



## Field Guides Tour Report

### Hawaii 2014

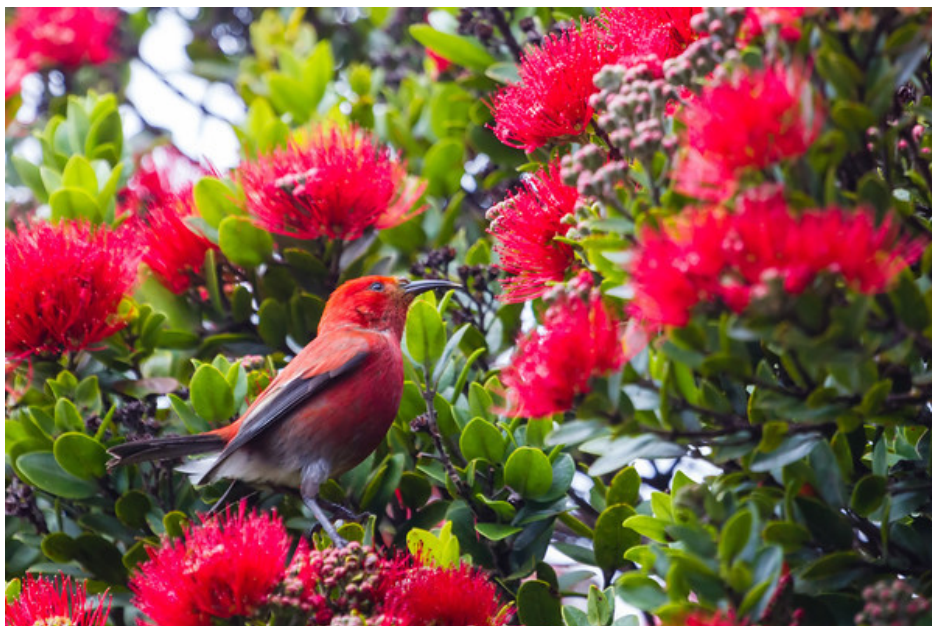
Apr 5, 2014 to Apr 14, 2014

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*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*

Hawaii. The 50th state. It's rather an unusual place: it's perhaps the Earth's most isolated archipelago, it is the US's only truly tropical state, and it has by far the most unique fauna and flora in the country!

The islands were once home to some impressive and unique birds (flightless giant geese, a flightless ibis that walked on all fours, a forest harrier, a long-legged owl, an endemic family [the O'o's] and 40+ species of honeycreepers!). These native birds colonized the islands from several sources: the honeycreepers probably were derived from an Asian rosefinch, the O'o's probably from ancient waxwings or their relatives (from North America?), the Elepaio's were monarch flycatchers that invaded from the South Pacific, the Nene from Cackling Geese from Alaska, the Hawaiian thrushes from an ancestor of Townsend's Solitaire or a relative from western North America or Mexico, the Hawaiian Hawk from Short-tailed Hawks from Mexico, etc. These colonization events happened over perhaps as much as 10 million years. Sadly, much of this is lost, including many of the most remarkable (and all the flightless species) before Europeans arrived, but much more was lost after. Still, there are still some pretty impressive native land birds still to be seen on the islands, as well as seabirds, and a few interesting introduced species.



*Apapane, perhaps the most successful of the extant honeycreepers, and a fine sight in its favored flowers.  
(Photo by participant Tony Quezon)*

Interestingly, the colonization of new bird species to the islands through human interference has added a similar number of species in about a century as had arrived over the previous several million years, and from sources more widely scattered around the globe (Skylarks from Europe, mynahs and bulbuls from India, doves and white-eyes from China and Japan, Northern Cardinals, mockingbirds, Western Meadowlarks, and several gamebirds from North America, Saffron Finches, Red-crested and Yellow-billed cardinals from South America, and francolins and Yellow-fronted Canaries from Africa, just for starters!). Sure, these may seem like uninteresting birds to us now since they are not native, but imagine what they may become after a million years of isolation on these islands!

Our tour took us to three of the main islands: Oahu, Kauai, and Hawaii (also called the "Big Island" to avoid confusion with the name now given to the chain). We enjoyed seeing the varying ages of these islands from the old, red soils, impressive canyons, and steep sea cliffs of Kauai, the Garden Isle, to the center of civilization and wind-swept North Shore of Oahu, and finally the young lava flows and high mountains--still with snow--that are home to the last refuge of native forest birds on the Big Island.

