

Green Heron in Hawaii

Peter W. C. Paton and
Laurie H. MacIvor

ON JANUARY 21, 1981 we observed an adult Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) in a brackish water pond in Hilo, Hawaii. This is the first photographically documented record of a Green Heron in the Hawaiian Islands (Pyle 1977), 3850 km from the closest population of the species. The Green Heron's typical range extends from the northeastern United States, east to southeastern Canada, and south to northern South America. The species has been reported as accidental in Greenland, Bermuda, and Suriname (A.O.U., 1957).

The Green Heron was discovered at Lokoaka Pond, located 4 km east of Hilo Bay on the island of Hawaii. Lokoaka is an inland pond connected to the ocean by a system of underground channels. The pond is maintained by local residents for the culture of mullet (*Mugil cephalus*) and milkfish (*Chanos chanos*). A forest of Kukui (*Aleurites moluccana*), African Tulip (*Spathodea campanulata*), Hala (*Pandanus odoratissimus*), and Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus robusta*) surround the east and south sides of the pond. Patches of Great Bulrush (*Scirpus validus*) and California Grass (*Brachiaria mutica*) line the edges of the pond (Elliot and Hall 1977, Shal-

lenberger 1977). The north side of the pond is bordered by a paved road, where all observations were made.

The heron was first noticed January 21, 1981 when a Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) flew low over a small island in the center of the pond causing a dark bird perched one meter high in a small bush to move its head to avoid the passing tern. This bird was clearly a heron, but noticeably smaller than a Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*). The perched bird then flew to an adjacent bush and was immediately identified in flight as a Green Heron. After landing, the bird stood in a "bittern-like" pose with its head held fully extended skyward for approximately one minute. The heron then retracted its neck, producing a silhouette similar to the hunchbacked posture of the indigenous Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*).


A bird, undoubtedly the same individual, had been seen by Paton at Lokoaka Pond on December 18, 1980. At the time, due to poor viewing conditions the bird was thought to be an aberrant immature Black-crowned Night Heron. Only a partial silhouette and a white malar streak could be discerned. Later it was realized that the bird might

actually have been a Green Heron, but subsequent visits to the pond were unsuccessful until January 21.

After January 21, the heron was seen periodically, and was last seen February 1, 1982. This individual was extremely secretive as it was seen only 5 in 20 visits to the pond between December 18-February 8, 1981.

Many observers saw this bird after it was first discovered. After several attempts to photograph it, two pictures were taken August 19, 1981. One shows a small heron with a brown neck, dark green body, and a white streak on the neck. This photograph is now in the Hawaii Audubon Society Rare Bird Documentary File, Honolulu.

DETAILED PLUMAGE characteristics noted were: the bird's crown was dark navy blue extending from above the eye halfway down the back of the head; white spectacles; the face and head were deep rufous extending through the chest, but on the dorsal side stopping at the base of the neck; one prominent white malar streak, with two vertical white streaks extending from the bill and merging into one broad streak on the chest; the back and wings were a faded blue-green color, with



Ben Feltner's Peregrine Tours

FALL 1983 TOUR SCHEDULE

MAINE/NOVA SCOTIA	2-10 July
PACIFIC NORTHWEST	16-29 July
ARIZONA	6-14 Aug.
UPPER TEXAS COAST WEEKENDS	1-2, 8-9, 15-16 Oct.
POLAR BEARS (Churchill)	Late Oct.
PALENQUE WORKSHOP	31 Oct.-5 Nov.
WESTERN MEXICO	7-17 Nov.
NIAGARA FALLS GULL WORKSHOP	24-27 Nov.
OAXACA	13-21 Dec.
EASTERN MEXICO	27 Dec.-11 Jan.

P.O. Box 3062 Houston, Texas 77001  (713) 520-7747

some faint white streaking running vertically along the wings when they were held next to its body, the belly and vent were an off-white, the bill was dark blue on the upper mandible and yellowish on the lower mandible, the legs and feet were bright yellow, and the bird was about $\frac{3}{5}$ the size of Cattle Egrets perched 2 m away.

Two previous records for the species in Hawaii have been published, but in neither case was the description adequate enough to rule out the possibility of an immature Black-crowned Night Heron. On September 24, 1974, there was a sighting at Wailea Golf Course in Kihei, Maui (Crow, 1974) and one seen November 22, 1974 near King Kamehameha Hotel in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island (Bolander, 1975).

