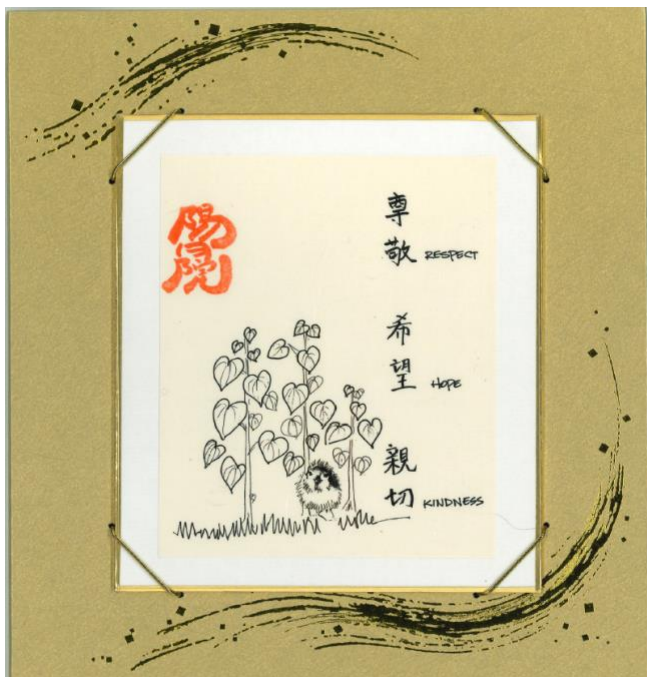


A New Year's Blessing

By Robynn Yim

I call him my New Year's Blessing bird.

At the beginning of 2023, I participated in a fundraiser project for His Holiness Gayuna Cealo, a Buddhist monk who does international philanthropic work. In Japanese tradition, he offered to bless people's wishes for the New Year. Participants wrote their wishes and sent them to His Holiness in Japan to be blessed and transformed into keepsake works of art.



I created calligraphy for 'respect', 'hope' and kindness' along with a drawing of a shearwater chick in the milo grove, and sent it electronically to His Holiness in Japan. It was then printed on parchment and affixed to a gold mat. The monk affixed his red seal during the live Zoom blessing.

My wish was simple yet abstract, a testament that dreams are limited only by your imagination. The international blessing via zoom was held in late January. I received my artwork a month later and gave no more thought to it. When the birds returned to Freeman Seabird Preserve to lay their eggs in June, there were at least a dozen strewn about the property unattended, so I did not pay much attention to the egg counted in a burrow dug next to the milo grove closest to the slope on July 14th.

Fast forward to the chick count on September 14th and I am shocked to hear a volunteer call out "chick!" when checking what I thought was just another hole. I have been watering that milo hedge twice a week and never saw him. Once I knew he was there, we added a roof tile to protect him from the sun and rain.



"Milo" the shearwater, Robynn Yim photo.

The chick was very shy, usually sitting in the burrow with his back end facing out so it was difficult to see him in the shadows. In recent weeks he started to sit further forward, occasionally peering out, but was still obscured by the pa‘u-o-Hi‘iaka that grew near the entrance. Naturally, I called him Milo.

Late Wednesday afternoon, November 22, Milo was not in the burrow, and I thought he may have departed, but after sunset he returned and retreated to the very back of the hole.

On Saturday morning, November 25, he was gone. Hopefully, he was able to navigate his way out to sea by the light of the waxing moon on a beautifully clear evening. Fair winds, little friend! Thanks for bringing my wish to life.

(Robynn is a long term volunteer tending plants at Freeman Seabird Preserve.

To learn more about Gayuna Cealo’s Foundation for Global Harmony: <http://cealo.biz/index.html> Ed.)

Kōlea Can Read License Plates

By Susan Scott

In spring of 2022, plover researcher Wally Johnson and HAS volunteers attached satellite-tracking tags to 20 kōlea (Pacific Golden-Plovers) in Punchbowl, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Of the 14 satellite-tagged birds that returned to the cemetery that fall, Johnson and volunteers recaptured 10 and removed the battery-depleted tags. That left four kōlea still carrying tags.

