



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Hawaii

Budget Island Endemics & Pelagic

8th March to 17th March 2023 (10 days)



Laysan Albatross by Dubi Shapiro

Hawaii is the most remote archipelago on Earth, located north of the equator in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Aside from the Islands' world-renowned beauty, many unique features attract naturalists here,

chiefly the high degree of endemism among the various life forms, active volcanism, verdant and varied native forests, and the surrounding great wilderness of the Pacific Ocean. The island chain's Hawaiian Honeycreepers have long attracted birders – and understandably so. The diverse forms evolved from a single ancestor akin to a North American finch, into nectarivores, bark-pickers, insect gleaners, or borers of many brilliant colours. These honeycreepers and native birds of other families have unfortunately been decimated, beginning with the arrival of the Polynesians and continuing with the introduction of mosquitoes and a multitude of alien plant and animal species. Many bird species have consequently gone extinct, and the remaining survivors face a precarious future.

Our comprehensive tour covers three of the major islands searching for some of the most critically endangered birds on the planet, while also featuring fantastic scenery and phenomenal underwater life. Some of the top birds of the tour include the bizarre Akiapolaau, Laysan Albatross, endangered Bristle-thighed Curlew, tricky Hawaiian Petrel, elegant White (Fairy) Tern and the charismatic Iiwi. Other endangered endemics include Oahu Elepaio, Hawaii Creeper, Anianiau, Hawaii Akepa, and the Critically Endangered Palila. Join us as we focus on these surviving endemic forest species, seabirds, and other Hawaiian avian specialities, along with the riches of this fabulous chain of picturesque tropical islands!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrival in Honolulu, Oahu.
Day 2	Honolulu, Kapiolani Park and surrounds
Day 3	Oahu - North Shore
Day 4	Flight to Kauai - Kilauea Point and Hanalei NWR
Day 5	Kauai - Alakai Wilderness Preserve and Koke'e State Park
Day 6	Fly to Big Island, transfer to Kona
Day 7	Big Island - Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge
Day 8	Big Island - Saddle Road & Pu`u La`au
Day 9	Big Island – Kona Pelagic
Day 10	Final departures



TOUR ROUTE MAP...



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

Day 1: Arrival in Honolulu, Oahu.

Today is set aside as an arrival day into bustling, but surprisingly birdy city of Honolulu. This evening we shall meet for a welcome dinner to discuss our plans for the forthcoming days.

Day 2: Honolulu, Kapiolani Park and surrounds.

This morning we start our day in Kapiolani Park, next to our hotel, to admire visiting Pacific Golden Plovers and Honolulu's city bird, the beautiful White Tern. While exploring the park we are sure to encounter a myriad of introduced species among the banyan and rainbow shower trees, such as Common Myna, Red-crested Cardinal, Red-vented Bulbul, Yellow-fronted Canary, Java Sparrow, Common Waxbill, Spotted Dove, Zebra Dove, and Rose-ringed Parakeet.



Nene by David Shackelford

After breakfast we will leave the city behind and enter the rainforests of the Koolau Mountains in pursuit of Oahu's endemic honeycreeper, the Oahu Amakihi, before we transcend down into the valleys to search for the endangered Oahu Elepaio. While on our endemic bird adventure we will most likely encounter White-rumped Shama, a thrush from Asia, noisy flocks of Red-billed Leiothrix, an occasional Red-whiskered Bulbul, and chattering Warbling (Japanese) White-eyes.

Day 3: Oahu - North Shore.



Anianiau by Stephan Lorenz

This morning, we will depart for an overlook at Laie Point on Oahu's north shore, where we will scan the water's surface below in attempts to pick out seabirds such as Sooty Tern, Sooty Shearwater, and if we are very lucky, the rarely encountered near-endemic Christmas Shearwater or Grey-backed Tern.

We then visit a series of small wetlands in the vicinity of James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge where we are likely to find Hawaiian Coot, the Hawaiian subspecies of Common Gallinule, Wandering Tattler and Black-necked Stilt, as well as a few introduced species that could include Common Waxbill, Spotted and Zebra Doves, and Red-vented Bulbul.