LITERATURE CITED

- AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION. 1957. Check-list of North American birds. 5th ed. Am. Ornithol. Union, Baltimore, MD.
- BOLANDER, G.L. 1975. Green Heron. *'Elepaio* 35:80.
- CROW, R. 1974. Field note. *'Elepaio* 35:140.
- ELLIOT, M.E. and HALL, E.M. 1977. Wetlands and wetland vegetation of



Green Heron, Lokoaka Pond, Hilo, Hawaii, Aug. 19, 1981. Photo / Peter Paton.

Hawaii. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pac. Ocean Div., Ft. Shafter, Hawaii.

PYLE, R.L. 1977. Preliminary list of the birds of Hawaii. *'Elepaio* 37:110-121.

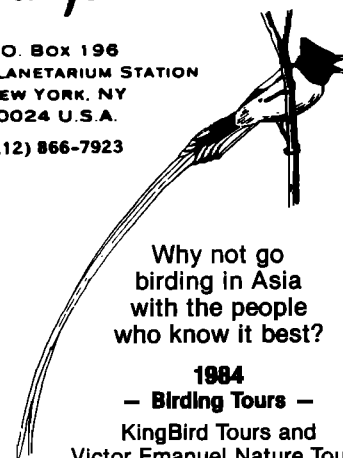
SHALLENBERGER, R.J. 1977. An ornithological survey of Hawaiian wetlands. Ahuimanu Productions. Honolulu, Hawaii.

—1923 *Kalaniana'ole St., Hilo, Hawaii 96720 (Paton), 1501 Camden Way, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73116 (MacIvor).*

King Bird Tours

P. O. BOX 196
PLANETARIUM STATION
NEW YORK, NY
10024 U.S.A.

(212) 866-7923



Why not go
birding in Asia
with the people
who know it best?

1984

— Birding Tours —

KingBird Tours and
Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

present

NORTH INDIA

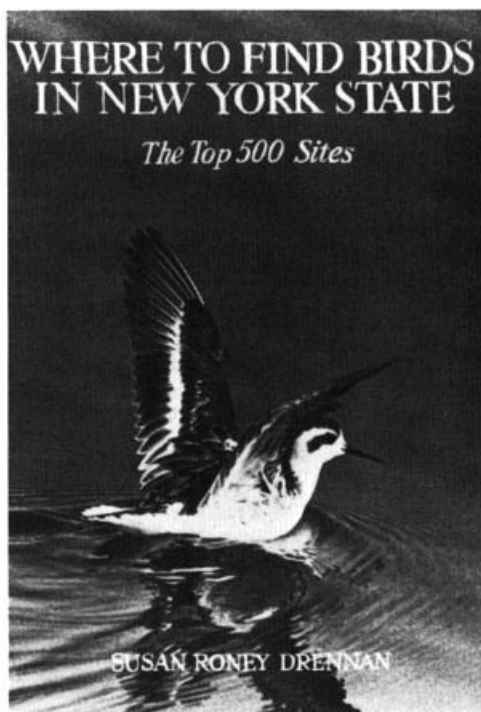
NW India
14 Jan-4 Feb

NE India
4-20 Feb

(Tours may be taken consecutively or separately)

Both tours led by BEN KING, the foremost field birder in Asia, author of *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia*, and currently writing *A Field Identification Handbook to the Birds of the Indian Region*. Co-leader JAN PIERSON, experienced VENT leader. Write for itineraries.

"The book is great. . . . Bird watching in New York State should reach a new high. . . . This is the most detailed and sophisticated state directory yet produced."—Roger Tory Peterson



WHERE TO FIND BIRDS IN NEW YORK STATE:

The Top 500 Sites

Susan Roney Drennan

Foreword by Roger Tory Peterson

This is the first comprehensive birding site guide for *all* of New York, with information on and directions to more than 500 top birding sites. Each site has a seasonal rating, physiographic description, and list of species likely to be found there. Other sections include sites and habitats for hawks, rare, pelagic, resident, and migratory birds. Includes 106 detailed maps prepared especially for this book. Whether for use in the field or at home, *Where to Find Birds in New York State* will be invaluable for both the serious and amateur birder.

672 pages, 106 maps, bibliography, index

Cloth \$38.00

Paper \$18.95

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Dept. BA
1011 East Water Street
Syracuse, NY 13210