Our most memorable sightings included the suburban families of Laysan Albatrosses (albatrice?), the brilliantly colored I'iwi with their off-key songs and bent bills, the finch-like Palila that Chris first heard out his window as we drove through Mamane woodland, the friendly Elepaio's we enjoyed on all three islands, the Short-eared Owl (or Pueo, its local name) that played with its food on the fence post and then entertained us with some head-bobbing, the flight displays of courting Red-tailed Tropicbirds and White Terns, the rare and endemic Newell's Shearwaters we enjoyed among the throngs of Wedge-tailed on our boat trip, the melancholy beauty of the honeycreepers that we did enjoy, including the Hawaiian Creeper on the nest, the Hawaiian Hawk that came in to land over us at Hakalau, the Black Noddies that danced over the waves along the youngest terrain in the US at the bottom of Chain-of-Craters Road, and a spy-hopping pod of Short-finned Pilot Whales that seemed unconcerned with our proximity. Even the introduced Black Francolin and Red-crested Cardinals were among the sights that we most appreciated on the tour!

Chris and I were very pleased that you decided to join us as we explored these special islands, and we hope we'll enjoy your company again soon!  
Mahalo and aloha!

--Dan

#### KEYS FOR THIS LIST

## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**ACKLING GOOSE** (*Branta hutchinsii*) – One bird was with Nene at Princeville, Kauai. [b]

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*) – Not sure if these arrived naturally or not (I'm betting 'not'), but we had several, including what appeared to be a few different size classes, at Hilo.

**HAWAIIAN GOOSE** (*Branta sandvicensis*) – After having been critically endangered, this, Hawaii's state bird, seems to have recovered well and is now being seen at many sites around Kauai and the Big Island. [E]

**ADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – One bird in Hilo. [b]

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Typical 'park ducks' in Hilo, where there may have been some wild birds involved.

**HAWAIIAN DUCK** (*Anas wyvilliana*) – Seen best at Hanalei on Kauai. [E]

### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**CALIFORNIA QUAIL** (*Callipepla californica*) – Seen at higher elevations on the Big Island. [I]

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**CHUKAR** (*Alectoris chukar*) – Several seen as we drove to Hakalau. [I]

**BLACK FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus francolinus*) – Rarer than the next, but we saw a couple on the dry side of Mauna Kea. [I]

**ERCKEL'S FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus erckelii*) – Common particularly on the Big Island, where we saw it well. A few were on Kauai, too. [I]

**RED JUNGLEFOWL** (*Gallus gallus*) – Hard to draw the line between 'chickens' and 'jungle fowl', but traditionally, the birds on Kauai are thought to be the closest to ancestral stock. [I]

**KALI PHEASANT** (*Lophura leucomelanos*) – Not hard to find on the Big Island, where it may be easier to see than in the Himalayas! [I]

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Seen on Oahu and the Big Island. These were 'ring-necked' types, not 'Green' or some of the other forms also known from Hawaii. [I]

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – Not uncommon on the Big Island. [I]

### Diomedidae (Albatrosses)

**LAYSAN ALBATROSS** (*Phoebastria immutabilis*) – What a treat! Thanks to Jessica for taking us to see the nesting birds in Princetown! They really are Gooneybirds! [N]

### Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

**WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus pacificus*) – THE common shearwater around the main islands, we saw them from all three islands we visited, including birds at burrows at Kilauea Point and birds at close quarters from the boat off Kauai. [N]

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus griseus*) – Several on the boat trip off Kauai.

**TOWNSEND'S SHEARWATER (NEWELL'S)** (*Puffinus auricularis newelli*) – This was great! A new species for both Chris and me, we used to do the tour too early to catch their arrival to the islands for nesting! This year we saw at least 12 off Kauai. [E]

### Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

**WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD** (*Phaethon lepturus*) – The common tropicbird inland on the islands.

**RED-TAILED TROPICBIRD** (*Phaethon rubricauda*) – After missing them on Oahu, we enjoyed good looks at this attractive species at Kilauea Point.

### Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

**GREAT FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata minor*) – Mostly females and young seen at Kilauea point.

### Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

**BROWN BOOBY** (*Sula leucogaster*) – Basically only seen on the Kauai boat trip.

**RED-FOOTED BOOBY** (*Sula sula*) – The most common booby on the main islands.

### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Widespread, but not native. [I]

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Pretty widespread.

### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**HAWAIIAN HAWK** (*Buteo solitarius*) – After fleeting views on the drive between Hilo and Volcano, a couple of birds showed well for us at Hakalau. [E]

### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**COMMON GALLINULE (HAWAIIAN)** (*Gallinula galeata sandvicensis*) – Very similar to mainland birds, but seem to have more red on the legs. [E]

**HAWAIIAN COOT** (*Fulica alai*) – Similar to American Coot, but the ones we saw had all white bills and shields. [E]

### Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-NECKED STILT (HAWAIIAN)** (*Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*) – An endemic subspecies of the mainland Black-necked, the Hawaiian form is darker on the head and neck, and have a black band on the tail. [EN]

### Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER** (*Pluvialis fulva*) – The 'robin' of the islands! In some smart plumage, too! [b]

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**BRISTLE-THIGHED CURLEW** (*Numenius tahitiensis*) – Four birds, all marked, on the north end of Oahu was a great last bird for our first day! I've submitted the band numbers to see where/when they were banded. [b]

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – A few on Oahu and Kauai. [b]

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – A few around Oahu. [b]

*Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)*

**POMARINE JAEGER** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) – A pretty good record, particularly considering the clean breeding plumage, as it flew by the beach at Kauai. [b]

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**BROWN NODDY** (*Anous stolidus*) – Several seen from the boat of Kauai.