Our primary target in this area, however, is the Vulnerable Bristle-thighed Curlew, a unique, rare shorebird that winters here in modest numbers. In the afternoon, we may depart for a forested trail to



continue searching for local Hawaiian endemics such as the uniquely patterned Oahu Elepaio, and Oahu Amakihi if need be.

Day 4: Flight to Kauai - Kilauea Point and Hanalei NWR.

The island of Kauai is widely regarded as the greenest and most beautiful island of the Hawaiian Archipelago, and it's also the oldest of the main islands. We begin our explorations with a visit to Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. With a wonderful view of the sea and the surrounding coastline, both Brown and Red-footed Boobies as well as Red-tailed Tropicbirds will vie for our attention as they soar back and forth near the lighthouse. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters are in their nest burrows at this time of the year, and we have a great opportunity to see the celebrated Nene, the endemic Hawaiian goose. Re-



Apapane by Owen Deutsch

introduced to the mongoose-free island of Kauai, conservation efforts here have helped save the state bird from extinction. Today will also be our first chance to find Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, an introduced native of Asia. Nearby Hanalei Refuge is great for waterbirds, including Hawaiian Coot, the endemic Hawaiian Duck (Koloa), and can hold migrant and vagrant birds as well.

Day 5: Kauai - Alakai Wilderness Preserve and Koke'e State Park. The rugged mountains of Kauai are richly forested, and the winding unpaved roads give us access to the interior of this picturesque island – including astounding views of Waimea Canyon, the Pacific's Grand Canyon. In order to find the scarce, native songbirds, it is necessary to travel to mountain forests above 3000 feet to avoid the devastating

effects of invasive mosquitoes. Probably introduced from Central America in the nineteenth century, the warmer lowlands provided fertile breeding grounds for these pests which rapidly spread avian diseases (avian malaria), literally decimating the thriving native bird population. Today, only in the cooler highlands where mosquitoes are less successful, do native songbirds still persist.



Akiapolaau by Stephan Lorenz

Trekking our way on foot along boardwalks and forest trails, we will search for several critically endangered species. Our first Apapane, one of the most abundant and vocal honeycreepers,



should light the way, and with luck we can hope for the canary yellow Anianiau, the heavy-billed Kauai Amakihi, and Kauai Elepaio. Meanwhile introduced species abound, with Warbling White-eyes zipping all about, and this is one of the few areas where Red Junglefowl are deemed “countable”.

On the drive down out of the highlands, we will stop at the spectacular Waimea Canyon, Hawaii’s own version of the Grand Canyon, where resident White-tailed Tropicbirds cruise the cliffs, and along the way we could happen upon the introduced Erckel’s Francolin.

Day 6: Fly to Big Island, transfer to Kona. The youngest and most geologically active island, Hawaii is twice as big as all the other islands put together, hence it is more commonly known simply as ‘The Big Island’. On arrival we will transfer to the west of the island and small town of Kailua-Kona. In the afternoon, we will start our quest for some of the islands trickier introduced species such as Indian Peafowl, Lavender Waxbill and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse.



Palila by Stephan Lorenz

Day 7: Big Island - Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge. Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge is one of the finest birding sites on the island of Hawaii. Today we will set out into the reserve of Koa-Ohia montane cloud forest, on the windward slopes of Mauna Kea. Our efforts, as we walk through the open forest, will be to locate the endangered Hawaii Creeper, beautiful tangerine-orange Hawaii Akepa, Akiapolaau and one of the signature birds of Hawaii, the stunning Iiwi. We will also keep a keen eye out for the very scarce endemic Hawaiian Hawk, and later we may spend some time searching along the Stainback Highway if this unpredictable species proves elusive.



