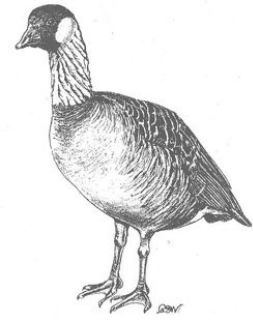


The Wildlife Society

-Hawai'i Chapter-



NEWSLETTER

July 2009

From the President's Desk

Aloha fellow Wildlifers!

Another year has passed, the summer heat is upon us, and the Hawai'i Conservation Conference is coming up fast – I hope everybody got the “early bird special”. This year, The Wildlife Society Hawai'i Chapter (TWS-HI) continued to move conservation projects forward across the state and Bill Standley, a long-time member and past president of the TWS-HI, received the “James D. Yoakum Award” at the Western Section's annual meeting (see page 4).



I want to thank all of the Chapter members that served as board members last year, particularly Norma Bustos. Norma is now focusing on her new job with the Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife where she is responsible for the state's listed seabirds and waterbirds. I am happy to say that the Chapter will benefit from the return of board members Brenda Becker, Ed Johnson, Liz Kashinsky, Vanessa Pepi, Dave Smith, Bill Standley, and Keith Swindle. We have elected the following new officers and created a new office called “grants manager”: President (David Leonard),

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Join us for the following events at the 2009 Hawai'i Conservation Conference at the Hawai'i Convention Center:

UH-HIP Breakfast Join us for our annual UH-Hawaiian Internship Program breakfast at 7:00 a.m on July 29 at Ala Moana Beach Park on the grass near the Diamond Head/makai corner of the Magic Island parking lot.

Chapter Meeting Our annual opportunity to get together with the full membership will be held on July 29 at 5:30 p.m. in room #312 at the Hawai'i Convention Center. Please come by to say to hi. New members welcome!

Conservation Opportunities Fair The Hawai'i Conservation Alliance and TWS-HI are sponsoring a Conservation Opportunities Fair July 30 from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. Please contact Deanna Spooner for details at spooner@hawaii.edu.

TWS-HI T-shirt or Tank Top Purchase a TWS-HI chapter t-shirt featuring Ron Walker's beautiful design. Men's t-shirts and women's tank tops will be available. Look for our table in the HCC exhibit hall.

To contact TWS-HI please visit:

<http://www.tws-west.org/hawaii/index.html>



Ka`ena Point Ecosystem Restoration Project Nears Completion

Ka`ena Point Natural Area Reserve, (NAR) on O`ahu's north shore, is one of the most unique protected areas in the state and supports many natural and cultural resources. Management of the NAR has been ongoing the past 20 years and started with the area being closed to motorized vehicles in 1989, allowing recovery to begin. Removal of non-native plants, planting of native plants, and predator control followed. Ka`ena Point is now home to a growing population of rare and endangered coastal plants including `ohai and Ka`ena akoko, and seabirds such as Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. The site's Laysan Albatross colony is one of the world's most

accessible and is rapidly growing. Hawaiian Monk Seals and Green Sea Turtles are also regularly found resting along the shoreline.

Despite these gains, the species at Ka`ena Point are under constant threat. In 2006, more than 100 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were killed by dogs and cats over a period of several days. Rats and mongooses are regular predators of seabirds, their chicks, and eggs. Rats and mice also eat native plants and seeds. Ongoing management efforts (e.g., predator control), while important, will not allow the area to fully recover. Because Hawaii's plants and birds evolved without mammalian predators, they are naïve (i.e., do not recognize mammals as a predator) and have few defenses against them.

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With a long-term solution in mind, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Wildlife Society, Hawai`i Chapter, proposed constructing a predator-proof fence to protect the reserve. This type of fencing was developed in New Zealand and the fence's mesh excludes all mammals including those as small as a two-day old mouse. In addition, the fence is designed to prevent mammals from digging under it or climbing over it. Once in place, the predator-proof fencing will shift the focus of management in the NAR from predator control to eradication.

Fourteen species of seabirds are regularly seen from shore around Ka`ena Point, three of which have established breeding colonies in the NAR. Once the fence is in place and predators have been eradicated, it is expected that two to three additional seabird species will establish breeding colonies with the possibility of many more in the future. Perhaps most important for these seabirds is the fact that Ka`ena Point is part of a high island so it will provide a safe nesting site if habitats in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are lost due to increasing sea levels.

