



‘ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society
For the Protection of
Hawai‘i’s Native Wildlife

VOLUME 82, NUMBER 3

MAY / JUNE 2022

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

By Susan Scott, Hawaii Audubon Society (HAS) President

Most of you know me as the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*’s marine science columnist, a 33-year-long job that ended in March, 2020. But that wasn’t the end of my work as an environmentalist. On January 17th, the Board of Directors elected me President of the Hawaii Audubon Society.

In February, the Board members held our annual retreat and spent a productive afternoon discussing how to best move this venerable organization forward. We agreed to continue the Society’s successful projects: 1) our bird book, 2) this journal, 3) Freeman Seabird Preserve, 4) kōlea research and education, and 5) bird tours and talks. To these undertakings, we added two more: 6) support manu-o-kū (White Tern) research, and 7) form partnerships with other conservation organizations throughout the state.

These seven undertakings meet the Society’s 83-year-old goals of the protection of, and teaching about, Hawai‘i’s native species. The following are highlights of these past, present, and future efforts.

HAWAII’S BIRDS, 7TH EDITION, 2020

The Society is the only Audubon group of about 450 in the country that publishes a state bird guide. The first edition was published in 1967.

The 7th edition, an all-volunteer labor of love, came out during the pandemic, yet sold well. We have recently ordered our second batch of 10,000 copies. Sales of this book help support the Society, as does the sale of other merchandise in our online store (<https://hiaudubon.org/shop/>).

THE ‘ELEPAIO

We are also the only Audubon chapter that publishes a peer-reviewed scientific journal containing research articles, updates on environmental issues, and HAS activities. These bimonthly, open-access journals (available on the new website www.hiaudubon.org) are a wealth of information.

They are also inspiring. For a presentation at the last annual meeting, I skimmed through decades of ‘Elepaio journals, and they warmed my heart. In the first issue of 1939, J. d’Arcy Northwood shared this insight: "Birds can teach us how to live more happily and completely.... Let us learn wisdom from the birds before it is too late."

FREEMAN SEABIRD PRESERVE

Since 2007, the Society has owned and managed the Freeman Seabird Preserve in Kahala’s Black Point neighborhood. This jewel of an acre hosts a colony of ‘ua‘u kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwaters), native seabirds tended by dozens of dedicated volunteers.

The birds appreciate the efforts. At the start, fewer than 100 wedgie parents were attempting to raise chicks among the weeds and rubble of an empty lot. In 2021, 816 parent birds had set up housekeeping there. Some dig their own burrows in the ground, but others are happy laying eggs in clay, rock, and tile shelters that wedgie fans build for them. Still other shearwater parents prefer raising chicks under the bushy branches of native shrubs. Since January, teams of students, educators, biologists, botanists, and other volunteers have been weeding, planting, and building in anticipation of the

wedgie's April return. Work at the Preserve continues throughout the year as volunteers tend native plants, conduct research, monitor with cameras, trap rats, and teach.

In 2022, the Disney Conservation Fund awarded a grant to the Society's nonprofit partner, Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge, to hire an educator. You'll be seeing Alanna Johnston here and there as she works to create more student activities and train teachers about 'ua'u kani and Hawai'i conservation. Alanna will also work with Society researchers and volunteers in sharing the joy of shearwaters with the community.



On February 27, 2022, Maia Payne (fifth from left), grade 10, and her Kailua scout Troop 311, led this nest-building day for her Eagle Scout Project, all photos by Susan Scott.

BIRD TOURS AND TALKS



Kailua's Trinity Christian School preschool class after Susan's Kōlea talk, arranged by teacher Ms. Pua Kane.

Several board members and other volunteers are restarting the popular walking tours, including Honolulu's manu-o-kū, Ka'ena Point's seabirds, and the waterbirds and shorebirds of Paikō Lagoon and Kawainui Marsh. We are also offering classroom talks and slide shows. Just ask.

Other future plans are neighbor island tours and city walks that feature all of Hawai'i's birds, including introduced birds, which are part of Hawai'i's wildlife history. Upcoming bird tours are on our website under the tab, "What We Do – Events."

KŌLEA COUNT AND TAGGING

The Society has long supported Pacific Golden-Plover research, and continues to do so with Kōlea Count, www.koleacount.org, a citizen science project that collects data about these much-loved shorebirds. In addition to gathering information, the Count encourages residents and visitors to notice and appreciate these remarkable birds that have adapted to our cities, yards, parks, and cemeteries.

