



'ELEPAIO

Journal of the
Hawaii Audubon Society

For the Protection of
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

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MARCH 2005

STATE OF THE SOCIETY FOR 2004

by Dr. Lawrence J Kimmel, 2004 President

MISSION STATEMENT: To foster community values that result in the protection and restoration of native ecosystems and conservation of natural resources through education, science and advocacy in Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Hawaii Audubon Society was founded in 1939 as an independent, non-profit membership association with specific aims pertaining to the protection of Hawai'i's native wildlife and habitats through education, research and advocacy. The Society has a membership of approximately 1,500 individuals and operates in accordance with a constitution and by-laws under the supervision of a Board of Directors elected by the members. The Society became a certified chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1978, but continues to function independently in all fiscal, policy and programmatic matters. Several part-time employees and independent contractors provide administrative and professional services for the Society and for specific programs, but many necessary tasks and responsibilities are accomplished through the efforts of dedicated volunteers statewide.

Education (see also the Pacific Fisheries Coalition report): A variety of informational posters, publications and curriculum materials promoting the protection of marine resources were created and distributed by the Society's Pacific Fisheries Coalition program. The educational products and presentations target students and the general public as well as fishermen, lawmakers and resource managers. In a start-up effort to inform the public about the need to eliminate cat predation on Hawai'i's birds, a fact sheet, downloadable web page and other educational materials were created for distribution by Hawaii Audubon Society in conjunction with the "Cats Indoors" campaign of the American Bird Conservancy.

Hawaii Audubon Society members continued, with other interested parties, a working group for the development of an interpretive center in Kawai Nui Marsh. This on-going, cooperative effort involves all aspects of the proposed project, including site selection and fundraising, along with determination of educational priorities and opportunities to showcase the natural environment of Kawai Nui Marsh.

Hawaii Audubon Society publishes the 'Elepaio, a peer reviewed journal, nine times per year, and operates a website at www.hawaii-audubon.com. The 'Elepaio provides important information regarding wildlife and habitat conservation matters in Hawai'i and the tropical Pacific. The Society's office continues to serve as an educational resource and networking point for local, national and international contacts.

Waimea Valley Audubon Center on the north shore of O'ahu is managed and operated by the National Audubon Society for the purpose of educating residents and visitors about Hawai'i's unique and fragile environment. Hawaii Audubon Society supports this goal, shares advisory personnel and provides educational materials for sale in the WVAC gift shop.

Conservation and Advocacy (see also the Pacific Fisheries coalition report): The Society's legislative analyst tracked bills and provided testimony on behalf of Hawai'i's native wildlife and habitat, as did several Society volunteers.

Adopt-a-Plover donations were accepted by Hawaii Audubon Society and used to purchase tiny radio transmitters for tracking individual Kolea (Pacific Golden Plover) on their spring migration back to breeding grounds in Alaska. Dr. Wally Johnson, a researcher at Montana State University, and local associates have tagged Kolea over the past three years and important findings were published in the February, 2004 issue of the 'Elepaio as well as in other scientific ornithological journals.

Pacific Fisheries Coalition project personnel continued to work to promote the protection of coral reefs, fisheries, and nearshore resources, including tropical fish which are targets of the aquarium trade. Participation in workshops and task force meetings in Hawai'i and the Pacific was enhanced by the wide variety of informational materials that have been produced in support of these important conservation issues.

The Society continues to be an active participant in the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee and similar activities on Maui and Hawai'i islands. This voluntary partnership of government agencies and non-profit groups and individuals is committed to eliminating the threat which alien invasive species pose to Hawai'i's native ecosystems. Society representatives continued to work with the Kawai Nui Heritage Foundation and Ahahui Malama I ka Lokahi to promote the need for conservation and cultural education programs based at Kawai Nui Marsh.

The Society's Conservation Committee, working to prevent threats to native wildlife and habitats, reviewed and submitted comments on a variety of proposed projects and activities statewide.

