

respect of his seaworthiness or because of the many superstitions associated with the bird. I suspect the latter indirectly bears more weight.

External parasites (members of the Mallophaga group) were collected from the 'Gooneys' that I had in hand. These parasites seemingly caused albatrosses considerable discomfort at times, for I frequently saw them scratch and peck their body extremities. During the summer months a part of this activity may have been caused, however, by the molt.

From my observations, I concluded that *Diomedea nigripes* lives a life relatively free from predators and other decimating factors while at sea. The situation may be somewhat to the contrary on the breeding and nesting grounds.

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NOTES ON SAIPAN BIRDS

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THE following observations were recorded during a period extending from December 8, 1945, to January 1, 1946. Although the duration of my assignment on Saipan, in the Marianas Islands, was brief, the nature of my military duties enabled me to spend a greater part of my time there in the field. Almost every part of the island was visited with the exception of the northern section of the central range of hills which at that time was still occupied by Japanese soldiers who had thus far evaded attempts at capture.

The southern tip of Saipan lies at latitude 15° 06' N. and longitude 145° 45' E. The island is approximately 15 miles long and 4 miles wide with an area of 72 square miles. A central range of hills runs from north to south, beginning with an 832-foot peak near Marpi Point at the northern end of the island and continuing to rise until an altitude of 1554 feet is reached at the peak of an extinct volcano, Tapatchau. From that point southward, the gradual slope toward Point Nafutan on the southern tip is broken by only two peaks (479 feet and 924 feet, respectively). A coral reef parallels a greater part of the western shoreline which is fairly regular. On the eastern side of the island two short peninsulas, Point Kagman and Point Nafutan, jet out to form Magicienne Bay.

In climate and flora, Saipan offers some contrast to its sister island,

Guam, which lies 121 miles to the south. We had found Guam hot and sultry but Saipan proved to be only pleasantly warm during the day and definitely chilly at night.

The vast groves of coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*) which form so characteristic an ingredient of Guam's flora are represented on Saipan by only a few unhealthy-looking specimens along the beaches of the southern part of the island. The she-oak or casuarina (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) is common in the Saipan lowlands while the screw-pine or pandan (*Pandanus*) and wild breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) constitute the most abundant plants on the ridge of forest-covered hills. Many of the lower hillsides support a dense growth of sugar cane (*Saccharum officinarum*) which, due to neglect during the war years, has run rampant.

The only noteworthy body of water inland on Saipan is Lake Susupe which lies approximately a mile inland from the southwestern shore of the island. The lake is surrounded on all sides by dense reed-beds and marshes which permit approach to the water's edge at only a few scattered points. Occasional pools of little importance occur along the west-central shore of the island.

The birds which I observed on Saipan may be divided into three distinct groups: resident land birds, migratory shore birds, and sea birds. Circumstances rendered it impossible for me to collect specimens but it is hoped that the following observational notes will prove of some interest. The nomenclature employed here is that of Ernst Mayr's 'Birds of the Southwest Pacific' (1945) and Peters's "Check List of Birds of the World."

LIST OF SPECIES OBSERVED

WHITE-TAILED TROPIC-BIRD (*Phaethon lepturus*).—These pelagic birds were often seen flying about the outskirts of the island, particularly those areas where the shoreline is bordered by high, rocky cliffs. A group of seven birds was observed on December 18 flying over Kagman Point at a considerable height in a high wind which preceded a severe storm. They were common about the cliffs in the Marpi Point area where they could be seen as they flew to and from crevices in the cliffs.

REEF-HERON (*Demigretta s. sacra*).—This species was common in the marshlands surrounding Lake Susupe. The Lake Susupe colony consisted of about 150 individuals. All of the birds observed in that area belonged to the white phase. A single specimen of the dark phase was observed on December 24 on the beach at the south end of Tanapag Harbor.

CHINESE LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus sinensis bryani?*).—This species was encountered regularly throughout the wooded portions of the island. It was often to be seen perching in the crests of wild breadfruit trees.

MARIANAS MALLARD (*Anas oustaleti*).—Although this species is reputed to be nearing extinction, it was encountered on each of three visits to Lake Susupe. On one such occasion seven birds were seen at the same time. The species apparently prefers the winding channels which lead through the reed beds about the lake rather than the open water. They are not unduly shy and may be approached within a few feet before they take to flight.

FERAL FOWL (*Gallus gallus*).—A pair of these birds was observed early on the morning of December 17 in the forest near Kagman Point.

GALLINULE; MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus guami*).—This species proved to be abundant in the marshy areas surrounding Lake Susupe. Due to the height and density of the vegetation, the bird was not often seen but its characteristic calls were continually heard.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica fulva*).—This was a common bird on the sandy washes about Lake Susupe, in open meadowlands, and cleared areas, even in well-inhabited areas such as open places in and around the town of Garapan.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*).—This curlew was fairly plentiful on Saipan throughout December. It was seen along beaches, on mud-flats, and on cleared lands such as baseball and football fields on military bases. It was often seen in the company of Pacific Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica fulva*).