Hawaii Elepaio by Stephan Lorenz

Day 8: Big Island - Saddle Road & Pu`u La`au. This morning, we head to Mauna Kea, a massive dormant volcanic peak rising over 4 200 meters above sea level. Measured from its base, Mauna Kea is, in fact, the tallest mountain on earth, surpassing even Mount Everest at over 10 000m high. The pockets of unique tropical forest that surround this volcano along the famous Saddle Road support a wide diversity of endemic Hawaiian avifauna. Our primary focus is the tricky Palila, whilst we will also



be searching for Omao (Hawaiian Thrush), furtive Hawaii Elepaio (Volcano form), the widespread Hawaii Amakihi, and our first opportunity to encounter the rare Akiapolaau, recognized for its remarkable bill including a short lower mandible for chiselling, coupled with a long flexible upper mandible sharply decurved for probing inside cavities. It is impossible to escape the large diversity of introduced species that occur here, with Common Pheasant sporting various colour forms, Kalij Pheasant, California Quail, Chukar Partridge, Wild Turkey, Erckel's, Black and Grey Francolins, Eurasian Skylark, Saffron and House Finches and African Silverbill all enjoying the conducive climate. We may also find Ruddy Turnstone, more Pacific Golden Plover and enjoy daytime views of Short-eared Owl as they quarter the nearby fields.



Iwi by Stephan Lorenz

Day 9: Big Island – Kona Pelagic. We have set aside much of today for a pelagic trip out of Kona, weather permitting of course. During our morning's outing, we hope to see Masked Booby, both Black and Brown Noddies, Great Frigatebird and White-tailed Tropicbirds in the inshore waters. As we venture further away from the coast, Sooty and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters are likely, Bulwer's Petrel and both Sooty and White Terns. Reaching deeper water, we will carefully scan for fast flying petrels that could include Black-winged, Juan Fernandez and with great luck Hawaiian, plus a number of rarer possibilities



Wedge-tailed Shearwater by Stephan Lorenz

that may include White-necked Petrel, Newell's Shearwater and Christmas Shearwaters, Leach's Storm Petrel, Long-tailed and South Polar Skuas as well as incidental cetacean sightings.

If we are still missing any species, we have the afternoon to catch up with them, as well as any countable exotics.

Day 10: Final departures. This morning we have further time around our hotel gardens for Lavendar Waxbill and Red-masked Parakeet, or any other species we still need. After breakfast our tours comes to an end with a transfer to Kona International Airport.



FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

This includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on 10;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Extra activities mentioned in the itinerary;
- All national park and other reserve entrance fees; and
- Local guiding services.

The tour fee does not include:

- ANY flights;
- Visa fees;
- Any drinks;
- Tips for local guides and services;
- Trip Report;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient participants, a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tippling: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.



Special Notes / Pace & Amenities:

- To reach the areas with native songbirds, a few longer hikes are required. In a couple of instances, we will spend upwards of 4 hours away from our vehicle. These longer hikes are undertaken at a modest pace, but rain is not unusual, and we encounter some muddy patches, may have a creek crossing or two, and there is some uphill/downhill hiking. In some cases, field stops are the only option for rest breaks.
- You should be in good health and reasonable fitness to undertake this tour. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions of any sort, please let the Rockjumper office know in advance of the tour.
- The hotels are of a comfortable standard throughout.
- Transport on the islands is by minibus. The roads are mostly in good condition; however, due to the nature of the topography, there is the possibility of landslides having a minor interference with our trip.
- Most days in the lowlands will be hot, humid and sunny. In montane areas, it will range from very cool (bring a fleece and a raincoat) to warm. The central mountain range of Kauai is one of the wettest locations in the world (up to 10m of annual rainfall!), but the weather here, as in much of Hawaii, varies. We do anticipate encountering some rain during the tour, but preparing to protect yourself from the sun is equally, or more important.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will depart from Honolulu International Airport (IATA: HNL) on day 1. As this day has been set aside as an arrival day, you are welcome to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude at Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport, Big Island (IATA: KOA) on day 10 after breakfast.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

Honolulu International Airport (IATA: HNL) is the main port of entry into Hawaii for this tour offering a number of internal flights to Lihue for the start of the tour. Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport, Big Island (IATA: KOA) is the main port of exit from Hawaii. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

