystems could be substantial.

The most recent population estimate of Kaua'i RRP numbers is over 10,000 individual birds, with the rate of

expansion steadily climbing along with costs to control them. The Kauai Invasive Species Committee, in partnership with the Rose-ringed Parakeet Working Group, is conducting research to develop management methods to mitigate these harmful pests.



Rose-ringed parakeets were recently observed at a bird feeder in Napili. These invasive species are not established on Maui and can cause harm to the agriculture industry, native ecosystem, and public health. Report RRP sightings to www.643pest.org or call (808) 643-PEST. Photo: Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project.

MISC is asking the Maui community to help in early detection efforts by reporting any sightings of these few remaining birds.

Report any sighting of Rose-ringed Parakeets on Maui to www.643pest.org or call (808) 643-PEST (7378). Questions may be directed to miscpr@hawaii.edu.

MISC appreciates your support in the rapid response effort to keep Maui free of this invasive species!

END

Shearwater Nesting on the Black Point Public Right of Way

By Helen Shanefield
Senior at Punahou School

Abstract

This paper reports on the data collected from my research project on Wedge-tailed Shearwaters nesting on the public right of way next to the Freeman Seabird Preserve, shares background information on my motivations, and discusses the importance of this research and my plans for future projects. I observed the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters at four different dates, and recorded their locations by hand on a map. On a fifth date, I also checked for eggs under the birds and tagged these locations with Dr. David Hyrenbach. The results indicate that there are 15 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters that nest on the studied area.



Figure 1. A Wedge-tailed Shearwater nesting on the right of way (June 28, 2021).

Introduction

I started volunteering this year at the Freeman Seabird Preserve at Black Point, Kahala. The nesting habits of the

Wedge-tailed Shearwaters ('Ua'u kani) deeply interested me, so I reached out to see what I could do to help for my senior service project this summer.

Every year, researchers and volunteers have counted the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters inside the preserve only. The shearwaters also nest on the public right of way adjacent to the preserve. Executive Director of the Hawaii Audubon Society Wendy Johnson realized that the 'Ua'u kani on the right of way had never been officially counted before.

For my project, over the course of a few weeks, I observed this population. Through this project, I hoped to raise awareness about the location of these birds to residents and other people who use the right of way. I was also interested in seeing if there were any differences in threats, habitat, or success rates between the birds on the right of way and the birds in the preserve. Protecting native Hawaiian wildlife has always been important to me. Since I live in Hawai'i, I am benefiting from nature, so I have a responsibility to offset the habitat loss that human development has caused. My observations took place over four dates, June 28, June 30, July 5, and July 7.



Figure 2. A Wedge-tailed Shearwater egg alone in a burrow (June 30, 2021).

Background Information

Wedge-tailed Shearwaters form monogamous pairs that stay together to breed every year. The colony will all breed at the same time, with each pair laying a single egg by June. Since my research took place from late June to early July, every bird that I counted for my project was assumed to be sitting on an egg (which I later confirmed). Chicks will hatch in August, and fledge from November to December. One of the largest threats to fledglings and young birds is "fallout," which is when they become confused by light pollution at night and end up crashing into structures (Urmston, 2020).

