

# The Hawai'i Conserver

Newsletter of the Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Vol. 45, Winter 1994

**A New(t) Congress, a New Legislature, and a New Governor.** Mark Twain wrote, (*Mark Twain's Letters from Hawaii*), about the Hawaiian legislature of 1866, "The mental caliber of the Legislative Assembly is up to the average of such bodies the world over--and I wish it were a complement to say it, but it is hardly so. I have seen a number of legislatures, and there was a comfortable majority in each of them that knew just about enough to come in when it rained, and that was all. Few men of first class ability can afford to let their affairs go to ruin while they fool away their time in legislatures for months on a stretch. Few such men care a straw for the small-beer distinction one is able to achieve in such a place."

With the City and State in the red, and Newt's gang ready to shred, will the hard-fought environmental gains of the last thirty years wind up dead? Will the new Governors' promising appointments deliver? We can only hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst. Now, more than ever, you need to let your voice be heard by those who are your elected representatives in these critical times.

--Rick Scudder, Editor



**Kanaha Pond Predator Study Showed The Difference** Predation by introduced mammals has been shown to be the major threat to the breeding success of Hawaiian waterbirds. To investigate if this finding also applies to the waterbird population of Kanaha Pond Wildlife Sanctuary (KPWS) a trapping program was conducted for 10 weeks between March 1 and May 15, 1994. This time period was chosen to include the approximate peak of breeding activities of the Hawaiian Stilt and Coot.

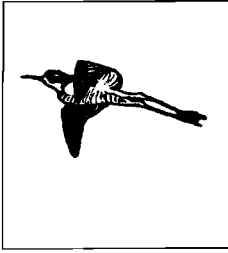
KPWS located at the north-east outskirts of Kahului town comprises in total 219 acres with approximately 85 acres of that brackish water. It is owned by the Hawaii Department of Transportation and managed by the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Constructed as a royal Hawaiian Fishpond around 1500 and diminished considerably through filling and fragmentation during the years between 1910-1954 it became Hawaii's first State Wildlife Sanctuary in 1952. It is now the permanent home of the Hawaiian Stilt, Coot and Duck. KPWS is considered as one of the most productive areas statewide for the Hawaiian Stilt. Today the major threat to KPWS is the surrounding encroachment by urban development which decreases its wetland quality and increases the establishment of both a diverse and dense predator population. Predators regularly observed at KPWS are the feral House Cat, the Small Indian Mongoose, Norway Rat, Roof Rat and Polynesian Rat. Dogs are irregularly sighted, due to perimeter fencing.

The goal of this study was to reduce the predator population, to evaluate predator diets with respect to bird predation, to document the significance such predation has on the endangered waterbird population, and to develop a strategy for a long term trapping program.

To do this 28 mongoose/cat traps, and 12 rat traps, and 2 dog traps were set at areas with a concentration of endangered waterbirds, and or historically known stilt nesting areas. Later, adjustments of trapping locations and trap numbers (10 more mongoose/rat traps were added) were made, based on observed stilt nest sites and predator pressure. All traps were monitored daily. Canned cat food and peanut/peanut butter were the preferred bait type for cat/mongoose and rats, respectively. Predator stomach contents were evaluated following a standard method established for rat stomach analyses by the Denver Wildlife Research Center.

In this 10 week trapping program 45 roof rats, 33 Polynesian rats and 8 Norwegian rats, 28 mongooses and 22 cats were caught. Predator abundance (not mongooses) declined significantly over the course of the project. As an outstanding result, Stilt fledging success increased by more than 400% compared to both 1992 and 1993. Cats and mongooses showed obvious site preferences at KPWS, they were mostly caught in the periphery. Rats in contrast, were caught throughout the whole sanctuary.

Live trapping is not a recommended method for the accurate collection of stomach/intestinal contents (due to passage and digestion of stomach material). Nonetheless, 50% of all examined feral House Cats, 24% of all



Mongoose, and 21% of all Rats (combined results of all 3 rat species) contained bird material in their stomachs or intestines.

This study clearly demonstrated that specific attention to trapping will make an important difference for the Stilt breeding season, it will significantly increase the nesting success. The study also showed that birds are an important part of the diets of feral House Cats, and to a lesser degree of the diets of Mongooses, and Rats at KPWS. Based on results, methodology, and successes of this project, a strategy for a long term trapping program for KPWS was subsequently developed.

Additional future predator studies at KPWS should focus on Hawaiian Coot and Duck nesting success and the role of avian predators needs clarification.