In an uncounted number of tries throughout spring and fall of 2023, Johnson and volunteers failed to recapture those four birds. The plovers seemed to have learned to avoid nets set out in pre-dawn darkness, and even evaded those propelled from a specialized net-gun in a moving car. We joked that these brilliant birds were reading our license plate numbers.

Finally, on November 29th, Johnson and net-gun expert Joshua Fisher, a USFWS invasive species biologist, caught one of the four sat-tagged birds. Johnson saw no evidence of harm caused by the tag and its harness, and the birds apparently agreed. The four have flown, with backpacks, two round-trips between Alaska and Hawai‘i, totaling about 12,000 miles.

The remaining three birds with backpacks look healthy and continue to forage in their respective territories of Punchbowl Cemetery.



Above left, Josh Fisher, happy here with his successful capture. Kōlea that were caught in the past are extra-wary. To sneak up on a bird, Josh shoots a net out the window of a moving car, which doesn’t harm the bird. The yellow net flies about 35 feet via a CO2-powered cartridge. Wally Johnson photo.

Above right, the removed tag, with harness. Total weight is 4.2 grams, about 2% of the bird’s body weight. A U.S. nickel weighs 4.9 grams. Joshua Fisher photo.



Wally Johnson holds the bird, still wearing its backpack tracker. Joshua Fisher photo.



Kona Arc participants. Mike Carion photo.

Arc of Kona Presentation

By Mike Carion

On November 20th, volunteers from the HAS Big Island Hui gave a bird presentation to members of the Arc of Kona, a wonderful nonprofit organization for persons with disabilities, their advocates and families.

Eleven participants received and enjoyed information about Big Island birds. With the energy level and enthusiasm so high, the event was rewarding for everyone involved. After a slide show, each participant joined HAS Big Island Hui volunteer, Jessie Chambers, in an art project. The hands-on project was well received and artists took their birds home with them.

We heard that the bird talk we presented led to requests to see the birds in person. We're happy to continue to expand the Big Island birding experience.

Thanks to Ann Humphrey for connecting us to the Arc.

(Since its start in 1950, the organization has undergone several name changes. In 1991, the group permanently removed the R word formerly used for mental disability from its title, and adopted the current title, Arc. Ed)

‘Alalā Project Field Trip

By Mike Carion

On November 26, 19 members of the HAS Big Island Hui visited the [‘Alalā Project](#) facility in Volcano Town. The project is a public-private partnership with the mission of restoring Hawai‘i’s endangered native crow, the ‘alalā, to the wild.

The ‘Alalā Project has two locations, one in the Volcano Town area, the other at the Maui Bird Conservation Center on the slopes of Haleakalā. Both are managed by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance Hawai‘i Endangered Bird Conservation Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources. The facilities are not open to the public.

We were able to see the last few remaining ‘alalā and learn how the facility is working to return the captive-raised birds to the wild. We also saw Kaua‘i’s highly endangered forest birds, the ‘akikiki and ‘akeke‘e, as well as the palila, found only on Mauna Kea’s western slope.

The work at the center is the only hope of keeping these species from extinction. We’re grateful to the center for their efforts and for allowing us to see their awesome work.



The ‘alalā, or Hawaiian Crow, (Corvus hawaiiensis). Mike Carion photo.

Snails and Ginger and Ferns, Oh My

By Susan Scott



Native Hawaiian land snails are critically endangered. In Mt. Ka'ala's natural bog, however, these snails are easy to find and admire. The pictured snail is a Succinea spp. The shell is about ½ inch long. It is crawling on a leaf of the kanawao plant (Broussaisia arguta.) Susan Scott photo.

On November 18, Wendy Kuntz, HAS board member and Kapi'olani Community College biology professor, arranged a service trip to Mt. Ka'ala for the school's Ecology Club. Seven student members joined the work party along with four other HAS volunteers for a total of 11, led by Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) specialist Jenna Masters.

