



# 'ELEPAIO

Journal of the  
Hawaii Audubon Society  
For the Protection of  
Hawaii's Native Wildlife

VOLUME 64, NUMBER 7

## “Last Ditch” Effort to Save Po‘ouli

One of the last of its species, a rare Hawaiian forest bird called the po‘ouli, has been captured by a team of biologists and transported to the Maui Bird Conservation Center in Olinda. This bird is one of three individuals who are believed to represent the last vestiges of a species first discovered only 31 years ago. The birds are being captured and moved into a captive breeding center with the hope that a captive management program will be able to save this species.

After months of battling adverse weather conditions in some of Hawai‘i’s densest rainforests, six members of the Maui Forest Bird Recovery team captured the bird, believed to be a female, at approximately 4:30 p.m. Thursday (September 9, 2004) in the Hanawi Natural Area Reserve. “She was incredibly calm and eating within minutes of being placed in a holding cage,” said Kirsty Swinnerton, project coordinator.

The bird was successfully transported to the Maui Forest Bird Conservation Center this morning by helicopter. “We took off at 7 a.m., and the weather was already closing in,” Swinnerton said. “After skimming along the treetops for a time, we came to clear skies and took off for Olinda.”

The Maui Bird Conservation Center – like the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center on the Big Island – is operated by the Zoological Society of San Diego’s Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species.

“This bird may well represent the future of this species, and we recognize the role we must play for this program to succeed,” said Alan Lieberman, avian conservation coordinator for the Zoological Society. “We are awed by this responsibility and will do everything in our power and experience to keep this bird alive . . . hopefully until the field crew can capture a mate and we can begin the process of reproduction.”

“Saving this species from extinction is a monumental challenge, and we are one step closer thanks to strong collaboration between our agencies and the Zoological Society of San Diego, and the excellent work of our biologists that have carried out the

planning and implementing this work,” said Peter Young, Chairperson of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project team has been attempting to capture a po‘ouli since February 2003, but most of the field trips focused on the other two individual birds. They succeeded in mist-netting this female on the first day of the field trip that began on September 8, the fourth trip to capture her. “We will take a few days off to regroup and to see how this bird adapts to captivity,” Swinnerton said. “Then we’ll be back in the field, trying to locate and capture the other two birds.”

The decision to bring these last three birds into a captive breeding program was made in 2003 after repeated efforts to bring these individuals together in the wild had failed. The bird which was captured today is the first one of its species to be removed from the wild.

“The protocol we followed was developed by the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project staff during the 2002 attempt to bring a male and female together in the wild,” explained Young. “Although that effort did not result in a breeding pair, it was incredibly important for the knowledge it gave us regarding how a po‘ouli may react to captivity. Thankfully, the female captured then, as well as yesterday’s capture, seemed to take it in stride.”

“Establishing a breeding pair of po‘ouli may be the most challenging task we’ve ever attempted,” said Lieberman, “We have successfully bred several Hawaiian bird species, including the ‘alala, puaiohi, and palila, and even reintroduced them into the wild, but to start off with only three birds, all of which are at least 6 years old, just increases the difficulties.”

“Without this effort, this unique species could go the way of the dinosaur, since the last three remaining birds are found in different areas of the forest and have no chance to reproduce in the wild,” said Gina Shultz, endangered species manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii. “This successful capture and transfer to Olinda breathes new hope for saving the

*continued on page 53*

## A Word Regarding the Peacocks of Waimea Valley Audubon Center

The Board of Directors of Hawaii Audubon Society acknowledges and supports the concerns of both our members and the general public regarding the sudden culling of peacocks at the Waimea Valley Audubon Center in July, 2004.

However, we wish to clarify that the Waimea Valley Audubon Center is managed and funded by the National Audubon Society, now known as the Audubon Society, on land leased from the City and County of Honolulu.

The Hawaii Audubon Society was founded locally in 1939 as an independent, non-profit membership association and became

a certified chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1978, but continues to function independently in all fiscal, policy and programmatic matters.

Hawaii Audubon Society Board members and employees had no advance knowledge of the culling or further information beyond that printed in the local newspapers at the time of the event.



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# The Society's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner

Tuesday, October 19th 2004

From 6:00 to 9:30pm

UH Manoa

Hawai'i Imin Conference Center - Garden Level

\$27.50 Per Person

Dinner once again catered by Kaka'ako Kitchen:

Mesclun of Greens with Lemon Miso Dressing

Asian Potato Salad

Sauteed Mahi with Tomato-Ginger-Butter Sauce

Wok-Fried Vegetables

Steamed Rice

Double Chocolate Brownies

This marks the eleventh year that the Society has recognized outstanding volunteers, corporate leaders, and public servants for their contributions in protecting Hawai'i's native wildlife and habitats.