Programs and Membership: Five bi-monthly membership meetings were scheduled by the Society in 2004. These meetings are open at no cost to all Society members and the general public, and include informational presentations on a wide variety of topics. Programs offered in conjunction with membership meetings included a wide variety of topics, ranging from bird reproduction and propagation efforts in Hawai'i for endangered species on the edge of extinction, to the expanding colonies of parrots in the State.

Field Excursions and Service Activities: Field excursions in 2004 included destinations which have proved to be annual favorites for members and visitors. Groups guided by Society volunteers visited the following sites: the Kahuku Dunes, Fort Kamehameha and Paiko Lagoon Wildlife Refuge for reef and

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April 18 Program Meeting: Pacific Golden Plovers by Wally Johnson

Wally Johnson, adjunct professor in ecology at Montana State University-Bozeman will present a talk on his research on Pacific Golden Plovers on Monday April 18th at UH Manoa, St. Johns Hall room 011 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Johnson has been following the Pacific Golden-Plover ever since noticing them in the Marshall Islands while researching the kidney function of birds that live around salt water. He conducts his research on O'ahu and in Nome, Alaska. Johnson and his crews band the birds in Hawai'i and attach small radio transmitters with the goal of learning where these birds nest in Alaska. The transmitters fall off in Alaska and cause the birds no harm.

He has studied the same individual birds for years, both on their wintering grounds and breeding grounds. This year he is starting a project to study the Pacific Golden Plover in Saipan. The National Geographic Society has funded much of Johnson's work, and television programs about it have aired on the Discovery Channel and "All Birds TV." Wally has also been the recipient of several research grants from Hawaii Audubon Society, and our Kolea Watch program has helped provide support for his research in Hawai'i and Alaska.

Program Meetings are held at the University of Hawai'i's St. John Lab (Botany Building Rm. 011) in the ground floor auditorium at 3190 Maile Way, where it intersects East-West Road. The main entrance to the building is at ground level, street side (Hint: the Diamond head side stairs do not lead to the auditorium). Program meetings take place from from 6:30pm to 8:30pm, refreshments are served, and HAS products will be available for purchase.

'Elepaio

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Field Trips for 2005

Here are our planned Field Trips for the year ahead. Our Board Members have each volunteered to lead a Field Trip this year. As these trips are still in the process of being arranged and confirmed, some dates and times are not yet set.

Field Trip information and updates will also be available on the HAS office answering machine (528-1432) and on our website, www.hawaiiudubon.com.

March 19, Saturday: Kahuku Dunes shoreline walk with Dr. Phil Bruner. A half day or all day trip depending on each individual's available time. We will meet at the parking lot of Kahuku Golf Course and hike from there along the shoreline to Turtle Bay Resort. We will take the city bus back to Kahuku at the conclusion of the trip (bring \$2 bus fare). On the hike we will see and talk about seabirds, migratory shorebirds, dune formation, coastal plants and their unique adaptations. We will also observe the conservation concerns in this environment. People should bring plenty of water, a lunch, sunscreen, hat and binoculars. Copies of Hawaii's Birds by Hawaii Audubon Society and Hawaiian Coastal Plants by Mark Merlin are suggested to bring along. This hike is in one of the few remaining undeveloped coastal lands on O'ahu. Call the HAS office for starting time and to register - 528-1432.

April (date TBA): Ka'ena Point with a FWS researcher to see Laysan Albatross chicks and parents, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, and coastal plants. Date and more details to come, but don't miss this one!. Call the HAS office to register - 528-1432.

May (date TBA): Honolulu Zoo: Wendy Johnson will lead another field trip not to be missed - Honolulu Zoo's Curator of Birds will give us a tour of some of the aviaries and of course the wonderful walk-through aviary (a fantastic close-up look at some very beautiful and unusual birds!). This trip is limited to 15 participants. Call the HAS office to register, 528-1432.