**BLACK NODDY (HAWAIIAN)** (*Anous minutus melanogenys*) – Several seen at sea off Kauai, but some better views from the cliffs at Chain of Craters Road, Volcano NP.

**WHITE TERN** (*Gygis alba*) – One of our first birds of the tour, and a nice one to start with! They nest at Waikiki and a few other sites around Oahu, but nowhere else on the main islands! [N]

**SOOTY TERN** (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) – A cloud over Rabbit Island off Oahu was bested by several close-flying birds off of Kauai.

**GRAY-BACKED TERN** (*Onychoprion lunatus*) – One bird on the Kauai pelagic was nice.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Yup. [I]

**SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Common on all islands. [I]

**ZEBRA DOVE** (*Geopelia striata*) – Abundant on all islands. This is the Indonesian form, not the Australian 'Peaceful Dove' (in case you're keeping track). [I]

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*) – Chris and a few folks got a glimpse in the Kona area.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**SHORT-EARED OWL (HAWAIIAN)** (*Asio flammeus sandwichensis*) – Locally called 'Pueo' we enjoyed several on the slopes of Mauna Kea, including one that 'bopped' the head of its mouse prey against the post on which it sat, then devoured it, finishing off with a good bout of head-bobbing while trying to figure out what we were up to.

*Psittacidae (Parrots)*

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula krameri*) – Increasing in Oahu and Kauai, which is a bit disturbing. [I]

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**HAWAII ELEPAIO (KONA COAST)** (*Chasiempis sandwichensis sandwichensis*) – The form we saw at Manuka park on our last day. [E]

**HAWAII ELEPAIO (MAUNA KEA)** (*Chasiempis sandwichensis bryani*) – This was the very pale-headed form we saw at the Palila site. [E]

**HAWAII ELEPAIO (HILO COAST)** (*Chasiempis sandwichensis ridgwayi*) – This was the form we saw at Hakalau. [E]

**KAUAI ELEPAIO** (*Chasiempis sclateri*) – Still fairly common and friendly at Alakai. [E]

**OAHU ELEPAIO** (*Chasiempis ibidis*) – After nearly giving up on this declining native species, we finally lucked upon one at Kulioouou. [E]

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**SKY LARK** (*Alauda arvensis*) – Fairly common in open habitats on the Big Island. [I]

*Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)*

**RED-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – The more common of the two bulbuls on Oahu. [I]

**RED-WHISKERED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) – Limited to Oahu. [I]

*Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)*

**JAPANESE BUSH-WARBLER** (*Horornis diphone*) – Heard a few times on Kauai and the Big Island, a few folks got a view of them at Alakai. [I]

*Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)*

**JAPANESE WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops japonicus*) – One of the most common passerines on the islands now. [I]

*Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)*

**CHINESE HWAMEI** (*Garrulax canorus*) – Mostly heard, this babbler can be hard to see well! [I]

**RED-BILLED LEIOTHRIX** (*Leiothrix lutea*) – Our best experiences were on Oahu and the Big Island. [I]

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA** (*Copsychus malabaricus*) – A fine songster that we enjoyed on Oahu and Kauai. [I]

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**OMAO** (*Myadestes obscurus*) – One of the two last surviving Hawaiian thrushes (there were originally at least four in historic times), and still fairly common at higher elevations on the Big Island. [E]

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Formerly most common on Kauai, but we also encountered it on the Big Island on this trip. [I]

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*



**COMMON MYNA** (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Everywhere! [I]

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

**RED-CRESTED CARDINAL** (*Paroaria coronata*) – A common South American tanager (!) that we enjoyed on Oahu and Kauai. [I]

**YELLOW-BILLED CARDINAL** (*Paroaria capitata*) – Replacing the last on the Big Island, it seems to have declined some since I first started coming to Hawaii in 2000. [I]

**SAFFRON FINCH** (*Sicalis flaveola*) – A South American tanager (!) that has been increasing (even reaching Kauai now). Most common on the Big Island. [I]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Familiar from back home, and heard even in deep natural forests. [I]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**WESTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella neglecta*) – A strange choice to have introduced, and to Kauai, of all islands! [I]

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

**PALILA** (*Loxioides bailleui*) – One of the rarest of the Hawaiian honeycreepers we encountered on the tour, this one has been declining steadily despite concerted efforts to help them. Fights with hunters about land use doesn't help, though. [E]

