



Christmas Bird Count No. 103: Hawai'i/Pacific Islands 2002 - 2003

By Thane K. Pratt¹

The 103rd Christmas Bird Count for Hawai'i and the Mariana Islands suffered both from a decrease in number of participants and from two circles not counted. Midway Island Circle, a Fish and Wildlife Service refuge that is nesting grounds for millions of seabirds and an interesting migrant trap as well, was cancelled because too few personnel were on the island at the time. Volcano Circle lost its most attractive destination when Kulani Correctional Facility, unique on the circle for endangered forest birds, shut its doors in response to the looming war with Iraq. Less surprisingly, two remote and less regularly counted circles, Johnston and Palmyra atolls, were also missed for lack of participants. Apart from that, there were two counts each for the islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui, and one each for Laysan Island, French Frigate Shoals, and Hawai'i Island (North Kona). All five circles were counted in the Marianas.

Seabirds in Hawai'i appeared in expected numbers, although 3741 Laysan Albatross and 84 Brown Boobies on French Frigate Shoals and 10 Tristram's Storm-Petrels on Laysan were high counts for breeding seabirds. Vagrant Caspian Terns showed up again this year: one each at Kane'ohe Marine Corps Airbase, O'ahu and another on the 'Iao Valley Circle, Maui during the count week. Two Laughing Gulls at the Kaloko Sewage Treatment Plant (KSTP), N. Kona were the only vagrant gulls report on this CBC.

The waterfowl migration to Hawai'i recovered somewhat after last year's disappointing season. Good numbers of two regular species, Northern Shoveler (281 birds for the state) and scaup (46, but mainly Lesser), were once again reported, although Northern Pintail gave a poor turn out with 168 birds, and only 3 American Wigeon were tallied. High counts were reported for Green-winged Teal (33, all American when noted) and particularly Bufflehead (11), a species that has not been seen in such numbers in years. Stragglers included a Tufted Duck and Canvasback at KSTP. High counts of native waterbirds were: for Hawaiian Coots, 126 birds on Moloka'i and 166 on Waipi'o, O'ahu, and 211 Hawaiian Stilt on Moloka'i. Both species of heron were unusually abundant on Maui, with 1678 Cattle Egrets and 192 Black-crowned Night-Herons. Two extreme rarities seen before and after the counts were the Baikal Teal on Kaua'i and Marsh Sandpiper on O'ahu.

The Pacific Golden-Plover, Hawai'i's ubiquitous and most beloved migrant, must have had an outstanding breeding season and safe passage this year, for they showed up in force on the counts, with exceptional numbers on Laysan Island, Honolulu circle, Moloka'i, and 'Iao circle on Maui. Other high counts were 10 Long-billed Dowitchers on the Waipi'o Circle, O'ahu and 33 Sanderlings on Moloka'i.

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Status Report of 2003 Environmental Bills at the Hawai'i State Legislature

By Kim Moffie, Hawaii Audubon Society Legislative Analyst

Lawmakers closed the 2003 legislative session on May 1, 2003 after taking action on hundreds of bills. Bills that passed will be sent to Governor Lingle for signature into law, or veto. The following is a summary of how environmental bills fared this year.

Measures the Legislature Passed

Invasive Species (Senate Bill 1505 SD1 HD2 CD1)

This bill statutorily establishes the temporary Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to address the invasive species problem in Hawai'i. It also prohibits the importation or sale of *Salvinia molesta*, *Salvinia minima*, and *Pisia stratiotes*.

Endangered Species Protection (Senate Bill 843 SD1 HD2)

This bill allows state and county agencies to enter into habitat

conservation plans (HCPs) and safe harbor agreements (SHAs). It requires legislative approval of certain plans and agreements.

Brown Tree Snakes (Senate Bill 554)

This bill allows the Department of Agriculture to bring four live, sterile brown tree snakes into the state for the purposes of research and training of snake detector dogs. Governor Lingle signed this bill into law.

Landowner Liability for Invasive Control (Senate Bill 552 SD2)

Creates a new chapter encouraging landowners to allow land and water access to personnel and volunteers of invasive species control or eradication programs by limiting the landowners' liability toward persons entering their property for these control and eradication purposes.

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Bird of the Month - Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

According to Hawaiian Birdlife by Andrew J. Berger (UH Press, 1972) "The Cattle Egret was imported from Florida to aid 'in the battle to control house flies, horn flies, and other flies that damage hides and cause lower weight gains in cattle' (Breese 1959)...A total of 105 birds were released on five islands between July 17 and August 24, 1959: one site each on Kaua'i, Moloka'i, and Maui, and two sites each on O'ahu and Hawai'i."