June (date TBA): Waikamoi Preserve on Maui with Jennifer Crummer.

July 9 Kawai Nui Marsh: Wetlands bird walk with Ron Walker.

July (date TBA) Chevron Ponds with Sal Pagliaro. In 1992, the first Hawaiian Stilts on Chevron's property at Campbell Industrial Park were seen - standing fresh water attracts birds - so Chevron fixed up several ponds and began managing them. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has been monitoring them since 1993, and trapping cats & mongoose as well. Chevron and possible FWS personnel will give us a tour of this great place.

August (date TBA) Kuli'ou'ou: 'Elepaio search with Dr. Phil Bruner.

September (date TBA) James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge with Ron Walker

October (date TBA) 'Ihi'ihilauea on Maui with Jennifer Crummer

November (date TBA) Sea Life Park seabird rehabilitation center with Arlene Buchholz

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mud explorations and viewing opportunities for migratory shorebirds; a service trip to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in conjunction with the Sierra Club, James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge to observe many species of migratory and wetland birds in their natural habitat, particularly the Bristle Thighed Curlew and the Hawaiian Stilt; and Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden for a birdwalk. In addition, the annual Christmas Bird Counts were held at several locations on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Moloka'i, Maui and Hawai'i. Society volunteers served as organizers and team leaders of the event which operates in conjunction with Christmas Bird Counts at thousands of locations in the U.S. and around the world.

Volunteer Activities: Hawaii Audubon Society volunteers continued monitoring seabird restoration efforts at Ka'ena Point in conjunction with efforts by the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. Rare bird sightings by members and volunteers were registered with the database at Bishop Museum. Volunteers also participated in clean-ups and habitat restoration at several shore-line and wetland sites. Society members were also invited to join field trips and projects at Kawai Nui Marsh sponsored by 'Ahahui Malama I Ka Lokahi, and to participate in native forest restoration with the O'ahu Na Ala Hele Trails and Access program, and to work with the Sierra Club doing alien plant control and outplanting of native species at Manuka Natural Area Reserve on the Big Island. Members represented the Society at conferences and public hearings, and on several steering committees, teams, task forces and workshops, including: the Permit Process Task Force, the 'Alala Recovery Team, the Wetland Restoration and Protection Partnership, the Forest Bird Recovery Team, the Natural Area Reserve Commission, the Marine Fish Conservation Network Advisory Board, Hawai'i's Watchable Wildlife Campaign, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Reserve Council, The Wildlife Society, Hawai'i Chapter's Predator Control in the Hawaiian Islands Workshop, and CITES.

Grants and Scholarships: Support from the Society's "Kolea Fund" was provided to Oscar W. Johnson for radio telemetry investigations on the migratory behavior of the Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*). Other small research grants were also given

Publications and Products: The Society published nine issues of the journal 'Elepaio in 2004. This publication was mailed to all local and Joint members and subscribers and includes peer-reviewed articles on current research in addition to news relating to the conservation and management of natural resources in Hawai'i and the Pacific. The 'Elepaio also includes Society updates and notice of activities of interest to members and the general public. Other educational products produced by the Society include the following: Hawai'i's Birds, a definitive, full color paperback now in its fifth edition (with the sixth edition almost ready for the presses); a companion cassette set "Voices of Hawai'i's Birds," and current checklist of the Birds of Hawai'i; "Hidden Treasures of O'ahu," a map featuring locations and detailed information on sites for exploring nature and ancient Hawaiian culture; "The Edge of Forever" an art-quality limited edition print featuring two endangered Nene. The Society also offers several T-shirt designs, including both the Kolea and the Ruddy Turnstone as best sellers, and an embroidered patch featuring the 'Elepaio.

Other Society Activities: The January 2004 Annual Chapter Leaders' Retreat featured strategic planning activities and discussions of conservation issues and the Society's role in promoting the protection of native wildlife and habitats.