At 4,025 feet tall, Mt. Ka'ala of the Wai'anae Range is the highest mountain on O'ahu. Because the 7-mile round-trip trail from Wai'anae is one of the most difficult hikes on the island, we were happy to trade a ride up the mountain in the DOFAW van for some weeding.

Little did we know. After climbing a pig-exclusion fence, we entered a dense native cloud forest loaded with rarely seen native plants, tree snails, dragonflies, and forest birds. Invading this breathtaking 1,100-acre Natural Area Reserve is kahili ginger, a hardy introduced species with stems thick as cigars.

With small hand saws, we cut down as many ginger stalks as we could get to (tough walking on the steep, spongy hillside) and sprayed herbicide on stumps to prevent regrowth.

Two hours later, Jenn rewarded our backbreaking work with a boardwalk hike through a misty fairyland of O'ahu's rare native forest.



Jenna Masters, DOFAW's Natural Resource Management Specialist, demonstrates ginger cutting with a hand saw (her left hand). She is spraying the stumps with herbicide, dyed blue so workers can see the saturation. The tall stems in the background are hāpu'u, endemic Hawaiian tree ferns, (Cibotium spp.) A pile of cut kahili ginger, AKA Himalayan ginger (Hedychium gardnerianum) is in the foreground. Kahili ginger is a threat to Hawai'i's native forests by outcompeting native plants. Wendy Kuntz photo.

The Board of Directors: Who's On It and How It Works

By Susan Scott

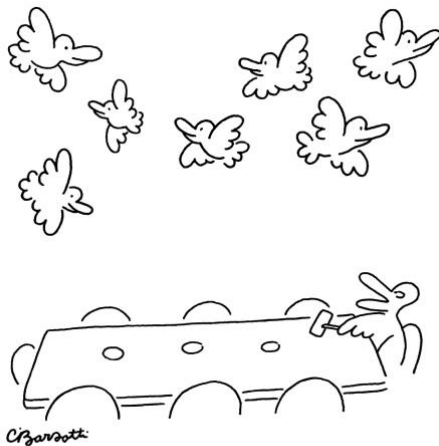
In September, the Board of Directors reelected me HAS president for a second two-year term. I'm honored that the board trusts me to continue the leadership of this venerable organization through 2025. I'll do my best to work with all concerned to continue sharing the joy of birds.

To clarify the board's role:

WHAT: The Hawai'i Audubon Society has an 11-member, all-volunteer Board of Directors, each serving 2-year terms. Maximum service is 5 terms (10 years.) According to Hawai'i state law, the maximum number of board members allowed for a nonprofit organization is 13.

Having a large board with members of various backgrounds and professional experiences gives us lots to work with in deciding paths forward. With so much positive energy, the future of Hawai'i Audubon is bright.

WHY IT MATTERS: We board members share ideas and skills to provide vision and leadership. During the past two years, we focused on spreading the joy of Hawai'i's native birds through projects and education. To that aim, we chose three species that residents and visitors often see in our cities, parks, and preserves: kōlea (Pacific Golden-Plovers), manu-o-kū (White Terns), and 'u'au kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwaters.)



"The meeting will come to order."

CartoonStock.com

WHO: That three current board members are past HAS presidents says a lot about their commitment to the organization. The three are John Harrison, Wendy Johnson, and Liz Kumabe-Maynard.

At the September 18, 2023 meeting, the Board voted to reelect all members whose terms expired: me (Susan Scott), Rich Downs, Wendy Kuntz, Yvonne Chan, and Liz Kumabe-Maynard. The Board also unanimously reelected the same four officers. We are the voting members of the Executive Committee. Nonvoting members of the Executive Committee are pro bono accountant, Rhea Reed, and pro bono attorney, David Johnson.

NEW MEMBER: After an outstanding year as our Big Island ambassador, Mike Carion of Kona volunteered to join the board. Please join Mike's [Hawai'i Audubon, Big Island Hui Facebook page](#) to follow tours and events happening on Hawai'i Island.