We will publish the Kōlea Count data here, as well as share Dr. Wally Johnson's March 2022 Punchbowl Cemetery tagging results, sponsored by Brigham Young University Hawai'i and HAS.

Students, professors, and HAS members have all volunteered to help in these projects. We know that Every Kōlea Counts.

HUI MANU-O-KŪ: WHITE TERN MONITORING

In 2016, Board member Rich Downs with other White Tern fans started this grassroots group dedicated to White Tern research. Starting with one breeding pair near Koko Head Crater in 1961, the manu-o-kū population has blossomed to nearly 3,000. These charming seabirds love our city's marvelous manicured trees, nesting (so far) between Hawai'i Kai and Pearl Harbor. Honolulu is the only city in the Pacific to hold this honor.

Rich Downs, manu-o-kū researcher and HAS's new Vice President, recently trained Sherine Boomla, a Kupu intern kupu.hawaii.org/ hired by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to help monitor the terns breeding



Wally Johnson (top left) got help with Kōlea tagging at Punchbowl Cemetery from Board members and staff. Shown here are Susan Scott (top middle), Wendy Kuntz (top right), Pat Moriyasu (bottom left), and Yvonne Chan (bottom right), as well as Interim Executive Director Susanne Spiessberger (bottom middle).

in Honolulu. In February, Rich counted 380 chicks and eggs in trees across the breeding range.



During a Waikiki Manu-o-Kū tour, Rich Downs explains the meaning of the blue tree ribbons.

You can see the work of the growing number of White Tern Citizen Scientists in the blue ribbons around tree trunks, indicating where the birds are raising chicks. The ties alert tree trimmers to the presence of terns, and comes with the support of our partners at DLNR and the Honolulu City and County Division of Urban Forestry. The ribbons provide the Manu-o-Kū Hotline -- 808-379-7555 -- for people to call when they find a chick on the ground. Volunteers either help reunite fallen chicks with their parents or take the youngster to the appropriate rescue facility.

HAS intends to support and expand this worthy citizen science program.

PARTNERS IN PRESERVING AND TEACHING

Most people associate the name Audubon with birds, and in that, Hawaii Audubon can be the umbrella under which

other bird conservation groups and individuals associate throughout the state. Whether they are government agencies, private entities, or solitary birders, we are partners in preserving species and enhancing habitats. Stay tuned for news about our partner organizations.

HOW THE SOCIETY WORKS

Decisions about projects and programs are made by our experienced Board of Directors, three of whom are past presidents, a testimony to their commitment to the Society. As president, it's my job to see Board decisions carried out. Helping me with that is the Society's full-time employee, Executive Director Susanne Spiessberger, and Office and Communications Manager Laura Zoller. These two dedicated women have been working with the Society for several years and are invaluable in keeping us compliant, connected, and moving ahead.

AN OFFICE: TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE?

With so many people preferring to work at home these days, nonprofit organizations are rethinking the expense of maintaining an office.



Spring cleaning: Hawaii Science Teacher Association (HaSTA) president, Gail Peiterson (left) and other educators helped move brochures and posters from the HAS office to schools.

The Board agreed that it would be good for the Society to have a physical presence in the community as a hub for meeting and educating students, residents, and visitors. We are currently looking for a friendly new office location in the Honolulu area with parking. If you know of any opportunities, please share with us.

You can help with any of the above causes by joining as a member or contacting us through our website. Hawaii Audubon Society members speak in schools, attend conferences, and lead tours.

In 1988, past Society president Sheila Conant helped me with my first book, *Ocean Watcher*, asking in return that I become a lifetime member of the Hawaii Audubon Society. I did that and now have the privilege of leading it, both in continuing doing what it does well, and in exploring new horizons.

We Society members, old and new, have much to be proud of, and a lot to look forward to. Thank you all for keeping the Hawaii Audubon Society an active and happy group. We're for the birds.



In a courtship gesture, the adult manu-o-kū on the left is presenting a fish to the adult on the right. International Marketplace.

KEEP CATS SAFE INDOORS

Keep Cats *and* Birds Safe

World Albatross Day June 19, 2022

This year, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) has chosen the theme "Climate Change" to mark the third World Albatross Day (WAD) <https://www.acap.aq/world-albatross-day/wad-2022-climate-change>. ACAP consists of thirteen members: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, Ecuador, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay.