In October, the Society's eleventh Annual Awards Dinner was held at the Imin Conference Center adjacent to the University of Hawai'i's East-West Center gardens. Educators, volunteers, public figures and corporate leaders were honored for their contributions to environmental education and the protection of Hawai'i's wildlife and habitats. Dr Phil Bruner provided a superb discussion of the Ruddy Turnstone and his research on shorebirds both in Hawai'i and in Alaska.

The Society continues to represent the goals and missions on which it was founded 65 years ago. We have a strong and dedicated Board of Directors and a great cast of volunteers, all of whom continue to support the wise stewardship of Hawai'i's natural resources and our island environment, while working to support the fragile ecosystems of our rare and endangered wildlife here in Hawai'i and the tropical Pacific.

Got Binoculars?

by Ron Walker

Student birders need the extra pair of binoculars that may be sitting unused in your closet. The non-profit education organization, Moanalua Gardens Foundation (MGF), offers popular wetlands and waterbirds unit for students and teachers that culminates in a daylong adventure exploring Hawaiian wetlands. Since many children do not have access to binoculars to use for the field trip, MGF is attempting to build its own lending collection.

If you have a pair to donate, please call 839-5354. MGF and the young birders of Hawai'i send their sincere thanks!

ATTENTION PLOVER LOVERS! KOLEA WATCH UPDATE:

In spring '04, Dr. Wally Johnson (Montana State University) and his team of volunteers attached temporary radio transmitters to 20 Kolea on O'ahu. The birds migrated in late April, and 6 of them were found on breeding grounds in Alaska during May and June. All 6 Kolea were from a wintering ground on the windward side at Hawai'i State Veterans Cemetery in Kane'ohe. These recent findings are a valuable addition to our understanding of where O'ahu's Kolea are going in the summer to raise their keiki.

Johnson is planning another round of Kolea Watch radio-tagging in April '05. Can you help with a donation? Any amount will be most welcome. However, if you contribute \$150 or more you can "adopt" a Kolea and name your bird. You'll also be informed if/when/where "your" plover is found in Alaska! Donations (to pay for transmitters and/or other expenses associated with Kolea Watch research) can be sent to: Hawaii Audubon Society, 850 Richards Street, Honolulu, HI, 96813-4709. Checks should be made payable to the Hawaii Audubon Society and earmarked "Kolea Watch." Mahalo nui!

Pacific Fisheries Coalition 2004 Report

by Linda Paul, Executive Director of Pacific Fisheries Coalition

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI): The NWHI Reserve Advisory Council (RAC) completed the Goals and Objectives for the future NWHI National Marine Sanctuary together with proposed fishery management measures in July. Linda Paul and William Aila, PFC principals, are RAC Vice Chair & Secretary, respectively. The recommended measures allowed for some very limited recreational fishing and some equally limited commercial pelagic trolling in the new Sanctuary; all other harvesting activity would have been prohibited. Bottom fishing would have been phased out with a buy-out program. In September the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) adopted the Goals and Objectives and passed them on to WESPAC to give them the opportunity to draft fishing regulations. However, the NMSP changed the Fishing Goal and some of its objectives and their preferred alternative would still allow some bottomfishing to continue in the NWHI in perpetuity. The RAC management plan/DEIS subcommittee is now working on the Sanctuary management plan. The DEIS is scheduled to be ready for public comment in the Fall of 2005.

The report to accompany the application for World Heritage Site status for the NWHI was completed, reviewed by the USFWS and the NMSP, and illustrated in color by Ellyn Tong. The Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Reserves was drafted and is circulating among the scientific community. The NWHI video script was completed and the footage collected. A poster illustrating the threat to the NWHI by vessels contaminated with encrusting invasive species was created. There are over 350 invasive aquatic species in the main Hawaiian Islands and some have spread to the NWHI. It is only a matter of time before more become established. The National Marine Sanctuary Program now cleans the hulls of research vessels going to the NWHI, but fishing vessels traveling to and through the NWHI are still fouled. Ellyn Tong attended, gave presentations, and distributed educational materials at the meetings of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force in 2004. L. Paul gave a presentation on the NWHI at the Hanauma Bay Thursday Evening in May.