Cattle Egrets are actually herons, about 20" long, and mostly white with yellow bill and legs. In the breeding season, adults will have a yellowish tinge on their heads, breast, and back, and their bills and legs will be orange. Juveniles have greenish legs and bills. Large rookeries are formed by these herons, sometimes containing as many as 100 nests built 12 to 15 feet high. An average of 2 eggs is laid per clutch. The young fledge at about 5 weeks of age.

These birds like to feed with cattle and are often seen perched on the backs of horses and cows, plucking insects from their grazing friends. The Cattle Egret is found almost anywhere, but particularly likes taro lo'i, wetlands, and irrigation ditches. Flocks will also forage for insects behind lawnmowers and in freshly cut fields and parks. The Cattle Egret also feeds on prawns at aquaculture facilities as well as mice.



Photo by Tom Dove

[information taken from *Hawaiian Birdlife* by A.J. Berger (1972), *Birds of Hawai'i and the Tropical Pacific* by Pratt, Bruner and Berritt (1987), and *Hawaii's Birds*, by Hawaii Audubon Society (1996). Many thanks, yet again, to Tom Dove for the use of his photo of a regal Egret.

STATUS REPORT continued from page 35

South Kona Wilderness (House Bill 1509 HD2 SD2 CD1)

This bill establishes the South Kona wilderness area to be administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources and provides for development of a comprehensive management plan for the area.

Conservation District Violations (Senate Bill 1415)

This bill clarifies that the Board of Land and Natural Resources may impose a fine for each violation within a Conservation District in addition to costs associated with land and/or habitat restoration.

Failed Measures

The following is a list of bills that the Hawaii Audubon Society supported this session, but died at some point in the legislative process.

Marine Reserves Network (House Bill 1407, Senate Bills 1497, 705)

This bill would have helped to protect coral reef and healthy fish populations by establishing island councils that select marine protected areas in 20% of the state's waters.

Blue Waters Bill (House Bill 737, Senate Bill 503)

These measures would have helped to prevent the ongoing problem of mud flowing into the ocean, coating the coral reef and ruining water quality.

Funding Natural Area Reserves (Senate Bill 1517)

This bill would have used a portion of the conveyance tax to fund the NARS system.

Invasive Species Appropriation (Senate Bill 857)

This measure would have appropriated funds and established a state invasive species administrator and authorized the Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Land and Natural Resources to enter private property for the purpose of controlling and eradicating alien invasive species.

Miconia Eradication (Senate Bill 1504)

This bill would have appropriated funds for the eradication of miconia.

Repealing Automatic Approval (House Bill 1029)

This bill would have repealed automatic permit approval, which jeopardizes our environment by allowing automatic approval of permits when there is a tie vote by a board or if a deadline passes while an agency is busy.

'ELEPAIO

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As for native Hawaiian forest birds, 4 Short-eared Owls on Kaua'i was a good count of this uncommon species. Excellent coverage in rainforest in Koke'e and the Alaka'i Swamp, Kaua'i yielded 5 critically endangered Puaiohi, as well as 5 of the declining 'Akikiki and 43 'Akeke'e, a species on a post-hurricane rebound. Notable for O'ahu was a high count of 56 O'ahu 'Amakihi for the Waipi'o Circle, which also yielded an 'I'iwi, a species nearly extinct on that island.

Hawai'i's ever-growing non-native avifauna produced unusual species for the region's CBC. Mourning Doves appeared on Maui first in the mid-1990s, and since then their population has exploded, unlike the presumably parent population on the Big Island, where the species is hard to find. Two were counted this year for the first time, at Waikapu, Maui. The small flock of cockatoos residing at the back of Honolulu's high-walled valleys finally showed up to be counted: 2 Sulfur-crested and 1 Salmon-crested cockatoos. Although potentially very destructive to growers of citrus and other crops, these white birds pose a lovely sight against the dark green forest. Thirty-seven Rose-ringed Parakeets were a high count for Honolulu, and a flock of Red-masked Parakeets also was noticed there again this year. A Skylark "skylarking" over Kaneohe Marine Corps Airbase,

O'ahu was an unusual find as the species more typically occurs on the dry leeward side of the island. A count of 55 Red-whiskered Bulbuls for the Waipi'o, O'ahu Circle marks the species slow advance across the island. More high counts on the Honolulu Circle included 2270 Red-vented Bulbuls and 192 Red-billed Leiothrix, which oddly once declined nearly to the point of extinction, but has since bounced back.