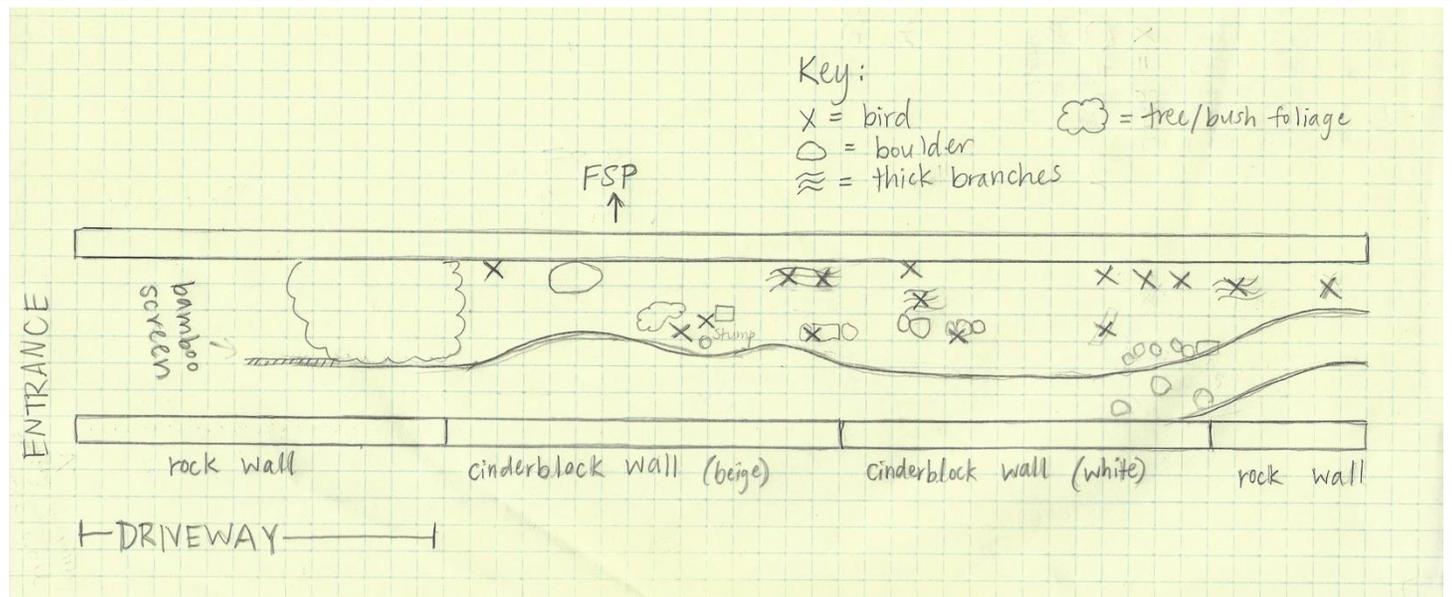


Figure 3. Hand-drawn map from July 5, 2021. The key is at the top.

Since Wedge-tailed Shearwaters nest in burrows in the sand or under rocks and bushes, they are also vulnerable to invasive predators such as cats, dogs, and rats (Urmston, 2020).

Methods

To keep track of the birds that I counted, I made a map by measuring the length of the right of way from the beginning of the rock wall to where it started to descend, which was around 120 feet. I also measured the width of the path from wall to wall, and measured the approximate distance between monuments such as boulders. Then, I drew a map of the right of way to scale on a piece of graph paper, where each square on the graph paper equaled about 2.5 by 2.5 feet. Each subsequent time I went to count shearwaters, I made a new copy of the map to compare bird positions. When counting birds, every time I saw a bird I would approximate its distance from the walls and other landmarks and then draw an “x” on the map where it had nested. I also took pictures of each bird, from the start to the end of the path, to record exactly where they were sitting. At the time of these observations, I did not check for eggs under the birds since I was by myself and had never done so before. On July 18th, however, Dr. Hyrenbach accompanied me and we were able to check for eggs and mark each nest with tags. On that date, we counted 20 birds on eggs, including birds nesting all the way down to the bottom of the right of way.

Results

Over my whole observation period, I counted 15 Wedge-tailed Shearwater adults. On any given date, one or two birds

were not at their nests, so it was important to record the multiple visits. There are no artificial nesting habitats on the right of way path, so the shearwaters nested mainly underneath the low branches of the large bushes along the route. A few birds were able to fit into the smallest possible spaces underneath boulders, which made them difficult to see. Others were very exposed, choosing to nest out in the open instead of under the foliage. These exposed nests could be vulnerable to cats, dogs, rats, or any other animal brought by people to the right of way. During my observations, people using the right of way occasionally had dogs, but they were all leashed and kept away from the nests. Most of the birds nested close to the rock wall bordering the Freeman Seabird Preserve, which is at least several feet away from the foot traffic.

Discussion

Learning more about Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and getting to observe them for my project made me realize how lucky I am to live here in Hawai‘i where we have such a diverse array of native species. I would love to continue volunteering any way I can to protect and maintain their populations. In the future, I hope to create a questionnaire for Black Point residents about Wedge-tailed Shearwaters nesting in their yards, since many birds also nest on private waterfront properties. This could be another frontier for the research.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Wendy Johnson, Alice Roberts, and Dr. David Hyrenbach for their help with this project.