A Northwest Hawaiian Islands Refuge Act was introduced in the House in 2004 but after its first committee hearing it was deferred. A House Resolution on the NWHI was subsequently introduced and passed out of the House, with Representative Ed Case sending in testimony in support. The resolution crossed over to Senate, but Senator Loraine Inouye did not schedule it for a hearing.

The second round of public hearings on the draft rules for state waters in the NWHI were finally held in July. The PFC arranged for the broadcast of four 15-second PSAs to publicize the hearings and distributed a press release. There was overwhelming public support for prohibiting commercial harvesting in state waters in the NWHI. A final draft of the rules had not been released by the end of 2004. The RAC also passed a resolution commenting on the state's draft rules, which was communicated to DLNR. The RAC found that the draft rules did not provide sufficient protection since they still allow for some fishing in state waters near Nihoa, which presents a threat of contamination by alien aquatic species.

Conservation of Pelagic Species: L. Paul attended the 6th and 7th Preparatory Committee meetings for the Central & Western Pacific Tuna Convention again as a member of the United States delegation. The Convention went into force on June 19, 2004. Hawaii Audubon Society represented conservation interests on the U.S. delegation during the MHLC negotiation process in Honolulu, at all seven preparatory committee meetings, and at the inaugural meeting of the Western & Central Tuna Commission in December in the Federated States of Micronesia. Our initial battle was to keep the process open to NGO participation. We were successful in getting the transparency article into the treaty, and seeing to it that it was implemented in the Rules of Procedure. The Commission began to deal with conservation and management measures, including the take of non target species, at its inaugural meeting in December, and in his opening statement the head of the U.S. delegation stressed again the importance of reducing the take of turtles, seabirds, and sharks. Bycatch has been part of the discussions of the Scientific Coordinating Group since the 2nd Prep Com meeting. Another conservation issue is overcapacity. Catch of big eye and yellowfin tuna are at MSY and threatening to go over. The biggest threat to the stocks is coming from the take of juveniles that congregate around fish aggregation devices (FADs) deposited by purse seiners around the Pacific.

L. Paul continues to monitor meetings of the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council and its various committees. Comments were faxed in on the EIS for proposed rules to allow a limited amount of swordfishing by Hawaii-based longliners in the North Pacific. L. Paul represents the Western Pacific region on the Marine Fish Conservation Network Board of Advisors and helps with the national effort to reform the Magnuson-Stevens Act. At our request Representative Ed Case agreed to co-sponsor the Fisheries Management Reform Act of 2004 (Rahall Bill). The Honolulu Advertiser published an editorial in favor of the bill. L. Paul chaired the Marine Policy, Law & Government panel at the Pacific Congress on Marine Science & Technology in June and gave a presentation on the recommendations of the Pew Oceans Commission and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

Destructive Fishing Methods: Lay Gillnets: The PFC is now working with a small coalition on the lay gillnet problem. Lay gillnets are an indiscriminate method of fishing, which ensnare everything that comes in contact with them. The DLNR held public meetings on the problem in February, where comments were recorded and survey forms were distributed. We placed articles in the Honolulu Weekly, the Hawai'i Fishing News and a lay gillnet ad in the newspaper. We video-taped a very contentious public meeting in Kane'ohe. In March the PFC manned a booth at the Waikiki Aquarium Family Fun Day, distributed lay gillnet survey forms and collected signatures on a ban lay gillnets petition at the booth and at other meetings and venues. As of December the DAR staff had not yet submitted a redraft of the lay gillnet rules to the DLNR board for approval to go out for formal public hearings.