In support of WAD and its theme, ACAP highlights one or more of the 22 albatross species. The featured species chosen for 2022 are two of the three species of albatrosses that breed in the North Pacific: the Black-footed *Phoebastria nigripes* and the Laysan *Phoebastria immutabilis*. Both these near-threatened albatrosses have most of their breeding populations on the low-lying atolls of the North-Western Hawaiian Islands, which are all at risk from sea level rise and storm floods, resulting in the loss of more and more breeding sites.

World Migratory Bird Day May 14, 2022

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is officially celebrated on the second Saturday in May, (<https://www.migratorybirdday.org/>). This year, the focus is on the impact of light pollution. Most birds are nocturnal migrants as there are fewer predators, the air in the atmosphere is usually less turbulent, and the air is cooler.

However, light pollution from homes, businesses, and other infrastructure is increasing about 2% per year. Artificial light attracts and disorients migrating birds, disrupting feeding and other vital behaviors, and making them more likely to land in dangerous areas, where they are vulnerable to collisions and predation.

Based on studies, <https://doi.org/10.1650/CONDOR-13-090.1>, between 100 million and 1 billion birds are killed in building collisions annually in the United States. WMBD aims to reduce the impact of light pollution by spreading the

message "dim the lights for birds at night" and highlighting the steps that we all can take to support it.

FLY AWAY BIRDS

By Marie Riley

HAS would like to thank late author Marie Riley for her generous donation and for contributing the following story.

Every evening, Malia and her mother took care of their garden. Malia liked being outside after she finished her homework. "Mama, what's this? Is it a flower?" Malia reached out and touched it gently.

"Yes, it is a very unusual flower. It almost doesn't look like a flower, does it?"

"It wasn't here yesterday!" Malia said.

"Our little plant finally grew big enough to bloom," Mama said.

Malia gazed at the orange and blue flower.

The evening sky glowed with the same colors.

"Malia, don't daydream, please," Mama said as she picked up dry leaves. "Move on and water the next plant."

"Mama, I like this flower!" Malia touched the new flower again. "What's its name?"

"It's a bird of paradise."

"Why is it called that?"

"I don't know. Our grandparents called it bird of paradise."

"Is that because it can fly?"

Mama laughed. "You know flowers can't fly!"

"But it does look like a bird that could fly," Malia said. She sighed. She had wished for a pet bird for her birthday. She hadn't told her mother and tutu how disappointed she felt when they didn't give her a parrot.

The next morning Malia saw more "birds" on the plant. She rushed off to school singing, "Seven birds, seven birds."

That evening, Malia watered the plants by herself.

Her mother was at Auntie Momi's house cooking food for a lu'au. Malia watered for a long time. The last rays of the sun touched the clouds with golden orange. The sun began to disappear behind the blue mountains.

Malia's tutu came out on the lanai and said, "Dinner will be ready soon."

"Tutu, why is the sun setting so early?"

Tutu laughed, "Because it's almost Halloween. By October the sun sets much earlier than in the summertime. Come in the house soon."

Malia went to turn off the hose. When she looked around, she gasped. She couldn't see the bird flowers! She whispered to herself, "What happened? Did the birds fly away?"

Malia stood still in the evening dim light trying to imagine how the birds disappeared. The trade winds began to pick up and touch all the leaves. The wind stirred Malia's imagination. She daydreamed. She could see what might have happened.

One by one the birds lifted up their orange wings, orange tailfeathers, and blue top- notch crowns. They sailed on the trade winds. Seven orange birds were flying toward the ocean and the rising moon.

Tutu called, "Malia, come in. The food's on the table."

"Tutu, the bird flowers are gone!"

"Maybe your mother cut them to give to Auntie Momi for the lu'au."

At dinner, Malia didn't say a word about the birds.

That night, as she slept, Malia dreamed of flying with the birds of paradise. It felt easy.

The breeze carried her. It was like floating in the ocean.

But instead of water it was air. She didn't have to do anything. She didn't have to learn anything. She felt that she always knew how to fly. She felt the cool air current, like waves, gently lift her as she and the birds floated magically, freely. She felt light as silent laughter as she glided with the seven birds above the ocean in the moonlight.

She smiled at the distant trees along the shoreline. She and the birds were sailing on air toward the moon, which was growing larger. Malia felt she could fly for as long as she liked.

