



Hakalau

Our Mission: To foster enjoyment, understanding and conservation of Hakalau Forest NWR and its surrounding ecosystems as well as fundraise to support the mission of Hakalau Forest NWR. We are volunteers working cooperatively with the Refuge to conserve endangered plants and animals and their rainforest habitat.

FOHF PO Box 6065, Hilo, HO 96720

www.friendsofhakalauforest.org

Newsletter Issue #12 August 2012

Report from the Refuge Manager

To learn the everyday events on the Refuge and who handles them, see the report on

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Open House

October 20, 2012 Do NOT miss this annual event

See why from a visitors view of the refuge on

Page 5

Songs from three rare native birds

heard at lower elevations of Hakalau Forest Refuge for the first time in 30 years, SUCCESS!

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Appreciation luncheon

Lorri Ellison and Pauline Kawamata honored.

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President's Report

Dick gives information about the Visitors Cabin on

Page 2



Volunteer Weekend

Do you love the refuge, but just can't find rationale for making the trip? You too can be a volunteer!

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Take a look at the new Friends website

at www.friendsofhakalauforest.org. We have updates on upcoming activities such as lectures and worktrips and features on native birds and plants on the refuge. You can even download an 'iwi ringtone for your mobile phone, thanks to member Mark Kaponi! (Hint: go to the Membership section of the site.) All past newsletters are archived there as well and notices about t-shirts and caps for sale.

We post new photos every few weeks of activities on the Refuge, such as the recent work trip to control English holly at the Pua 'Akala cabin and the 'Imi Pono no ka 'Aina and Hawai'i Academy of Arts and Sciences students studying the flowering patterns of the 'ōhi'a on the refuge. The photo gallery on the website is linked to the Flickr group Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR (www.flickr.com/groups/friendsofhakalauforest/), and you can post photos to Flickr that will then show up on the website. Here's how: go to Flickr.com and open up an account. It's free. Post photos, add captions, tag them, and even geo-locate them. Once they're up on your account, go to the Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR group and add the photos to the group (limit 10 per day). Once they're in the group they will show up in the photo gallery on the website. We'd love to have more people posting to the website so everyone can see what your Friends group is doing on the Refuge. Our goal is to make this an interactive website you will want to visit often.

J. B. Friday, FOHF Secretary



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Shown with Refuge Director Jim Kraus, are volunteers Lorri Ellison and Pauline Kawamata who received the appreciation of the Friends of Hakalau and Refuge staff for the many trips and hours spent working at the refuge. Sandwichs, chips and a cake were served at the luncheon on June 8, 2012 attended by about 25 guests.

Photo by EIN

From the Presidents Perch...

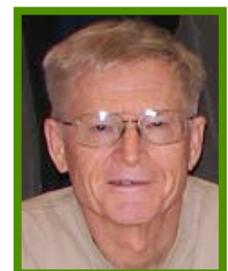
At our all-day planning session in February, the Board of Directors determined the major project for Friends of Hakalau Forest (FOHF) for 2012 would be to replace the roof on the Volunteer Cabin at Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge. The main room and porch of the cabin were built in 1986, a few months after the refuge was established, to house and support refuge staff, volunteer crews, researchers and contractors. The addition of a bathroom and small bunk room in the early 1990's provided more space and comfort for refuge staff who used the cabin primarily during the week, and volunteers who used the cabin mostly on weekends. A second addition a few years later made more space for volunteers and private rooms for refuge staff who, by then, were living in the cabin for the entire workweek. In 2004, a separate residence was built for the growing refuge staff and the Volunteer Cabin, as it then became known, was given over to volunteers. Over the years, the cabin has been an important component of the refuge's volunteer program. It has housed crews who assisted with the outplanting of a half million native and endangered trees on the refuge; the propagation of 200,000 native and endangered plants in the refuge greenhouse; the removal and control of many acres of invasive weeds like banana poka, gorse, holly and Florida blackberry; the harvest of koa and other seeds for refuge propagation and outplanting; the removal of feral pigs; and the maintenance and repair of refuge structures. Currently, about 40 volunteer crews numbering up to 16 individuals are housed in the cabin each year for one or more nights.



The cabin roof has recently developed some leaks that have been temporarily sealed but, after 26 years, it's time for total replacement. FOHF has selected a local contractor (Monty Miranda Construction) to replace the roof and gutter for \$13,300. Construction is planned for this month (August 2012). An effort to raise these funds was initiated in May with the distribution of a flyer to our membership, businesses, refuge permittees and individuals at a wide variety of talks, meetings and conferences. Board members have also made dozens of phone calls and personal pleas to members and friends

seeking their donations. We are very grateful to those who have contributed, particularly to the HPM Foundation for their generous donation of roofing materials worth \$2,500. However, we have a long way to go, having received a total of only about \$4,000 thus far. If you have not already done so, please consider sending a donation to keep our hard-working refuge volunteers dry and comfortable during their days and nights in the Volunteer Cabin. (Tax deductible contributions may be mailed to FOHF, P.O. Box 6065, Hilo, HI 96720. See our website, friendsofhakalauforest.org, for more information.)