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Aquarium and Live Reef Fish Trade and Habitat Protection: The Marine Aquarium Trade in the Western Hemisphere and the Indo-Pacific Region: Impacts on Coral Reef Ecosystems, written by K. Boggiatto, A. Rieser, K. Moffie, and L. Paul and illustrated by Ellyn Tong, was published and distributed to public aquariums across U.S.

A seven minute video What You Should Know About Saltwater Aquariums was also completed and is being duplicated for distribution nation-wide and broadcasting on flights to and from the mainland. The take-home message: if you love to watch fish, visit your public aquarium. The aquarium trade poster design and layout has also been completed.

The Live Reef Food Fish Trade: Global Trade Impacts on Coral Reef Ecosystems, written by intern Naomi Arcand and illustrated by Ellyn Tong, was published and distributed at the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Bangkok in October. The booklet was instrumental in getting the Napoleon Wrasse listed on Appendix II, which means that the trade can now be monitored. The proposal passed by consensus, which is a first for a marine species at CITES, the listing of which has been long opposed by Japan and its marine trading partners. L. Paul drafted an FAO fact sheet to counter the Japanese argument that FAO should be managing the trade in marine species, not CITES. It was translated into French and Spanish and distributed to delegates. N. Arcand also prepared the Species Survival Network Fact Sheet on the Napoleon Wrasse. L. Paul and N. Arcand attended the 13th meeting and drafted and distributed press releases and fact sheets on the effects of trade on reef fish populations and habitat in English, French and Spanish.

Other Aquatics Legislation: HB 2964, the administrative inspection bill, passed out of the House and halfway through the Senate. This bill was designed to remove the probable cause requirement, a major impediment to the monitoring of aquarium species exports out of Hawaii as well as the enforcement of state fishing regulations, and it was supported by DLNR. K. Moffie drafted a monitoring rule at the DLNR's request, but it is being held up by the Attorney General until the probable cause requirement for inspections is removed from state law.

HB 557, the no-sale-of-speared-fish bill, passed the Health Committee (HLT) unanimously and went to the floor, where it was re-referred back to committee. The commercial sale of speared reef fish contributes to the overexploitation of inshore reef fish populations and is a public health risk. No further

hearings were scheduled by HLT before the end of session. Subsequently HCR 116 was introduced and heard in the Water, Land & Hawaiian Affairs (WLH) Committee that supported the intent of the bill. The Department of Health (DOH), the Speared Fish Club, and a right-to-fish lobbyist testified against the bill. The resolution was deferred. Subsequently we requested the FDA send of letter of inquiry to DOH but they have yet to take action.

HB 2056, the community-based co-management bill, was also introduced that would allow coastal communities to make decisions about closed areas and gear restrictions. This concept was strongly supported by participants at the 2003 State Aquatics Conference, which the Society sponsored. It passed out of the subject matter committee, but multiple phone calls from fishermen caused the chair of the Judiciary Committee not to set it for a hearing. Subsequently HCR 167, supporting community-based co-management, was introduced, passed out of its first hearing, but did not get any further.

Education and Outreach: E. Tong created a new size-at-first-reproduction poster in color that illustrates the actual size of 20 reef fish at L50. Contributions from the National Park Service, NOAA-Fisheries, and the Waikiki Aquarium helped to pay for the printing costs of 10,000 copies, which were distributed to agencies, harbors, and the public, and which are almost gone. They have been a very effective tool in getting fishermen to release under-sized fish.