Malia awoke before sunrise and went outside. The magical plant stood still in the night air. All was still. The first golden light of sunrise rose across the ocean. The trade winds began to stir. Malia took a deep breath, closed her eyes, and imagined.

In the eastern sky, seven far-away orange birds appeared, growing bright from the sun. They seemed larger and faster the closer they came. They flew directly to their home, the plant with its stems and leaves pointing toward the sky. Malia could hear their wings fluttering and whooshing as they settled on the stems of the plant, their perches.

Malia opened her eyes. She touched the "birds" lightly. They were real flowers. Malia stood still. Tutu came outside and stood beside her.

"Tutu, where do the birds of paradise go at night?"

Tutu smiled.

Malia laughed lightly and answered her own question. "To 'paradise!'"

GLOSSARY

MALIA - Hawaiian name for Mary

BIRD OF PARADISE - A tropical African plant of the banana family "having several brilliant orange and blue flowers protruding from a green spathe in a form that resembles a bird in flight."

Webster's New World Dictionary. Second Edition, Simon and Schuster.

MOMI - Hawaiian name that means Pearl

TUTU - Grandmother in Hawaiian

LANAI - open porch

LU'AU- traditional Hawaiian party

TRADE WINDS - tropical winds blowing over the Hawaiian Islands from the East

Hawaii Audubon Society Membership and Donations

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 nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and does not receive dues paid to the National Audubon Society. Thank you for supporting your local Hawaii Audubon Society.

Going forward, all annual memberships end on Dec 31. As a courtesy, all 2022 memberships (new or renewed this calendar year) will expire Dec 31, 2023. See details on <https://hiaudubon.org/membership>.

Please choose your membership level on our website: <https://hiaudubon.org/membership>

- \$15 Hawaii Audubon Society Student Membership
- \$25 Hawaii Audubon Society Regular Membership
- \$28 International Membership, Canada & Mexico
- \$33 International Membership, other countries
- \$40 Hawaii Audubon Society Family Membership
- \$100 Hawaii Audubon Society Supporting Membership

Or, make a tax-deductible donation in any amount on <https://hiaudubon.org/donate/>.

Members receive the bimonthly '*Elepaio* journal, with peer-reviewed scientific articles and local environmental news and activities. **The '*Elepaio* is sent by email, or contact hiaudsoc@gmail.com to receive by mail.**

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

Announcements

Upcoming Events and Field Trips

For regular updates, go to
<https://hiaudubon.org/events/>

7th Manu o Kū Festival: May 7, 10 am to 2 pm

Preparations are under way to bring the free festival centered around the native bird ambassador, the manu-o-kū, back to the Coronation Lawn of 'Iolani Palace'.

It will feature games, crafts and learning activities centered on native Hawaiian wildlife. There will also be entertainment, speakers, several walking tours, spotting scope, wildlife costume contest, and more.

Second location, from May 1 to 6, will be the International Market Place with its iconic Banyan Tree, perfect for daily walking tours and story telling.

Details will be posted on our website and www.conservehawaii.org/manuokufestival2022.

Paikō Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary:

June 11, at 8 am

Just a good summer low tide - visit Paikō at low tide (-0.3'). Learn about the many native plants at the water's edge. We may see some stay-behind migratory shorebirds as well as a resident pair of Hawaiian Stilts, year-round 'iwa, egrets & herons, lots of urban birds & ducks, and other critters. Meet at the end of Kuli'ou'ou Road.

A waiver is required for all participants. Please download from <https://hiaudubon.org/events/> and email the completed waiver form back before the tour or bring it along to the site.

Leader: Alice Roberts (HAS Board member)

RSVP: MermaidsHI@aol.com

'Elepaio ISN 0013-6069

Managing Editor: Susanne Spiessberger

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The 'Elepaio is printed on recycled paper and published six times per year.

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HAS guided tours are a membership benefit. Non-members, please join us as a new member, or consider making an online donation of \$5 or more for your participation. Mahalo for your support.

NEW MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Going forward, all annual memberships end on Dec 31 (<https://hiaudubon.org/membership>). As a courtesy, all new 2022 memberships and 2022 renewals will expire December 31, 2023. Starting 2023, if you join

- between January 1 and June 30, your membership will expire on December 31 of the same year.
- on or after July 1, your membership will expire on December 31 of the next year.

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