References

Urmston, J. (2020, August 28). Wedge-tailed Shearwaters ('Ua'u Kani) on O'ahu, Hawai'i.

ArcGIS StoryMaps. Retrieved July 3, 2021, from <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e98492536ee145baad01d54c90f7d0c3>

The Avian Botulism Alert Network:

A New Tool for Hawai'i's Wetland Birds

The following article was first published on September 2 on <https://pacificbirds.org/2021/09/the-avian-botulism-alert-network-a-new-tool-for-hawai%CA%BBis-wetland-birds/>

The new tool on <https://www.hiwaterbirds.com/report-a-sick-waterbird> allows the public to report confirmed or suspect cases of avian botulism to the Hawai'i botulism network (see screenshot below).

A new, informative website provides resources and a place to report possible botulism outbreaks in Hawai'i's waterbird populations. The launch of the reporting tool by the Hawai'i Wildlife Ecology Lab at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is already helping managers and researchers address the serious threat that botulism poses to waterbirds on the islands. The work was supported with a 2020 Partnership grant from Pacific Birds.

Avian botulism is a paralytic disease which causes the infected birds to be unable to lift their heads or properly fly or walk. Hundreds of endangered waterbirds can be affected every year in Hawai'i, with the majority dying from the disease.

Unfortunately, most birds die before they can be rescued, but with swift reporting the outbreaks can be limited.

The new web portal, housed at the Hawai'i Waterbirds Partnership, is both a resource and a reporting tool. Managers can quickly report when an outbreak is occurring; the network will alert partners so that they can increase search efforts for sick birds or carcasses at their own sites. This will help reduce the severity of further outbreaks, because avian botulism creates a "bird-to-bird cycle" where maggots feed on dead birds, concentrating the toxin, and are then eaten by other birds, poisoning them as well. Data are also shared with the Wildlife Health Information Sharing Partnership (WHISPers).

An Alert Network in Action

In July, the new reporting portal was tested when two cases of suspected botulism were found at Hāmākua Marsh on

O'ahu. An adult and chick Ae'o (Hawaiian Stilt, *Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*) were found alive, although later succumbed to the disease in veterinary care. The case was reported so that other managers could step up patrols for sick or dead birds. Over time, the aim is to have all botulism cases reported to increase these rapid responses.

REPORT A SICK WATERBIRD

Avian botulism is a paralytic disease that kills thousands of waterbirds globally each year. Infected birds will present with limp necks, trouble walking and flying. Wetland managers and caretakers throughout Hawai'i must swiftly respond to suspected cases of botulism to limit outbreak spread. Please report confirmed or suspect cases of avian botulism to our Hawai'i botulism network below.

1. Report your suspected botulism case to initiate response protocol. This will send an email to our listserv (hiwaterbirds-grp@hawaii.edu). Please wait for a response about collecting samples.

Please include the following fields in your email:

- Reporters Name:
- Reporters Phone Number:
- Reporters Email Address:
- Location of the sick bird(s):
- Species affected:
- Approximate number of animals affected:

2. Read about management practices for controlling avian botulism
3. A follow-up email concerning your suspected botulism case will provide details on data reporting and specimen collection
4. Collect specimen samples and submit to USGS for testing following proper protocol

REPORT A SUSPECTED AVIAN BOTULISM CASE

END

Seeking Editor for the Hawai'i Christmas Bird Count

By Thane Pratt

Every year over the Christmas holiday, birders around the country meet on a special day to count the birds in their neighborhood. This century-old, conservation-minded tradition successfully replaced an even older and contrary practice of gathering on Christmas Day to shoot every bird in sight!

The popular Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is sponsored by the National Audubon Society (NAS), and in Hawai'i by Hawaii Audubon Society (HAS). Data from the count go into a national database used to follow trends in bird numbers. A volunteer editor checks over the data (entered by the bird-counters) and submits an annual report. For 21 years, that editor for Hawai'i has been Thane Pratt. Now that Thane is retiring from this role, NAS is seeking a new CBC editor. Qualified readers are encouraged to apply. Qualifications include a solid knowledge of the Hawaiian avifauna and the ability and willingness to review data entry in an online database and to write a 500-word report aimed at the birding public and penned in plain English. (The editor is NOT responsible for organizing the CBC - that's the job of HAS and NAS.) Excellent and immediate support is available both from online manuals and from a "live person," the ever-helpful and appreciative NAS CBC Director. Thane will be available to coach during the transition. The CBC editor's job is rewarding for someone who likes following the ebb-and-flow of Hawai'i's amazing birdlife and the people who track it. Please contact Thane at thane-linda@earthlink.net or 808-443-8160.