This project was funded by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and administered by the Conservation Council for Hawaii. Principal investigator was Renate Gassmann-Duvall DVM Ph.D. Copies of the final report, and long term trapping program, may be requested through USFWS Refuges and Wildlife, Honolulu. --Renate Gassmann-Duvall, DVM, 572-1584.

**Women in Conservation Leadership Conference** In September, Kate Schuerch and Karen Blue of Purpleheart Puppets had the great honor of representing Hawaii at the National Wildlife Federation's Western "Women in Conservation Leadership" conference in Reno, Nevada through the sponsorship support of the Conservation Council for Hawaii and the NWF. This conference was one of two, Western and Eastern, presented by NWF to identify, explore and work toward removing the perceived and real barriers to women assuming leadership roles in the NWF, affiliate organizations like CCH, and the conservation community as a whole. In accordance with its original statement of purpose, NWF is working to encourage more women to take leadership roles in the environmental and conservation movement and to facilitate this process.

The conference began with an immediate bonding between the Hawaii delegates and the six regional associates from Alaska during registration. Although there are radical climatic disparities between the two states, there are many similarities in conservation issues, patterns and problems, leading to much discussion and brainstorming. Through the creative and interactive style of the two workshop leaders, this type of bonding expanded to include all of the conference participants, uniting us as women facing common problems through our commitment to conservation despite our geographic and personal differences.

Each workshop activity led us through a step by step procedure in analyzing and addressing issues surrounding women in, and working toward, leadership positions in the environmental movement. We were given a basic understanding of different organizational structures and some of the ways in which our enculturated gender roles affect these organizations. Another exercise taught us how to identify our individual styles, to use our own styles to work effectively with others, and to realize that differing view points are the foundation of creative problem solving rather than barriers. We need to appreciate and foster the resources of our diversity to succeed in the important conservation work that we do, women and men together.

As Purpleheart Puppets, we were able to bring Aloha to the conference. Melody the baby teen-age Honu, Hihimanu the Spotted Eagle Ray, current touring show, Pacific Passage, were given stuff after the big dinner on Saturday night. big splash with this crowd, and everyone joined in finale song, Make the Difference, was requested to ceremony of the conference, for we are each Difference!



a uniquely Hawaiian touch of Humpback Whale, Moana the and the Puffins, all from our a chance to strut and sing their Environmental education made a to sing with the puppets! The be sung again at the closing committed to making a World of

Following the conference, we came away with an enthusiastic resolution to become more involved with CCH and the NWF, and we consider ourselves very fortunate to have such support and encouragement from the men of CCH (It really felt good to share this other conference attendees!) It is a privilege to be a part of the process that is reinstating one of the original visions of the founder of NWF: to make women, who are half of the world's population, equal population, equal partners in the leadership of the NWF and the environmental movement.

To make use of the information and ideas generated at this conference, we are working with Rick Scudder, Steve Montgomery and Bill Sager to become more involved in the Big Island Chapter of CCH, and we are continuing to network with many people who were at the conference. We are truly thankful to the many wonderful people who encouraged and made it possible for us to attend, both from CCH and NWF. Yes, we can Make the Difference. -- Karen Blue & Kate Schuerch. 968-6469.

**NWF Hawaii Conservation Summit** The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) conducted its first Hawaii Conservation Summit in Hilo this past July 30 to August 6. CCH helped coordinate it with NWF, through the active participation of many of our members as instructors and trip leaders. CCH also ran a volunteer-manned gift shop, which sold environmental education materials. This was a great opportunity to educate mainlanders about Hawaii's unique ecosystems, its critters, and the needed support to carry on the job required. There were special programs for the kids, a separate program for the teens, and classes, hikes and field trips for the adults. A special MAHALO goes to Chevron USA for sponsoring the Purpleheart Puppets at the Summit. Instructors and volunteers alike agreed that all the work was worth it. In fact, it was so successful that **NWF will be doing it again in 1995**, and many of the participants want to come back. For information on attending, call 1 800 245-5484. SNOOZE, YOU LOOSE! CALL ASAP!

**The CCH Annual Meeting** was held on Wednesday, May 11, 1994 at the Manoa Public Library in Honolulu. Board Member Elections results: Bill Sager, Chairman; V-Chair, open; Rick Scudder, Treasurer; Linda Day, Secretary, Peter Connally, Doug Blake, Les Barclay, David Boynton, Forrest Peterson, Steve Montgomery and Peter Rappa as Board Members. Steve Montgomery was reelected at National Rep. to the National Wildlife Federation. (CCH mourns the passing of Peter Connally, our Maui Board member. Peter was a full-time conservationist/educator and will be sorely missed).