**HAWAII AMAKIHI** (*Hemignathus virens*) – About as common as Apapane on the Big Island, especially on the dry side. [E]

**OAHU AMAKIHI** (*Hemignathus flavus*) – Our first 'drep' (=Drepanid, or Hawaiian honeycreeper) of the tour, and one of the last to survive on Oahu, sadly. However, this species seems to have taken to non-native forest quite readily. [E]

**KAUAI AMAKIHI** (*Hemignathus kauaiensis*) – Rarer than the other two Amakihi's, and more restricted to native habitats, but still fairly common therein. [E]

**ANIANIAU** (*Magumma parva*) – Doing remarkably well in the Alakai, it seems this one may be showing resistance to avian malaria! [E]

**HAWAII CREEPER** (*Loxops mana*) – Still relatively common in Hakalau, we saw several, including a female on the nest. [EN]

**AKEKEE** (*Loxops caeruleirostris*) – Happily, after several years when the species appeared to be declining precipitously, it seems to have begun recover a bit. We enjoyed some fine views of at least one bird. [E]

**AKEPA (HAWAII)** (*Loxops coccineus coccineus*) – Hard to see well, they were nevertheless fairly common at Hakalau. [E]

**IIWI** (*Vestiaria coccinea*) – Declining on Kauai, but still quite common at Hakalau, where we enjoyed good views of these fine-lookin' birds! [E]

**APAPANE** (*Himatione sanguinea*) – Quite possibly the most successful of all the Hawaiian honeycreepers, we got to experience them at Alakai and Volcano, with the dawn cacophony at the later site being quite impressive! [E]

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Yes, these are the same House Finches that we have back home, although there may be a higher frequency of yellow or orange males on Hawaii. [I]

**YELLOW-FRONTED CANARY** (*Serinus mozambicus*) – Increasing on Oahu and the Big Island. A native of southern Africa. [I]

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

**COMMON WAXBILL** (*Estrilda astrild*) – Common at Waikiki, indeed! [I]

**RED AVADAVAT** (*Amandava amandava*) – A species that seems to be a bit temperamental in its abundance, Garry gave us good information on where to find them on the north Kona side of the Big Island, and we enjoyed a large flock there. Most seemed to be female-plumaged, but I think males have a female-like non-breeding plumage. [I]

**AFRICAN SILVERBILL** (*Euodice cantans*) – Called "Warbling Silverbill" in several older books, but African and Indian species have been split since, and the Hawaiian birds are black-rumped African Silverbill. We saw them on the Kona side of the Big Island. [I]

**NUTMEG MANNIKIN** (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Seen on Kauai and the Big Island. [I]

**CHESTNUT MUNIA** (*Lonchura atricapilla*) – Seen on Oahu and Kauai. [I]

**JAVA SPARROW** (*Lonchura oryzivora*) – Easy in Waikiki and a few other sites. This species has been trapped out in its home range in Indonesia, so it may be easier to see in places like Hawaii these days! [I]

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## MAMMALS

**BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN** (*Tursiops truncatus*) – David Kuhn is certain he saw a few of these at one point on the Kauai boat trip.

**SPINNER DOLPHIN** (*Stenella longirostris*) – This species seems to be the common dolphin around the main islands!

**SHORT-FINNED PILOT WHALE** (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) – A great close-encounter with a pod of about 20-30 individuals off Kauai was a great experience on our boat trip!

**HUMBACK WHALE** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) – Seen off Oahu and on the Kauai boat trip. These are mostly mothers who are birthing calves in these relatively safe tropical waters. They don't feed while here, however.

**SMALL INDIAN MONGOOSE** (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) – Several seen on the Big Island. Originally introduced to control vermin, they turned to birds as well, and probably caused the declines of most seabirds. [I]

**HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL** (*Monachus schauinslandi*) – One spotted lounging on rocks at Kilauea Point, Kauai. [E]

**WILD BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*) – First introduced by the Polynesians, and later augmented by European Wild Boars by whites, these feral pigs are making a mess of the last remaining wild habitats. Sadly, we saw a few in Hakalau, where they were supposed to have been excluded, but somehow have gotten back in. [I]

**DOMESTIC GOAT** (*Capra hircus*) – One the Big Island. A big problem! [I]

**DOMESTIC SHEEP** (*Ovis aries*) – On the Big Island. [I]

Herps

**BROWN ANOLE** (*Anolis sagrei*) – Introduced from the Caribbean, we saw this lizard on Oahu and Kauai. [I]

**GREEN SEA TURTLE** (*Chelonia mydas*) – Locally called 'Honu', we saw several off the coast of Oahu and the Big Island as they surfaced for air between snacks of seaweed.

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## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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**Totals for the tour: 87 bird taxa and 9 mammal taxa**