Additional roof fundraising efforts are in the planning stage. A repeat of last year's successful effort to recruit new members and raise funds at the Refuge Open House is planned for the 2012 Open House on October 20. Jack Jeffrey has agreed to guide up to eight FOHF members on a birding hike to the lower reaches of the Pua Akala Tract on that day. Additional guides will be recruited if the eight-participant maximum is exceeded. New members are welcome and each participant will donate \$50 to the re-roofing fund. Make your reservation and get additional information by emailing FOHF at friendsofhakalauforest@gmail.com. More fundraising tours and photography hikes are planned for later dates.



Richard C. Wass, President

Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR



Refuge Manager's Report

Youth Employment: Hakalau Forest employed 2 interns this year through KUPU /AmeriCorps beginning last fall. David Mackey and Keith Burnett assisted the refuge with the nene program, conducting non-native predator control activities in nesting areas and monitoring parental pairs and their goslings. The refuge had a successful nesting season again largely due to this effort. They were joined this summer by Nicole Fernandez from Oahu through a Department of Interior/Student Conservation Association initiative supporting employment opportunities in conservation for Native American and Pacific Islanders. Many thanks to David, Keith and Nicole for their contributions here at Hakalau Forest and we hope they pursue additional experience in the field.

New Fire Management Specialist for Hakalau Forest NWR and the Pacific Islands NWR Complex: Andy Kikuta, formerly our Maintenance Supervisor, was selected for the newly established Fire Management Specialist in March. Andy's new duties will cover fire program support for refuges on the Big Island as well as all the other National Wildlife refuges in the Pacific. His duties now include fire management planning and reporting, training, fuel reduction projects, coordination with local fire departments and neighboring landowners. Already managers from Maui to Guam are enlisting his support so more travel looks to be in his future. Our congratulations to Andy. He has been a key leader in directing the field crew at Hakalau Forest in day to day fence maintenance, repair and weed and ungulate control programs for over 20 years. We are hopeful that approval for recruiting a replacement will be forthcoming in the face of expected Federal budget tightening.....stay tuned .

Invasive Weed Control with Volunteers: Hakalau Forest NWR was fortunate to receive "seed" funding from this national program and has already had two weekend field trips for Volunteers to conduct holly control and we expect to do more over the coming year. This is another great opportunity to contribute in a hands on way to resource management efforts at the refuge.

Refuge Visitors: We recently hosted a visit from Bill Woody, the Chief of the Office Law Enforcement for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, DC as well as Hannibal Bolton, the Assistant Director for Federal Aid and State Programs and several representatives from state fish and wildlife agencies.

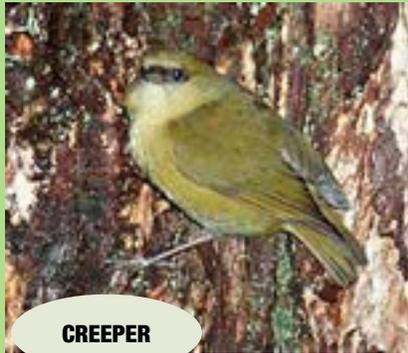
Land Protection Planning (LPP) and Acquisition: The Refuge and Region 1 recently were notified that the Director signed the LPP, clearing the way for potential future acquisitions of identified lands, provided: 1) we obtain appropriations in future budgets for purchasing land, and 2) we have willing sellers to work with. Once final decision documents are signed in the Regional Office, notification will go out and the Final Plan will be available on our website.

Ongoing trespass and vandalism: We continue to experience illegal entry to the refuge and damage to refuge fences, gates and locks. Those responsible are blatantly undermining the work of 27 years of staff effort and that of hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in management effort. Intrusion by feral pigs and cattle from surrounding lands follows quickly whenever such damage to fences and gates is done. Removal of non-native ungulates and restoration of forest understory through replantings will continue. We are pursuing the potential for establishing reward funds to combat these acts.

Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager



AKEPA



CREEPER



AKIAPOLAAU

Photos courtesy of Jack Jeffrey

RARE BIRDS DETECTED IN FOREST RESERVE

By Carolyn Lucas-Zenk

A chorus of songs from three rare native forest birds was heard last month at lower elevations of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge for the first time in 30 years. This unexpected detection of the Hawaii creeper, akepa and akiapolaau is welcome news to those hoping to save the endangered birds from extinction.

“Detecting these endangered forest bird species is encouraging because of the serious challenges these birds face, including the expansion of disease due to global climate change, competition with introduced non-native birds, introduced predators and habitat destruction from feral ungulates,” said Steve Kendall, a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “These endangered species were not detected when U.S. Geological Survey biologists last visited this remote location.”