Although seabirds will benefit from the fence, endangered plants may derive the most benefit from this project. Some species may never be able to reproduce successfully unless rodents are eliminated, providing opportunities for seeds to germinate. While it is impossible to predict exactly what changes to the native plant community will occur in the NAR as a result of this project, a dramatic increase in native plants and animals is expected.

The proposed design of the fence will allow for the continued use of the NAR, and access will not change. People can continue to visit Ka`ena Point to fish, hike, bike, and participate in other recreational and educational activities. Access will be through unlocked doors at the existing reserve entrances. The draft environmental assessment for the predator proof fence was published in December 2008 and was finalized in June 2009. The project is now in the final permitting stages, which are expected to be completed by the end of 2009. The final round of city and county permits has been applied for and these are expected to take 3-6 months to process. Once permits are approved construction can begin.

Public outreach associated with this project has been extensive and has included a wide variety of stakeholders, community members, and Hawaiian kupuna. Over 1,800 people have been directly contacted and are in support of the project. The project also has received extensive media coverage in both local newspapers and television programs. The approximately 500 m (0.3 mi) long marine-grade stainless steel fence will stand 2 m (6.5' ft) tall and be constructed along an existing road to minimize its impact to the reserve. The final alignment plan of the fence was designed with input from Hawaiian kupuna and encloses the soul's leap rock, or leina. A third gate was added near the leina to allow cultural and spiritual aspects to be maintained. This alignment protects the maximum amount of habitat and is the least visually obstructive. To minimize the visual impact of the fence, its color will blend into the natural environment.

Hawaiian Birds Hit National Spotlight

by David Leonard

Compared to other states, Hawai`i receives relatively little funding to protect the 31 federally endangered birds that are found in the islands. In fact, 33% of the birds listed under the Endangered Species Act are found only in Hawai`i, but less than 5% of the funds available are spent on their recovery.

Among other factors, a lack of awareness of the plight of Hawaiian birds contributes to this funding inequity. This lack of awareness has contributed to a lack of engagement by mainland based NGOs regarding the conservation of Hawaiian birds.

However, things are changing. As of the Spring of 2009, "The State of the Birds", a publication produced by North American Bird Conservation Initiative, U.S. Committee, included an entire chapter on Hawaiian birds and their dire conservation status (<http://www.stateofthebirds.org/>).

Quickly following this report, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) dedicated their entire Spring issue to Hawaiian birds. These publications, as well as advocacy by ABC and others, contributed to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's interest in developing a Keystone Initiative around Hawaiian forest bird conservation. This initiative will provide dedicated, long-term funding for Hawai`i's most endangered birds. In addition, the activities funded through this initiative will benefit many of Hawai`i's other endemic species.

James D. Yoakum Award Goes to Hawai`i Chapter Member

TWS-HI board and chapter member Bill Standley was presented with the "James D. Yoakum Award" at the 2009 Annual Conference in Sacramento, California. The award recognizes individuals who have provided outstanding, long-term service, support, and commitment to the Western Section of TWS.

Bill was recognized for the work he did setting up the Section's web site over 10 years ago and for maintaining it the past decade.



Bill Standley (right) receives the 2009 James D. Yoakum Award from Western Section TWS President, Rhys Evans.

Congratulations Bill!!

Captive Releases of Two Endangered Hawaiian Forest Birds

by David Leonard

About the only things that the Puaiohi (Small Kaua`i Thrush) and the Palila have in common is that both are federally endangered and both are being captive bred by the Zoological Society of San Diego at facilities in Hawai`i. Funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Hawai`i Division of Forestry and Wildlife, captive raised birds are released into the wild to increase the size and range of populations.

The Puaiohi is restricted to 20 square kilometers on the southern and central plateau of the Alaka`i

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TWS-HI Helping to Fund Watchable Wildlife Signs

by Bill Standley



Last year we reported that the The Wildlife Society Hawai`i Chapter (TWS-HI) provided funds to produce and erect signs at 31 viewing sites that are part of the Hawai`i Watchable Wildlife Project. The Hawai`i Watchable Wildlife Project has developed a statewide network of wildlife viewing sites to enhance the enjoyment of the state's "watchable wildlife". Viewing guidelines and interpretive displays at the viewing sites inform residents and visitors about Hawai`i's native flora,

fauna, and habitats and encourage responsible viewing behavior. Seven different signs have been produced including whales and dolphins, Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, seabirds, wetland birds, and forest birds. TWS-HI sponsored two sign-types: monk seals and wetland birds, and these have been placed on each of the main islands so be sure to watch out for them.