A new edition of the PFC's fishery management brochure Taking Care of Hawai'i's Nearshore Marine Resources was put together by E. Tong, illustrated, and published in a new, larger format and in color, and is being distributed to policy makers and the public. Hawai'i Fishing News also published E. Tong's articles on NWHI and on the biology and value of marine reserves for fishermen. L. Paul also participated in the creation of a Seafood Card for Hawai'i, spear-headed by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which we will help distribute. E. Tong conducted three reef fish train sessions for Reef Check: 1) fish identification, 2) coral identification, and 3) survey methods, which were broadcast repeatedly on 'Olelo Community Television. Angel Alcalá's presentation of the value of community-based management and marine reserves, video taped by L. Paul at the end of 2003, was edited by E. Tong and broadcast on 'Olelo. E. Tong taped presentations by Dr. Alan Friedlander on community-based management and Dr. Bill Walsh on the status of Hawai'i's marine resources, for broadcast on 'Olelo.

Reminder: Deadline to Apply for UH Undergraduate Scholarship is May 1, 2005

Through a trust set up in memory of Rose Schuster Taylor, Hawaii Audubon Society offers a full tuition scholarship to an undergraduate student in the University of Hawai'i system each school year.

Applicants must be majoring in a field related to Hawaiian or Pacific natural history. Applications are available by calling (528-1432) or emailing (hiaudsoc@pixi.com) the HAS office. The application should also be available shortly on our website, www.hawaiiudubon.com. Completed applications must be received by May 1, 2005.

Volunteers, Refuge Staff Complete Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Albatross Counts

Laysan, Black-footed Albatross Populations Remain Relatively Stable

How do you tackle an albatross census when you're responsible for most of the world's population? One nest at a time, according to those who just completed the daunting task. A team of 19 volunteers worked through the holidays to complete a count of every active albatross nest on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. Braving gale-force winds and driving rain, they counted 408,133 Laysan albatross nests and 21,829 black-footed albatross nests during a 2-week period between December 15 and January 3.

This complete assessment of Midway's nesting albatrosses is the fifth such effort in the last 13 years. Comparing this count with the first atoll-wide count in 1991, numbers of nests have remained fairly stable for both species, though numbers have fluctuated somewhat from year to year.

Comparable counts were conducted simultaneously at Laysan Island and French Frigate Shoals, both part of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. At Laysan Island, 140,861 Laysan albatross and 21,006 black-footed albatross nests were counted, and at French Frigate Shoals, refuge staff counted 3,226 Laysan and 4,259 black-footed albatross nests. Counts at these three sites totaled represent 93 and 77 percent of the world's Laysan and black-footed albatrosses, respectively. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of 99 percent of the world's population of Laysan albatross and 96 percent of the world's population of black-footed albatross. These two species nest on all of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and small numbers of Laysan albatross nest on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and on several offshore islands in the main Hawaiian Islands. Midway is home to the greatest number of Laysan albatross, approximately 73 percent of the global population; and about 35 percent of the world's black-footed albatross.

The volunteer crew at Midway was split into four groups, each of which worked through assigned sections of the three islands

at the atoll. Each group moved in a line through each section with a mechanical counter and an inverted paint can, used to make a tiny dot beside each active nest. Because the atoll's landscape includes a mixture of forests, fields, and thick brush, the volunteers got their exercise climbing and crawling as well as walking through the vegetation.

This year's volunteer crew ranged in age from 31 to 79 and represented a variety of backgrounds and professions. The crew included two scientists from Japan who work with the endangered short-tailed albatross and counters from Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington State, Washington D.C., and Hawai'i. In addition to completing the albatross count, the volunteers worked on habitat restoration projects such as removing invasive plants, transplanting native plants, and propagating other plants in greenhouses. Other chores included fixing chainsaws and bicycles, clearing trails and vegetation for safety, and assisting with refuge maintenance. The team returned to Honolulu on January 8.

"It will be difficult to adjust to our normal lives again," said Beth Flint, the Service's senior seabird biologist for the Pacific Islands and coordinator of this year's albatross counts. "We already miss the moos, clucks, and 'eh-eh-eh's of the albatross that literally surround you on Midway. And all of us would like to return to visit after those 430,000 eggs hatch!"