The guest speaker was Ed Petteys, Kauai District Manager of the Div. of Forestry and Wildlife. Ed gave a detailed and very informative view of trying to manage Kauai's valuable natural resources, still trying to recover from Hurricane Iniki and facing decreasing State funding.

**Chairman's Corner** Katie and Karen, Purpleheart Puppets, went to a NWF sponsored Women in Conservation Conference held in Reno and came back all pumped up. They are ready to take on Big Island issues and help coordinate/encourage programs and participation. Their report is in this issue.

Environmental Legislation may be a disaster in the new hostile Congress. The Republican program focuses on three major issues.

1. Unfunded Mandates, said to be \$13 billion by conservatives, is based on a flawed study. Garbage in/garbage out problems apply to statistics as well as computers. Unfunded Mandates are a problem for states and deserve a careful look, but they are nowhere near the problem conservatives try to make it appear.

2. Takings Legislation simply says that if zoning prevents land owners from using property the way they want the zoning entity (via your taxes) has to pay the owner the difference between the highest use and the uses remaining to the owner. This legislation can destroy zoning as a land use planning/management tool.

3. Risk Assessment is the third leg of the conservative program to destroy resource management. It would require every federal agency to make regulations to be economically positive, but would also tie up regulatory agencies in complex, time consuming and expensive red tape. No one has yet determined how to give non-dollar values equal weight in an economic analysis.

In addition, the Republican program includes a mandate to put the Bush/Quayle wetlands definition into law. The result will be elimination of protection on half of the remaining wetlands in the country. The election

**Membership Form**

**CLIP & MAIL**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conservation Council for Hawai'i  
P.O. Box 2923  
Honolulu, HI 96802**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership dues:**  
 Individual \$7                       Sustaining \$25  
 Family \$10                               Supporting \$50  
 Benefactor \$75                          Life \$250

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

New CCH Member  
 Renew my Membership '95

Donation for aircraft noise control CCH/CAN fund \_\_\_\_\_  
 Donation \_\_\_\_\_

*All \$ given are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

has created a potential for major change in environmental issues in the country. At least, most of the candidates supported by the Hawaii Coalition of Conservation Voters won office in Hawaii. We have a lot to do to move positive programs in Hawaii and to minimize damage at the Federal level.

CCH is teamed with U.H. Sea Grant to sponsor Earth Day 95 (call 946-0007). Earth Day will be April 28, and will provide an opportunity for organizations to spot light their projects. Even though Earth Day will spot light programs, the Earth Day 95 program encourages organizations to look at problems they want to tackle and develop long range programs to benefit the environment. If you want to get more active in environmental projects give me a call at 247-2551 and let me know what you're interested in. We can sure help you network into a program that interests you. As always CCH provides the non-profit vehicle to receive grants for use by worthwhile projects.

Whether it is working with CCH administration or helping you implement a program you're interested in, CCH can help and needs help. Get involved anyway you want, but make a difference. GO FOR IT. --Bill Sager, Chair, 247-2551.

**Wildlife Week** This year's theme is, "Home is Where the Habitat Is." As in past years, CCH will prepare and distribute to the schools a locally prepared teacher's kit and poster along with the materials acquired from the National Wildlife Federation for Wildlife Week, April 16-22, 1995. Steve Montgomery is the contact person for Wildlife Week (676-4974 phone & fax).

**CCH Officers & Board Members 1994-95:** Bill Sager (247-2551), O'ahu, Chairman; Linda Day, O'ahu, Secretary; Rick Scudder (842-3429) O'ahu Treasurer; Steve Montgomery, O'ahu (676-4974) Nat. Rep.; Peter Rappa, O'ahu; Forrest Peterson, Moloka'i; Doug Blake, Kailua-Kona; Les Barclay, Hawai'i; David Boynton, Kaua'i; Maui board seat vacant. The fax # for CCH is (808) 676-4974.

*The Hawai'i Conserver.* Rick Scudder is editor E-mail address for Rick Scudder is 'rscudder@igc.apc.org'



## PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

It's a new year and time to renew your membership with CCH for 1995-- please use the clip-out form and the attached envelope to send in your dues today. You won't want to miss receiving the next wildlife week poster. Donations are always welcome, especially in these tight fiscal times.

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A citizen's  
organization  
promoting  
environmental health  
and education,  
conservation and  
management of  
Hawai'i's natural  
resources. Established  
in 1950, CCH is the  
Hawai'i affiliate of the  
National Wildlife  
Federation (NWF).