Check out <http://www.hawaiiwildlife.us/>



TWS-HI Awarded Joint Venture Grant

by Norma Bustos



A \$4,000 grant was recently awarded to The Wildlife Society Hawai`i Chapter (TWS-HI) from the Pacific Coast Joint Venture to help defray the cost of hosting a Waterbirds and Wetlands Conference in 2010. The Hawai`i Wetland Joint Venture was created to help protect and reverse degradation to Hawai`i's remaining wetlands and to spearhead the recovery of Hawaii's endangered waterbird populations.

The proposed 2010 Hawai`i Waterbird and Wetlands Conservation and Management

Conference will bring together Joint Venture partners, including federal and state agency personnel, as well as private organizations, landowners, and scientists. Talks and discussions will focus on improving current waterbird recovery efforts and wetland management actions.

TWS-HI is currently seeking ideas and input for the proposed conference. If you have suggestions related to potential venues, exhibitors, keynote speakers, or other ideas please contact Norma Bustos at Norma.I.Bustos@hawaii.gov.

Brochure on Feral Cats and Their Effects on Hawai`i's Wildlife

by Norma Bustos

The Hawai`i Division of Forestry and Wildlife was recently awarded a Pacific Coast Joint Venture Discretionary Fund grant to print a "Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Brochure". The brochure will outline the impact that feral and free-ranging cats have on Hawai`i's wildlife, why trapping, neutering and releasing cats will not work in Hawai`i, the importance of not feeding feral cats, and the need to keep pet cats indoors.

As many wildlife professionals can attest, discussions about feral and free-ranging cats often become emotionally charged, even among individuals with similar backgrounds. It is hoped that this brochure will assist individuals working to protect Hawai`i's waterbird species by allowing information to be disseminated in a non-confrontational manner (i.e., distributing brochures). A well-designed brochure is a much-needed first step toward educating the public on the effects feral cats have on Hawai`i's native birds, especially the state's waterbirds. Hopefully once everybody has a better understanding of why feral cats are bad for native birds, community groups, private entities, and the public at large will increase their support of Hawai`i's native species.



continued from page 4 Wilderness Preserve in areas with deeply dissected, steep ravines of wet montane forest.



The Palila is mostly restricted to the western slopes of Mauna Kea on Hawai`i island in high

elevation dry woodlands dominated by mamane trees. The Puaiohi is a generalist, eating fruits and invertebrates, while 95% of the Palila's diet consists of green mamane seeds.

In October 2008, 23 captive reared Puaiohi were released into the Alaka`i to bolster the population



which is estimated to be somewhere around 500 individuals. Since 1999, 178 captive reared Puaiohi have been released at two sites as part of a strategy to increase the population of this critically endangered bird.

Seven captive reared Palila were released in March 2009 on the northern slope of Mauna Kea. Although most Palila occur on the western slope, a small population has been re-established on the northern slope. This population was founded by moving birds from the western slope and by releasing captive birds.

Since 2004, 28 captive reared Palila have been released at this site as part of a strategy to create a self-sustaining, second population. It is hoped that the birds released in March will remain and integrate with the 15 – 20 birds that now occupy the northern slope.

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

Ecological Society of America
94th Annual Meeting
August 2-7, 2009
Albuquerque, New Mexico
<http://www.esa.org/albuquerque>

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual
Conference
September 13-16, 2009
Austin, Texas
<http://www.fishwildlife.org/annualmeet.html>

The Wildlife Society 2009 Annual Meeting
September 20-24, 2009
Monterey, California
<http://www.joomla.wildlife.org/monterey09>

10th International Effects of Oil on Wildlife
Conference
October 5-9, 2009
Tallinn, Estonia
<http://www.eowconference09.org>

2009 Watchable Wildlife Conference
October 6-8, 2009
Avalon/Cape May, New Jersey
<http://www.watchablewildlife.org/conference>

The Wildlife Society Annual Conference:
Western Section
January 26 – 29, 2010
Visalia, California
<http://joomla.wildlife.org/Western/index.php>

Island Invasives: Eradication and Management
Conference
February 8-12, 2010
Auckland, New Zealand
<http://www.cbb.org.nz/conferences.asp>

24th Vertebrate Pest Conference
February 22-25, 2010
Sacramento, California
<http://www.vpconference.org/>

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Ecosystem monitoring of plants, invertebrates, birds, and rodents has been done over the last year to provide baseline data that will allow scientists to document how the community responds to the eradication of predators.