The following presentation is planned for your enjoyment:

### **Hawai'i's 'Akekeke (Ruddy Turnstone) in Alaska**

by Dr. Phil Bruner, Director of the BYUH Museum of Natural History, Professor of Biology at BYUH, past President of Hawaii Audubon Society, and Chair of HAS Grants and Scholarship Committee

Dr. Phil Bruner has been researching Kolea (Pacific Golden-Plover) here in Hawai'i since 1980 and Alaska since 1988. This past year Phil and his wife Andrea began a new study on another migratory shorebird the Ruddy Turnstone or 'Akekeke in Hawaiian and Tellvak in Inuktatut. This research is focused on investigating site fidelity, mate retention and natal philopatry. The presentation will highlight our June 2004 work at Woolley lagoon, Seward Peninsula, Western Alaska. Ruddy Turnstones are the second most common migratory shorebird wintering in Hawai'i. This beautiful bird can be seen along shorelines as well as on lawns. Their common name, "Ruddy Turnstone" comes from the rusty colored breeding plumage and their foraging tactics of turning rocks over in search of prey.



**Reservations must be made and payment received no later than October 15th. Make your reservations by calling the office at 528-1432 or emailing us at [hiaudsoc@pixi.com](mailto:hiaudsoc@pixi.com). Checks may be mailed to the HAS office at 850 Richards St., #505, Honolulu, HI 96813.**

## National Wildlife Refuge Week 2004 Events:

### Kilauea Point, Kaua'i:

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week 2004, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge invites you to discover the refuge's treasures. Please join us on one of our guided hikes:

On Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, October 12, 14, and 15, park rangers will be leading hikes up Crater Hill where participants will get a chance to see the results of wildlife conservation efforts and enjoy breathtaking coastal views. Hikes will run from 10:00am -2:00pm.

On Wednesday, October 13, biologist Brenda Zaun will lead a natural history hike up Crater Hill. This journey will feature Kilauea Point's famous seabirds. Hike runs from 8:30 - 10:30am.

On Saturday, October 16, longtime Kilauea resident Gary Smith will entertain hike participants with his recollections of the human history of Crater Hill. Hike runs from 8:30 - 11:30am.

All hikes will be over moderately strenuous terrain and REQUIRE RESERVATIONS. Space is limited. Call 828-1413 and speak with Bobby.

Saturday, October 16, will also be a free (no entrance fee) family day at the refuge. Fun activities for the keiki, too.

### Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge, Island of Hawai'i:

#### Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge Taking Reservations for Annual Open House

If you've never experienced a native Hawaiian rainforest, it's time to set aside Saturday, October 16, find your binoculars, get out your raingear, and make your reservations for the annual Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge open house. And if you've already been there, you'll probably want to return again!

"We have folks who come every year as well as newcomers who have no idea Hawaii even has rainforests," said Refuge Manager Dick Wass. "All are welcome to join us in celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week by spending a day in Hakalau Forest."

Residents and visitors are invited to hike through the Pua 'Akala Tract, which harbors a high-elevation rainforest, many native birds such as 'i'iwi and 'elepaio, and significant numbers of endangered species including the Hawai'i creeper and Hawai'i 'akepa. A historic 110-year old koa cabin also will be open for viewing.

Visitors will be met by refuge staff and tour leaders at the Pua 'Akala Barn anytime between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. They will receive a briefing on refuge management objectives and strategies and a description of the plants and animals the Refuge protects. Rainforest hikes of varying lengths will be offered. The hikes will be led by biologists and staff familiar with native Hawaiian flora and fauna. Visitors will have the opportunity to tour the refuge greenhouse and learn about the forest restoration program. Cultural resource protection, weed control projects and the University of Hawaii's field station will also be highlighted.

Participants must arrange their own transportation to the Refuge. A four-wheel-drive vehicle is required for the two-hour drive from Hilo, Waimea, or Kona. "We don't recommend this trip for young children or those who lack an adventurous spirit due to the long rough ride, rugged terrain, and primitive facilities," said Wass.

Visitors should come prepared for wet chilly weather and bring their own lunch, water, binoculars and rain gear. Reservations are required and may be obtained by calling the refuge office in Hilo at 933-6915 by October 13. Directions and additional information will be mailed to all participants.

Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge consists of 32,730 acres of native forest and grassland on the windward slope of Mauna Kea between the elevations of 2,500 and 6,500 feet. The Refuge was established to protect and manage endangered forest birds and their habitat, and contains some of the finest stands of koa-'ohi'a forest in the state.

Contact: Dick Wass or Jim Glynn, 808 933 6915

## Nominating Committee Report

As of September 21, the only confirmed candidate for available positions on the Board of Directors is Wendy Johnson, Past President. No other report from the Committee was available.

Positions open for nomination include: President, Treasurer, Second Vice President, Recording Secretary, and up to seven additional Director-at-Large positions. If you are a Society member and want to be a candidate, please submit a letter of interest and brief resume of your background and activities (in and/or outside of HAS) to the attention of the Nominating Committee at the Society's address (or email address) by November 10, 2004.



**CATS INDOORS!**  
The Campaign to Save Birds & Cats

THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS AND WILDLIFE

- Cats with bells on their collars still kill wildlife.
- Even well-fed cats kill wildlife.
- Cat-injured wildlife seldom survive, even if they escape.
- Outdoor cats are exposed to many hazards, including cars, disease, and parasites.

Protect cats, birds, and other wildlife by keeping cats indoors!

For more information, contact:  
AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY  
Cats Indoors! The Campaign to Save Birds and Cats  
1134 Jefferson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20035  
Phone: 202-462-1591; Fax: 202-462-1594  
E-mail: abc@abcbirds.org; Web: www.abcbirds.org



**PO'OULI** *continued from page 49*

Nation's most endangered bird."

The stocky little bird with a black mask is part of the Hawaiian honeycreeper family, but is so unique it occupies its own genus. It is the only Hawaiian forest bird to rely heavily on native tree snails as its food. Despite extensive searches, only three birds – a male and two females – have been found in recent years, and all in separate home ranges.

The elusive po'ouli was not even discovered until 1973, when a group of University of Hawai'i students conducting research on the east slope of Haleakala sighted a bird they had never seen before. It was named "po'ouli," which means black head in Hawaiian, by Mary Kawena Puku'i, a renowned authority on Hawaiian culture. Biologists say its quiet and infrequent call makes it much more difficult to find than more vocal species such as the Maui parrotbill.

The Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project is made up of a team of ornithologists supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. Guidance for the team's work and implementation plans to save the po'ouli from extinction are carried out by the Po'ouli Working Group, a team of more than a dozen experts from several agencies and organizations.

Source :

*US Fish and Wildlife Service News Release dated September 10, 2004*

Contacts:

*Barbara Maxfield or Ken Foote, USFWS, 808 792 9530  
Deborah Ward, Hawaii DLNR, 808 587 0320  
Christina Simmons, ZSSD, 619 685 3291*

## Christmas Bird Count 2004 - 2005

The Christmas Bird Count is a coast-to-coast annual bird census. Volunteers count every bird and bird species over one calendar day. Birds are indicators of the overall health of the environment. Christmas bird count data in any given area can provide valuable insight into the long-term health of bird populations and the environment.

Over 45,000 people from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America and the Pacific Islands participate in more than 1,700 counts held during a two and a half week period!

Join our Christmas Bird Counts during the official count period from December 14, 2004 to January 5, 2005. If you want to do something good for birds and meet other "bird people," contact one of the coordinators to sign up (contact information will be in the November 'Elepaio).



A white tern feeds its chick at Kapi'olani Park. Photo by T. Dove

### 2004 Membership in Hawaii Audubon Society

**Regular US Member**

(via bulk mail, not forwardable) ..... \$ 15.00  
First Class Mail ..... \$ 21.00  
Junior Members (18 and under) ..... \$ 10.00  
Supporting Member ..... \$100.00

**Foreign Membership (Airmail)**

Mexico ..... \$ 21.00  
Canada ..... \$ 22.00  
All other countries ..... \$ 28.00

*Donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Country, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

+ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

= Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership

Renewal

Please make checks payable to Hawaii Audubon Society and mail to us at 850 Richards St., #505, Honolulu, HI 96813.  
PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.



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## Calendar of Events

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**Saturday, October 16 Field Trip** Birding at Ho‘omaluhia Botanical Garden, Kane‘ohe. *See page 50.*

**Tuesday, October 19 Annual Awards Dinner** *See page 51.*

**Monday, November 15 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.

**Saturday, November 20 Annual Mailout.** *See pag 51.*

**Monday, December 13 Annual Membership Meeting.** Election results tallied and announced. Info in November ‘Elepaio.

**December 14, 2004 to January 5, 2005 105th Annual Christmas Bird Count.** *See page53.*

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