More help wanted! HAS is looking for an enthusiastic organizer of the annual Volcano CBC on the Big Island, see Announcements section for details!

122nd National Audubon Society CBC Calendar for Hawai'i

NOTE: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, the following information is subject to NAS guidelines, e.g., compilers cannot confirm events before Nov 15. For detailed requirements visit <https://www.audubon.org/news/christmas-bird-count-compiler-announcements>.

Big Island

- **Kona CBC:** Saturday, December 18, 2021. Contact: Lance Tanino, lance.tanino@gmail.com, 808-495-6545
- **Volcano CBC:** Sunday, December 19, 2021

With five routes to choose from in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and nearby, this is a great opportunity to see native forest birds, with a chance for finding endangered species. Contact:

Thane Pratt, thane-linda@earthlink.net, 808-443-8160

- **Hilo CBC:** Sunday, January 2, 2022

This circle encompasses the greater Hilo area. Limited spaces available with required Covid protocols and restrictions. Contact:

Sherman Wing, shermanwing1@gmail.com, 303-324-9636

Kaua'i

- **Kapa'a CBC:** Saturday, December 18, 2021

Contact: Kimberly Uyehara, cbckauai@gmail.com or 808-635-9309

- **Lihu'e CBC:** Sunday, December 26, 2021

Established in 1971, this count ran annually for twenty years before falling dormant for three decades. It was revived in 2020 and your assistance is welcome in helping keep this circle going strong for years to come! Contact:

Jennifer Rothe, jennifer.a.rothe@gmail.com (preferred), 920-312-2782

- **Waimea CBC:** To be announced

Maui

- **Lana'i CBC:** Thursday, December 16, 2021

- **Hana CBC:** Tuesday, December 21, 2021

- **Haleakalā CBC:** Monday, December 27, 2021

- **'Iao CBC:** Monday, December 20, 2021

Contact for any of the four: Sonny Gamponia, sgamponia@gmail.com, 808-244-0727

- **Moloka'i (Kualapu'u CBC):** Tuesday, December 14, 2021

The Moloka'i circle is divided into Topside and Kalaupapa. Both trips survey wastewater facilities, aquaculture farms, and historic places - locations normally restricted to the public. All participants must show verified Hawaii SMART Health Card and masks required. Contact:

Arleone Dibben-Young, nene@nene.net, 808-553-5992

O'ahu

- **Honolulu CBC:** Sunday, December 19, 2021

This count covers O'ahu from Waimanalo on the east to Aiea on the west and from Kaneohe on the north to Diamond Head on the south. Some birding experience is helpful, but you do not need to be an expert birder to participate. If you have a preference for your count area, please let me know.

Contact: Pete Donaldson, pdnldsn.bird@mac.com (preferred), (H) 808-456-5662, (C) 808-371-4447

- **Waipio (Central O'ahu) CBC:** Sunday, January 2, 2022

Contact: Dick May, mayhi02@hotmail.com or 808-375-2439

NW Hawaiian Islands

- **Midway Atoll CBC:** Saturday, December 25, 2021

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is currently closed to public visitation. The CBC is conducted annually by refuge staff, contractors, and program volunteers. Contact: Jonathan Plissner, jonathan_plissner@fws.gov, 808-954-4815

KEEP CATS SAFE INDOORS!

Keep them and the birds safe.

Welcome Home to Our Shorebirds at Paikō Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary

Low Tide Reef-Walk: September 18, 2021, 8:00 am
by HAS Board Member Alice P S Roberts

First, let's take a look back at our 2nd of 3 Paikō Trips this year, June 26, 9:00 am; four of us gathered to observe Paikō Lagoon & its wildlife. The tide was a very very LOW -0.3' (about as LOW as it can go). It was HOT & sticky without the trades. One of the resident Hawaiian Stilts (ae'o/kukuluae'o, *Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*) greeted us.