Preliminary data from seasonal rodent monitoring indicates that rats and mice shift their habitat use throughout the year to take advantage of Wedge-tailed Shearwater eggs. Eradication of rodents will be conducted when the fewest seabirds are breeding in the NAR and once completed we can all begin to enjoy watching the transformation of Ka`ena.

For more information please e-mail Kaenapoint@yahoo.com, or go to the website www.dofaw.net and click on "Ka`ena Point Ecosystem Restoration".



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Vice-President (Bill Standley), Treasurer (Vanessa Pepi), and Grants Manager (David Smith). Brenda Becker and Liz Kashinsky will remain in their respective positions as Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

This past year TWS-HI has continued to use its nonprofit status to assist in developing, obtaining, and in some cases, implementing grants that would not otherwise be available to Chapter members and partners (see articles elsewhere in this newsletter). The board is continuing to develop more formal procedures for such grant agreements and we are always looking for new ways to expand the Chapter's opportunities to promote wildlife conservation issues in Hawai'i. I encourage you to get in touch with a board member if you have any ideas.

Besides serving as the fiscal sponsor for the Ka'ena Point fencing project (see page 2), the Chapter also is assisting in the implementation of a number of research and restoration projects, especially on O`ahu. Of these, perhaps the most exciting project was the aerial broadcast of rodenticide on Lehua Island off of Kaua`i. Preliminary field work suggests that the island is now free of rats. Rabbits were removed in previous years and now full scale habitat restoration can begin to benefit the 10 or so seabird species that breed on the island including the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel and the threatened Newell's Shearwater.

The Chapter will be participating in the Hawai'i Conservation Conference (HCC) again this year, both through financial support of the student awards and the University of Hawai'i Hawaiian Internship Program (UH-HIP). We will also have our

annual membership meeting and will be hosting a breakfast social to provide Chapter members an opportunity to interact with some of the UH-HIP interns. The Chapter will have a table in the exhibit hall to provide information on The Wildlife Society, sign up new members, and sell TWS-HI t-shirts featuring art work by chapter member Ron Walker.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm originally from Florida and have been living in Hawai'i for the past five years. I received graduate degrees from the University of Central Florida in Biology and the University of Florida in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. While in Florida, I studied and conducted management to benefit cavity nesting birds, particularly the White-breasted Nuthatch and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Since December 2005, I've been overseeing the Endangered Forest Bird Program for the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. Please feel free to contact me at david.l.leonard@hawaii.gov.

Aloha,

David Leonard



Mahalo to Rob Kinslow of OM Creations for graphic layout & design.



Koloa maoli Outreach Efforts

by Bill Standley

The Hawaiian Duck or Koloa Maoli is threatened with genetic extinction through hybridization with feral Mallards. An important step in addressing this threat is public outreach. The Wildlife Society Hawai`i Chapter recently partnered with Community Links Hawai`i and Malama Hawai`i to implement a grant from the Hawai`i Invasive Species Council to raise awareness about impacts of feral Mallards on the Hawaiian Duck or Koloa Maoli and other native waterbirds. Under the mini-campaign "Domesticated Birds Gone Wild", three television vignettes were produced and aired on channel OC16's "Outside Hawai`i" and on YouTube. The videos include interviews with biologists and other people who care about the Hawaiian Duck. A 30 second TV Public Service Announcement on the Koloa Maoli and Mallard hybridization issue also was produced and has been airing on local television regularly since October of last year. A new section has been added to the Malama Hawai`i website to house all of the Koloa Maoli information and it includes links to the videos (www.malamahawaii.org/koloa.html).



In addition, five lesson plans with accompanying materials were developed for students from grades K-7. A team of writers, artists, educators, and scientists created the lesson plans, which meet Hawai`i Department of Education standards. Topics of the lesson plans include defining the natural diet and

habitat of ducks in Hawai`i and discussing the hybridization of feral Mallards and native Hawaiian Ducks. It is hoped that these lesson plans will build awareness and understanding about this special bird and the challenges it is facing.

Hawai`i Wildlife Center Update

by Bill Standley

Protecting Hawai`i's native wildlife requires more than habitat protection. There is an ever-present need for hands on care and a rapid response capability to rescue and aid injured wild animals. In recognizing the importance of this vital missing piece of environmental stewardship, The Wildlife Society Hawai`i Chapter (TWS-HI) joined many others in making a donation to the Hawai`i Wildlife Center (HWC), currently in development on the Big Island. The effort is being led by TWS-HI member, Linda Elliott.



A two acre site has been donated and construction is underway. The center is expected to be completed in June 2010.

Check out the HWC web site at <http://www.hawaiiwildlifecenter.org> for more information.