The rediscovery happened May 22, when USFWS and U.S. Geological Survey scientists spent 11 hours trekking four miles through rugged terrain to a remote area in the lower elevations of Hakalau Forest NWR. They were doing a project that studied the potential impact of climate change on introduced mosquito-transmitted diseases, such as avian malaria and pox virus. They were not expecting to detect three of Hawaii Island’s rarest forest birds, all of which are “at risk, very vulnerable and have a low population,” Kendall said.

Hawaii’s native birds are believed to be highly susceptible to mosquito-transmitted diseases, limiting their distribution to the cooler, higher elevations of the refuge. While the new observations “do not change the status of the birds, which are in dire straits,” the finding significantly extends the current known range of the species at the refuge and will hopefully prompt further scientific investigations, Kendall said.

An annual bird population census is conducted at Hakalau Forest NWR, usually in the spring, but not at lower elevations, he added.

Because of active habitat management and restoration, Hakalau Forest NWR is one of few Hawaii Island places where populations of native forest birds are increasing or at least stable. Kendall did not know the population totals to date. Ongoing studies at the refuge on avian disease, forest bird demographics and food resources, as well as feral pig control may shed some light on whether these endangered forest birds are holding their own or recovering at lower elevations.

USFWS Pacific Region Director Robyn Thorson said the findings reinforce the importance of monitoring to detect changes in environmental conditions, habitat and associated wildlife populations.

“Hawaii’s native birds face multiple threats from habitat destruction, invasive species, introduced diseases and climate change, with many already having been driven to extinction,” USGS Director Marcia McNutt said. “The observation of three endangered species possibly expanding their range in a wildlife refuge gives us hope that with some care, the road to extinction need not be a one-way street.”

USGS Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center and USFWS Hakalau Forest NWR scientists heard the Hawaii creeper and Hawaii akepa at 4,200-foot elevation near Awehi Stream, within a mile of where they were last observed by USFWS biologists during the 1977 Hawaii Forest Bird Survey. Most important were visual and aural detections of at least one endangered akiapolaau at 4,200 feet, which is 1,000 feet lower in elevation from previous sightings in the 1970s.

Extensive surveys of Hawaii Island forest habitats in the late 1970s and early 1980s showed the best remaining habitats and largest native bird populations were in the high-elevation rainforests on Mauna Kea’s eastern slopes. This led to the

continued on next page...

Rare birds detected in forest reserve continued....

establishment of Hakalau Forest NWR in 1985 to protect and manage endangered forest birds and their habitats. It's the only national wildlife refuge dedicated to conservation and restoration of Hawaiian forest birds.

An overall integrated conservation strategy, which includes research, habitat management, ecological restoration and public education, is key to helping Hawaii's native forest birds. The public can help by getting involved with Hakalau Forest NWR's extensive volunteer program, assisting in the recovery of degraded ecosystems and helping establish healthy habitats. Besides voluntary brute-force labor, Hawaii Island residents can provide ongoing critical support for restoration programs and scientific endeavors at the refuge, which has a tiny staff, modest operating budget and myriad of responsibilities, Kendall said.

Stephens Media June 26, 2012, reprinted with permission.



A Visitors Perspective...

“My wife and I spent a day with Jack Jeffrey at Hakalau this past April. What a special place it is. Not to sound too woo-woo, but it touched me in a very deep way. It was our fifth trip to the Big Island and we had never made it to Mauna Kea. Jack was great; so informative and you can tell he has a strong connection to the refuge. It was a wonderful day.”

Rick D.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECT A SUCCESS

The August 4th and 5th volunteer service project coordinated by the Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR was a success thanks to the participation of several of our members, the help of several non-members and some of the staff of the Refuge. Members Reid Loo, Linda-Jane Irwin, J. B. Friday, Richard Wass and Layne Yoshida participated in the weekend project along with Nathaneal Friday and Matthew Crowell.

Also helping on Saturday, August 4, were three members of the refuge staff, Steve Kendall, Kawika Waxman and Keith Burnett. Kendall is the Refuge Wildlife Biologist and was the individual who arranged for the holly eradication work that was done on the first day of the project.

The holly is spreading in an area near the old Koa Cabin that is located in the refuge and it will take much more work to manage the pest. The holly eradication

was accomplished by cutting the holly shoots and spraying the stumps that remained with herbicide in an attempt to stop regrowth. The holly that was cut was removed from the area to ensure that the cut material does not become a source of new plants.

On Sunday, August 5, the volunteers cleaned the self guided trail at the administrative center. This clearing was done by cutting on and along the side of the trail so that it would be useable during the Refuge's open house in October of this year.

Several pictures of the weekend have been posted on the Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR website.

We will be planning other volunteer service trips in 2012 and 2013. Some trips may be day trips and other trips will be overnight trips so if you are interested in volunteering watch the Friend's website for future dates.

Layne Yoshida



Photo by Layne Yoshida

After cutting the ornamental holly, the volunteers threw it on top of this old shed to keep it from reproducing. August 5, 2012.