Counts were rather low this year on most of the Marianas Islands. Unusual migrants included a Grey Heron, a Black-winged Stilt, a Black-headed Gull, and an Eurasian Coot on Guam and a White-winged Tern on Saipan. Consistent reporting of native species was an encouraging sign of species status. Rarities included 2 Guam Rail from the introduced population on Rota, 7 Mariana Crows on Rota (but sadly not on Guam), and 12 Rota Bridled White-eyes. As for non-native birds, a lone Budgerigar was a first record for Saipan, where again the newly-established Orange-cheeked Waxbill was found, a total of 3 birds.

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Results of 2002-2003 Christmas Bird Count – Main Hawaiian Islands

Species	Kaua'i		O'ahu		Moloka'i Kualapu'u	Maui		Hawai'i	
	Waimea	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu		Pu'u O Kaka'e	'Iao Valley	N. Kona	Volcano
Laysan Albatross	9	64		6					Volcano was cancelled and no count numbers are available for N. Kona at all – should they become available at a later date, we will include them in a future issue.
White-tailed Tropicbird	9	2		1	7				
Red-tailed Tropicbird					11				
Brown Booby	9	3		7	1				
Red-footed Booby		466		1,138					
Great Frigatebird	3			212					
Cattle Egret	78	62	236	253	34	2	HC-1,678		
Black-crowned Night Heron	19	5	13	61	10		HC-192		
Nene		49				2	3		
Brant	1								
American Wigeon			2	1				CW	
Mallard			1	99				3	
Koloa	4	118		3					
Koloa x Mallard hybrid			18	17				8	
Blue-winged Teal			US-1					CW	
Northern Shoveler		3	9		86			126	
Northern Pintail		2	66		5			24	
Garganey				US-1					
Green-winged Teal		3	7		5			16	
Ring-necked Duck								1	
Greater Scaup	3								
Lesser Scaup					2			HC-19	
Bufflehead		US-3			2			US-1	

continued...

Results of 2002-2003 Christmas Bird Count – Main Hawaiian Islands continued

Species	Kaua'i		O'ahu		Moloka'i Kualapu'u	Maui		Hawai'i	
	Waimea	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu		Pu'u O Kaka'e	'Iao Valley	N. Kona	Volcano
Peregrine Falcon							1		
Chukar						1			
Gray Francolin				6	15	9	38		
Black Francolin	1				9		2		
Erckel's Francolin	9		2						
Red Junglefowl	61	6				1	7		
Ring-necked Pheasant	5	1				6	2		
Hawaiian Moorhen	7	11		6					
Hawaiian Coot	2	44	HC-166	8	126		108		
Black-bellied Plover							1		
Pacific Golden-Plover	27	60	331	HC-1585	252	16	HC-317		
Hawaiian Stilt	22	67	196	146	211		260		
Wandering Tattler	4		5	27	2		5		
Ruddy Turnstone	3	7	114	330	44		60		
Sanderling	3		18	4	33		45		
Long-billed Dowitcher			HC-10				2		
Wilson Snipe							US-CW		
Laughing Gull					1				
Caspian Tern				US-1			US-1		
Hawaiian Noddy				25					
White Tern				3					
Rock Dove			40	327	2	CW	31		
Spotted Dove	25	81	300	1,930	22	66	144		
Zebra Dove	41	174	854	3,894	85	110	HC-448		
Mourning Dove							US-2		
Rose-ringed Parakeet				HC-37					
Red-masked Parakeet				22					
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo				US-2					
Salmon-crested Cockatoo				US-1					
Pueo	4						1		
Kaua'i 'Elepaio	60								
O'ahu 'Elepaio			8	15					
Eurasian Skylark			1	US-1		26	HC-9		
Red-vented Bulbul			300	2,270					
Red-whiskered Bulbul			HC-55	226					
Japanese Bush-warbler	1	2	18	10			23		
White-rumped Shama	6	12	34	116					
Puaiohi	5								
Hwamei	30	3	1				9		
Red-billed Leiothrix			16	HC-192		17			
Japanese White-eye	160	8	240	938	25	9	31		
Northern Mockingbird	2	1		2	1	1			
Common Myna	105	168	442	2,600	267	105	HC-477		

Volcano was cancelled and no count numbers are available for N. Kona at all – should they become available at a later date, we will include them in a future issue.