WANDERING TATTLER (*Heteroscelus incanus*).—A single individual was observed on the rocky shore of Agingan Point on December 15.

GULL (*Larus* sp.).—A single gull in immature plumage was observed at Lake Susupe on December 23 and on several subsequent occasions. It was a small gull with a gray mantle, a white head with a dark auricular spot, and dark primaries. The tail was white with a narrow brown terminal band. The feet and legs were reddish and the bill was brownish with a black tip.

Dr. Ernst Mayr and Mr. Hustace H. Poor have suggested that the bird was probably either the Black-backed Gull (*L. ridibundus*) or the Herring Gull (*L. argentatus vegae*).

FAIRY TERN (*Gygis alba*).—This lovely bird was abundant throughout the island. It was always to be seen fluttering gracefully above the forest, even in the highest part of the island. Small flocks were seen perching in breadfruit trees. Their bickering "flight conversations" were often heard.

NODDY TERN (*Anous* sp.).—On December 10 and on subsequent occasions, Noddies were observed flying about and resting on the high rock designated as Tsukimi Island (which lies only a few hundred feet from Saipan) and on the corresponding cliffs of the latter island. On December 19 a pair was seen flying off Kagman Point. Due to their small size, very dark coloration, and type of habitat, I believe these birds to have been White-capped Noddies (*Anous tenuirostris*).

MARIANAS FRUIT DOVE (*Ptilinopus roseicapillus*).—Although they were shy and difficult to discover as they perched motionless in the dense vegetation, these handsome little doves were found to be fairly numerous in the forests which border the northern shore of Magicienne Bay. Unlike the White-throated Ground Doves (*Gallucolumba xanthonura*), they were not easily flushed and usually sat quietly until they were certain of discovery, in which event they would disappear rapidly into the depths of the forest. Their coloring, though vivid, renders them difficult to discern against their background of tropical greenery.

PHILIPPINE TURTLE DOVE (*Streptopelia bitorquata dusumieri*).—Ubiquitous. Unlike birds of this species I have observed on Samar and Mindanao in the Philippines, these were easily approached and were similar in habit to domesticated doves. They were often seen in the fields as they fed on the ground in the company of Pacific Golden Plovers (*Pluvalis dominica fulva*).

WHITE-THROATED GROUND DOVE (*Gallucolumba x. xanthonura*).—This bird was found to be common on brush-covered hillsides and semi-wooded country. It was seen on the ground in papaya thickets and perched both in low shrubs and high trees. Individuals were always observed singly.

EDIBLE NEST SWIFTLET (*Collocalia inexpectata bartschi*).—These little swifts occurred in fair-sized concentrations about cliffs on all parts of the island. They were seen in greatest numbers during heavy rains.

WHITE-COLLARED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon chloris albicilla*).—This bird was observed singly or in pairs on wooded hillsides throughout the island. It was not encountered in the open lowlands. In behavior and call it closely resembled *H. c. collaris* of the Philippines. Both subspecies seem quite at home in inhabited areas, suffering no noticeable ill-effects from the proximity of mankind.

NIGHTINGALE REED WARBLER (*Acrocephalus l. luscinia*).—A pair of these birds was seen perched in a tree on the border of a stand of she-oaks near Lake Susupe on December 16. At our approach, they dived into the clump of trees and were not subsequently observed nor heard.

RUFIOUS-FRONTED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura lepida saipanensis*).—These nervous little birds were numerous in forested areas and vine-draped crevices in the lava above Magicienne Bay. They were observed as they foraged for insects through the undergrowth and along vines or sallied forth to capture their prey on the wing.

MICRONESIAN STARLING (*Aplonis opacus guami*).—Although we had found this bird to be numerous everywhere on the island of Guam, it appeared to be common only locally on Saipan. It occurred in large flocks in the Marpi Point and Kagman Point areas but elsewhere was distributed somewhat sparingly.

GOLDEN HONEY-EATER (*Cleptornis marchei*).—We failed to discover this bird until several days after our arrival on Saipan although we had devoted considerable time to searching for it. Unlike the Cardinal Honey-eater (*Myzomela cardinalis*), it appears to be restricted to a single habitat, that of dense forest. A single pair was observed on December 22 in the forest on the north shore of Magicienne Bay, and on December 24 several pairs were observed in the same area.

CARDINAL HONEY-EATER (*Myzomela cardinalis saffordi*).—As it had been on Guam, this bird was found to be present in fair numbers on all parts of Saipan. While it occurred in the littoral *Casuarina* stands, in the trees and shrubs of cultivated areas, and in vegetation about habitations, it was most abundant in upland forested areas. It was observed either singly or in pairs. Its appealing song is much in evidence. Its call is a high piercing whistle.

BRIDLED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops conspicillata saipani*).—A flock was observed in a sugar cane field west of Kagman Point on December 10. On December 16 they were found to be common in the *Casuarina* stands and semi-wooded hillsides east of Lake Susupe where they occurred in groups ranging from three to 20. In behavior they bring to mind the Bush-Tit (*Psaltriparus minimus*) for their infiltration manner of moving through the vegetation is quite similar. The white eye-ring of this subspecies is very prominent.

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