

In February and March, the rocky coasts from Essex County south to Plymouth should be checked for wintering loons, grebes, cormorants and especially the sea ducks. Cape Cod will produce the majority of the Common Eider off Monomoy as well as good numbers of Common Goldeneye off the west coast. A strong northeasterly storm could produce a small flight of alcids observable from any promontory (favorite locales are Cape Ann and First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Sandy Neck, Barnstable, and Sconset Beach, Nantucket. However, the majority of the alcids remain well out to sea at this late season. Check all inland fresh-water ponds for wintering waterfowl.

The open-country raptors can be most easily found over the *Spartina* marshes of Essex County, as well as the moors of the coastal plain. Dense evergreens should be carefully searched for wintering owls and Goshawks.

A large gull population might harbor among its numbers one of the less common northern or European species. Large populations of these may be found at Newburyport Harbor, Cape Ann, Revere Beach and numerous other localities wherever refuse is present in large quantities.

For over-wintering land birds, check low, thick, wetlands with abundant ground cover as well as feeders, the latter especially after heavy snows.

Fruit-bearing trees and shrubs (evergreen or deciduous) will provide food for the winter finches. Good birding!

R. R. V.

A NEW AVIAN SPECIES

For many birders, it is a rare day when they identify a new species. But imagine discovering an unknown species that is also a member of a new genus! Furthermore, you do this on a well-populated island with one of the most celebrated bird families.

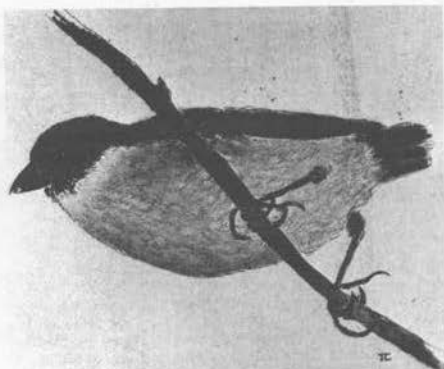
Yet, in December, 1973, the world became aware of a previously unknown Hawaiian honeycreeper, the first endemic bird found in Hawaii since 1923. Along with the classical Darwin finches, this family (*Drepanididae*) represents an extreme example of adaptive radiation -- the specialization of an organism to a specific ecological niche. As might be anticipated, such specialization makes these organisms particularly vulnerable to environmental upset. In the case of the Hawaiian honeycreepers (before now comprising seven genera with 22 species), eight species have become extinct in the recent past, because of man's encroachment.

The new Hawaiian honeycreeper (as yet unnamed) was found by eight students from the University of Hawaii, working under a National Science Foundation grant, who surveyed the virtually inaccessible Hana Rain Forest on Maui's Haleakala volcano, one of the wettest places on earth. They estimate that only about 150 of these birds exist within an area of 10 to 12 square miles between elevations of 6,000 to 7,500 feet.

About the size of an English Sparrow, the new species has a brownish-olive back that changes to light buff on the underparts. The most striking feature is a black mask that extends from the forehead to below the lower mandible and backward in a wedge that ends behind the eye.

L. J. R.

*A bird debut.
A new feathery
friend, and
member of the
Hawaiian Honey-
creeper family,
has just made
itself known to
ornithologists. It
represents the
first new genus
and species of
bird discovered
in 10 years.*



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