Results of 2002-2003 Christmas Bird Count – Main Hawaiian Islands continued

Species	Kaua'i		O'ahu		Moloka'i Kualapu'u	Maui		Hawai'i	
	Waimea	Kapa'a	Waipi'o	Honolulu		Pu'u O Kaka'e	'Iao Valley	N. Kona	Volcano
Yellow-faced Grassquit			3	1					
Saffron Finch			11						
Red-crested Cardinal	15	23	47	218	37		HC-14		Volcano was cancelled and no count numbers are available for N. Kona at all – should they become available at a later date, we will include them in a future issue.
Northern Cardinal	20	13	49	105	5	8	38		
Western Meadowlark	1	14							
House Finch	16	12	170	874	208	37	52		
Yellow-fronted Canary				37					
Maui 'Amakihi						50			
O'ahu 'Amakihi			HC-56	71					
Kaua'i 'Amakihi	81								
'Anianiau	43								
'Akikiki	5								
Maui 'Alauahio						9			
'Akeke'e	43								
'I'iwi	22		US-1			30			
'Akohekohe						1			
'Apapane	349		64	30	3	146	10		
House Sparrow	21	13	141	463	22	152	HC-213		
Lavender Waxbill									
Orange-cheeked Waxbill				15			CW		
Common Waxbill			168	862					
Red Avadavat			3	20					
Warbling Silverbill	1				2		HC-88		
Nutmeg Mannikin	33	259	15		32		HC-137		
Chestnut Mannikin		1	141				HC-10		
Java Sparrow	14	108	82			3	HC-282		
Individuals	1,379	1,868	4,456	20,458	1,567	807	4,939		
Species	44	35	45	53	32	24	48		
Observers	31	12	12	56	15	3	4		
Party-hours	21.5	16.5	30.6	90	15	6	21		
Count Date	12/28/02	12/27/02	12/14/02	12/21/02	12/29/02	12/28/02	12/14/02		
cw = reported count week HC = high count US = unusual sighting									

Results of 2002-2003 Christmas Bird Count – Laysan Island and French Frigate Shoals

Species	Laysan Island	French Frigate Shoals
Laysan Albatross	189,000	3,741
Black-footed Albatross	19,520	5,546
Bonin Petrel	200	40
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	3	
Tristram Storm-Petrel	10	4
Red-tailed Tropicbird	2	5
Masked Booby	14	174
Brown Booby	30	84
Red-footed Booby	225	775
Great Frigatebird	719	688
Cattle Egret	3	
Laysan Duck	193	
Northern Pintail	1	
Pacific Golden-Plover	1,801	87
Wandering Tattler	51	1
Bristle-thighed Curlew	20	2
Ruddy Turnstone	1,482	417
Sanderling		6
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	
dowitcher sp.		1
Brown Noddy	2	1
Hawaiian Noddy	34	88
Blue-gray Noddy		2
White Tern	9	189
Laysan Finch	85	
Individuals	213,408	11,852
Species	23	20
Observers	2	9
Party-hours	12	37.5
Count Date	12/29/02	12/19/02

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850 Richards St. Suite 505 Honolulu, HI 96813
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Field Trips for 2003

All trips with an * are still in the process of being planned. Details will be provided as the scheduled dates get closer. A donation of \$2 per participant on all field trips is appreciated.

Left-Over Shorebirds & Ocean Creatures at Paiko Lagoon June 14, Saturday 7-9:00 am

June 28, Saturday 7-9:00 am

See aquatic creatures such as eels, crabs, snails, mantis shrimp, squid, puffer fish, ghost crabs, and whatever else becomes visible. Wear old tennis shoes or reefwalkers, and bring sunscreen, water, and lunch. We will meet at Paiko Lagoon. Children especially enjoy this field trip! Call Alice to register, 538-3255.

Lyon Arboretum

July 19, Saturday 10am

Come take a leisurely stroll through this lovely botanical garden where it's possible to see 'Amakihi, Red-billed Leiothrix, Red-vented and Red-whiskered Bulbuls, Common Waxbills, White-rumped Shammas, and Sulfur-crested and Salmon-crested Cockatoos. We'll meet in the parking lot at 10am. Mosquito repellent is strongly suggested. Call the HAS office to register, 528-1432.