Photo credit: Alice Roberts

If you've never been to Paikō, it is quite changed from my first visits in 1985... signs & ropes...besides Mother Nature's incredible shifting whispering sands; have you listened as you walked? Cecilia & Bob from CO joined Robynn & me; Cecilia was born & raised here.



Photo credit: Alice Roberts

NOW, about the 3rd of 3 Paikō trips, September 18, 2021; six folks joined me. We spent about 15 minutes viewing from the end of Kuli'ou'ou Road. We counted 8 Hawaiian Stilts; later 3 flew nearer to us, one had bands on both legs above the ankles, see left bird in picture below:



Photo credit: Laura Zoller

Many people think that a bird knee is backwards; actually that's the ankle.

We also counted 4 kōlea - Pacific Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva*), 3 Ruddy Turnstones ('akekeke/keke, *Arenaria interpres*). We thought the biggest news of the day: we saw, amongst the many ducks, 2 'alae 'ula (Hawaiian/Common Gallinule, *Gallinula gallinula sandvicensis*).



Photo credit: Alice Roberts

We'd only seen one on the June trip. The Easter Duck was still there (as seen in the July/August 'Elepaio 81:4.) and perhaps a hybrid (light brown) offspring of his.

This is the first group (from left to right: Jackie, Bonnie, Jordan, Jean, and Mark) I've ever hosted where each had binoculars, and several had cameras; a fun group for sure!



Photo credit: Alice Roberts

When we turned back, we saw a Wandering Tattler ('ūlili, *Tringa incana*) nearing the edge of the lagoon. Then we saw an immature (brown with white streaks) Black-crowned Night-Heron ('auku'u, *Nycticorax nycticorax*) stalking in the lagoon. Throughout the trip, we saw many White Terns (manu-o-kū, *Gygis alba*) flying in wondrous synchronization and several flappy white Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) with their s-shaped necks and outstretched legs. Though it was quite windy, we sadly saw no expected 'iwa (Great Frigatebird, *Fregata minor*). Do I need to list all the urban birds we sighted? If you want to know, contact me. BTW, we collected 3 bags of trash as we returned.

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.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Hawaii Audubon Society Regular Member | International Membership: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Hawaii Audubon Society Student Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$28 Canada & Mexico |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Hawaii Audubon Society Family Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$33 Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Hawaii Audubon Society Supporting Member | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Donation | |

Donations are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.

Name: _____

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Phone: _____ Email: _____

- Email me the 'Elepaio Mail me the 'Elepaio Email me volunteer opportunities, updates, & field trips

Please make checks payable to **Hawaii Audubon Society**.

Mail form and payment to Hawaii Audubon Society, 850 Richards St, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813.

Email: hiaudsoc@gmail.com <http://www.hawaiiudubon.org> Phone: (808) 528-1432

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

Announcements

CBC Compiler for Volcano Circle Needed!

HAS would like to express our deep gratitude to Thane Pratt, as he will be the organizer of the annual Volcano CBC ("compiler") for the last time. Thane, CBC compiler on the Big Island for 21 (!) years, is leaving his post for Christmases on the mainland. We are now looking for an enthusiastic new compiler. Nevertheless, Thane is available to help his successor "learn the ropes." Qualifications include bird-identification and organizational ability. Duties include coordinating the count with HAS and with the leaders for each of the five individual field routes (usually the same leaders from year to year), plus collecting the completed data forms and entering the data on an online database.

Support is available from online manuals and from the NAS CBC Director. The job doesn't take so much time, and it's a reward way to bring the world of birds to people locally!

Please contact Thane at thane-linda@earthlink.net or 808-443-8160. Also visit <https://www.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count-compiler-resources#02> for more compiler resources.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY Fieldwork Habitat Restoration

When: January through March, Saturdays from 8 to 11 am
Where: Freeman Seabird Preserve (FSP), located in Southeast O'ahu at Black Point. For more information, go to <https://www.freemanseabirdpreserve.com>.

FSP is generally closed to public visitation to protect sensitive nesting habitat. Reservations may be arranged for individuals or groups that would like to help restore Hawaiian coastal vegetation and seabird nesting habitat. Approved COVID-19 protocols will be applied.

RSVP: Email Alice Roberts at mermaidshi@aol.com in advance to participate.

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