FUTURE: In January 2024, we board members and advisors will meet for our annual all-day retreat to discuss how we can move Hawai'i Audubon forward to be a leading worldwide voice for Hawai'i's birds.

Hawai'i Audubon Society 2024 Leadership

A big mahalo to all our board members and volunteers for their efforts and hard work.

The following officers were reelected for 2024-2025:

President: Susan Scott

Vice President: Rich Downs

Secretary: Wendy Johnson

Treasurer: John Harrison

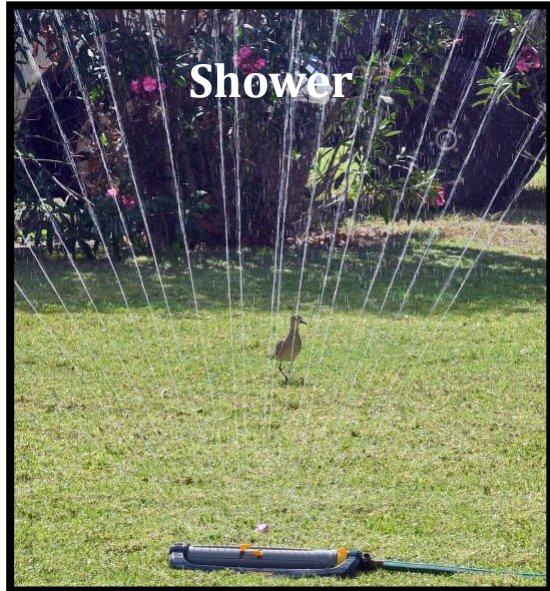
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HAWAI‘I KŌLEA

Photos donated by plover lovers.

Stretch



Shower



Eat



Nap



Brawl



Retire



Hawai'i Audubon Society Membership and Donations

The mission of the Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i Audubon Society.

If you join between January 1 and June 30, your membership expires December 31 of the **same** year.

If you join July 1 or after, your membership expires December 31 of the **next** year.

See details on <https://hiaudubon.org/membership>.

Please renew by choosing your membership level on our website: <https://hiaudubon.org/membership>

\$15 Hawai'i Audubon Society Student Membership

\$25 Hawai'i Audubon Society Regular Membership

\$40 Hawai'i Audubon Society Family Membership

\$100 Hawai'i Audubon Society Supporting Membership

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

New international membership ('Elepaio by email only) is now \$25; for international **renewals** requesting a print version, the fee is \$38.

All members will receive the bimonthly 'Elepaio journal by email with peer-reviewed scientific articles and local environmental news and activities. To request the 'Elepaio by mail (**not available to new international members**), contact: office@hiaudubon.org.

Announcements

For regular updates, check out hiaudubon.org/events and/or our social media sites.

Kōlea Count

From December 1 until March 31, you can participate in the Kōlea Count citizen science project. Join a "Big Count" for large areas such as campuses, golf courses, parks, or carry out a "Little Count" for small areas such as backyards or schoolyards. For more information, go to

<https://www.koleacount.org>

To volunteer at
Freeman Seabird Preserve,
please email Alice Roberts at
mermaidsHI@aol.com



Kate Righter photo.

Kids' Bird Cartoon Contest

Want to see your keiki's artwork published in the 'Elepaio? Have them submit an entry to our Bird Cartoon Contest. Open all year for Hawai'i's K-12 students. Choose any Hawai'i bird (native birds given preference.)

Comics can be funny or factual. Entries must be original work – no clip art, AI, stock photos, reusing images, etc.

Send questions and entry photos to
events@hiaudubon.org

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Hawai'i Audubon Society
850 Richards St, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813
office@hiaudubon.org
<https://hiaudubon.org>





HAWAI‘I AUDUBON SOCIETY
850 RICHARDS ST, SUITE 505
HONOLULU, HI 96813-4709

<https://hiaudubon.org>
office@hiaudubon.org

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