Shorebird Homecoming at Paiko Lagoon

September 6, Saturday 6-8:00 am

September 27, Saturday 9-11:00 am

Welcome our shorebirds home! Another great trip to Paiko Lagoon to welcome our Kolea home and see if other shorebirds have also returned. This is a keiki-friendly trip – the kids will love it! Wear old tennis shoes or reefwalkers, and bring sunscreen, water and lunch. We will meet at Paiko Lagoon at 8:30am. Call Alice to register, 538-3255.

*James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge - October

*Ewa Plains Sinkholes with Dr. Alan Ziegler - November

*Christmas Bird Count - December

June 16 Program Meeting – Wild Bird Rehabilitation with Mark Caspers, DVM, of Feather & Fur Animal Clinic

Have you ever found a baby, sick, or injured bird and not known what to do with it, what it eats, how to heal it, when to release it, or just who to ask? Dr. Mark Caspers will talk about wild bird rehabilitation at our next program meeting. Dr. Caspers treats both exotic and native birds (and yes, dogs and cats, too!) at Feather and Fur Animal Clinic in Kailua. Your editor has taken her birds to him on many occasions – not only is he a great person and an extremely knowledgeable vet, but he has a good sense of humor. This promises to be an informative and enjoyable presentation.

Program meetings are held at Henry Hall Room 109 on the Chaminade University campus, 3140 Wai'alaue Avenue, Kaimuki. Meetings are from 7:30 to 9:30pm. Refreshments are served, and HAS publications, T-shirts, and maps are available for purchase.

Pacific Golden Plovers Being Tracked – Many Thanks to Donors!

by Linda Shapin

I had the chance to join Wally and Pat Johnson on April 15 and 17 to watch them band Pacific Golden Plovers and fit them with transmitters at Punchbowl National Memorial Park. Wally and Pat, who live in Colorado, have been coming to Hawai'i to do Plover research for many years, and think nothing of rising at 3am when they are here in order to be at one of several locations setting up mist nets by 4:30am. This year birds were caught at Hickam and at Punchbowl National Cemetery.

Not every bird caught gets a transmitter. The weight of the bird is taken into consideration because underweight birds sometimes don't migrate in the spring, electing to stay here over the summer and fatten up. Putting a \$135 transmitter on such a bird would be a waste. The chosen Kolea also have to be able to carry the transmitter (about the size of a thumbnail, with a 9" trailing wire) without undue stress.

After being removed from the mist nets, they were carefully placed in burlap bags put in Wally and Pat's car, where someone sat guarding them. The rest of us untangled and released several angry but uninjured bulbuls and cardinals caught in the mist nets by accident, then helped to take the nets down. The plovers were taken to a conference room to be weighed, examined, and admired. If found fit to carry a transmitter, they were banded and the transmitters glued to the feathers on their rump, between the wings. What struck me most was how calm, trusting, and patient the plovers were throughout the whole process.

The best part of my participation was the opportunity to hold two of these gentle birds, then set each one free. In their typical dignified way, they simply walked off and started to calmly preen. The plovers must be released back to their exact territory



photo by Clifford Hand

- if released in another plover's territory, they will be attacked and chased off.

This year, 15 birds were banded and fitted with transmitters. Many thanks to our Adopt-a-Plover donors: Janice Roberts, Rick Caulfield, Tracey Kazunaga, Bill Kruse, Bettie May, Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge (2 transmitters), and, together, Kelly Vitousek and Frederic Manke. The rest of the 15 birds were adopted by participants in Hawaii Nature Center's Kolea Watch Program. Crews in Alaska are tracking our plovers. To follow this process, log on to HNC's website: www.hawaiinaturecenter.org and go to Kolea Watch.

2003 Membership in Hawaii Audubon Society

Regular US Member (via bulk mail, not forwardable)	\$ 15.00	Mexico	\$ 21.00
First Class Mail	\$ 21.00	Canada	\$ 22.00
Junior Members (18 and under)	\$ 10.00	All other countries	\$ 28.00
Supporting Member	\$100.00		

Donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.

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Calendar of Events

July 14, Monday, HAS Board meeting

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

June 16, Monday, Program Meeting

Wild Bird Rehabilitation See page 40.

June 14, Saturday, Field Trips

Left-Over Shorebirds & Ocean Creatures at June 28, Saturday
 Paiko Lagoon See page 40.

July 19, Saturday, Field Trip

Lyon Arboretum See page 40.

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