Of the 21 species of albatrosses in the world, 17 have been identified as being at risk by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. "The most immediate threat to most of these species is mortality due to interaction with the world's commercial long-line fisheries," Flint explained. "Laysan and black-footed albatrosses are not immune to this problem, and thousands of each species are killed each year in international and domestic fisheries in the North Pacific."

Source: FWS News Release

Contact: Barbara Maxfield (808) 792-9531

Rare Hawaiian Bird Released on Kaua'i

Eighteen puaiohi (pu-ai-o-he), a critically endangered bird species native to the island of Kaua'i are in the process of being released into the Alaka'i Wilderness Area. The release of these birds will take place over several weeks as the birds are allowed to fly from aviaries in the forest into their native forest habitat.

The birds, representing a species that is believed to number fewer than 500, were raised at the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center on the island of Hawai'i and the Maui Bird Conservation Center. The releases are part of a collaborative effort undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and the San Diego Zoo's Hawai'i Endangered Bird Conservation Program to build a sustainable population of these birds in the wild.

The puaiohi, also known as the small Kaua'i thrush, is a small songbird that has been reduced to a single relict population in the wet forest of the Alaka'i Wilderness Preserve. Habitat degradation caused by feral ungulates and invasive alien plants, and the

joint threats from introduced predators and diseases are thought to be contributing factors in the decline of this population. More than half of Hawai'i's surviving songbirds are listed as endangered by the state and federal government.

"We have been able to release 95 captive-reared puaiohi back into the wilderness since 1999, and we believe these recruits are making a significant contribution to the recovery of the population," said Alan Lieberman, director of the Zoo's propagation efforts in Hawai'i.

Not all endangered bird species in Hawai'i have done as well. Last November, a po'ouli living at the Maui Bird Conservation Center died after two months in captivity. The two remaining individuals of the species, believed to possibly still survive in the wild, have not been spotted in more than a year. "The loss of the only captive po'ouli last year was a clear demonstration of the urgent need to take action to save species

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Rare Hawaiian Bird Released on Kaua'i *continued*

before they dwindle to such low numbers," said Dr. Scott Fretz, Wildlife Program Manager for the State's DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

The captive puaiohi are flown to Lihu'e, Kaua'i then transported to the release site. At the release site they are placed in an aviary where they spend 7-10 days adjusting to the environment. Over a period of five weeks, six birds at a time are staged for release in a series of three releases. Each bird is fitted with a radio transmitter that will relay signals allowing biologists to monitor their movements, health and range.

"The success of this puaiohi release program, and of others such as the nene release program, gives us great hope for the future of Hawai'i's endangered birds," said Gina Shultz, acting field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific islands office. "Captive propagation and release programs clearly are an important part of our recovery efforts, and we join with our partners in wishing these 18 birds a long and happy life in the Alaka'i."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assis-

tance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

The DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife is responsible for the management of state-owned forests, natural areas, public hunting areas, and plant and wildlife sanctuaries. Program areas cover watershed protection; native resources protection, including unique ecosystems and endangered species of plants and wildlife; outdoor recreation; and commercial forestry.

The Hawai'i Endangered Bird Conservation Program is a part of the San Diego Zoo's department of Conservation and Research for Endangered Species. CRES, operated by the not-for-profit Zoological Society of San Diego, is working to establish field stations in five key ecological areas internationally and participates in conservation and research work around the globe. The Zoological Society also manages the 100-acre San Diego Zoo and the 1,800-acre San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park.

Source: FWS news release dated 2/15/05
Contact: Barbara Maxfield, (808) 792-9531

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Calendar of Events

Monday, March 21 Board Meeting

Open to all members, 6:30 to 8:30pm at the HAS office.
Education and Conservation Committees meet at 5:45pm before
Board meetings.

Saturday, March 19 Field Trip

Kahuku Dunes shoreline walk with Dr. Phil Bruner. See page 10

April 18 Program Meeting

Kolea Research Update by Dr. Wally Johnson. See page 10

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