

NATURE'S NEWSFLASH 2013



November Issue

Aloha! Nature's Newsflash is a semi-annual publication that features stories and insights of conservation activities that help preserve and protect Moloka'i's native natural resources. If you would like to contribute information to our publication, please send it to The Nature Conservancy, P. O. Box 220, Kualapuu 96757. Let's all make a difference by "Thinking globally, Acting locally"!

Remote Pelekunu

By: Momi Afelin, Molokai High School Sophomore

My Dad, Bucky Afelin, and I showed up at the Molokai TNC Baseyard at 5:15 am to prepare for the helicopter flight into the remote Pelekunu Valley. We were part of The Nature Conservancy's Pelekunu Preserve stream monitoring team! It was my first helicopter ride and what stunning views of the valley from the air it was!

Once in Pelekunu Valley, our team headed to the mouth of the stream where we gathered data on waterproof paper and recorded GPS location and stream temperature. It's a long, tedious and COLD process to monitor the isolated streams of Pelekunu, but a very important one as well. Pelekunu is a very pristine area with a delicate and complex ecosystem where all life forms are reliant upon each other for survival. Monitoring the animals and aspects of the stream help us to understand how well the stream's ecosystem is doing and what the different causes of changes in the ecosystem may be. It also helps to determine what kinds of precautionary measures might need to be taken to help protect this unique portion of the island. Monitoring the stream was a really interesting hands-on learning experience. You wouldn't believe how many different O'opu there are and how their populations change so drastically based on what part of the stream you're in! Also seeing the *Hihiwai* and *'Opae* was really cool as well. The Tahitian prawns were a little scary if you ask me. They had no fear of humans or of spears!

During our 3 day trip, everyone had a chance to observe the streams, the beauty of the valley and the dangers being in such an isolated valley. Pelekunu is not the place you want to be surprised in and we were reminded of "playing it safe", as mother nature is often full of surprises, and there are limited opportunities for outside communication. Everyone was very cautious.

I'm certain that everyone took away many precious memories of the experience, I know I did. My dad and I worked as a monitoring team. It was a great opportunity for us to spend quality time with each other while learning about the conservation efforts in Pelekunu. My dad spent a great amount of his childhood in Pelekunu valley and shared stories with us about what it was like back then and how it compared to what the valley is like now. For me, it was awesome to see where my dad spent a lot of time growing up and where my great grandpa used to live.

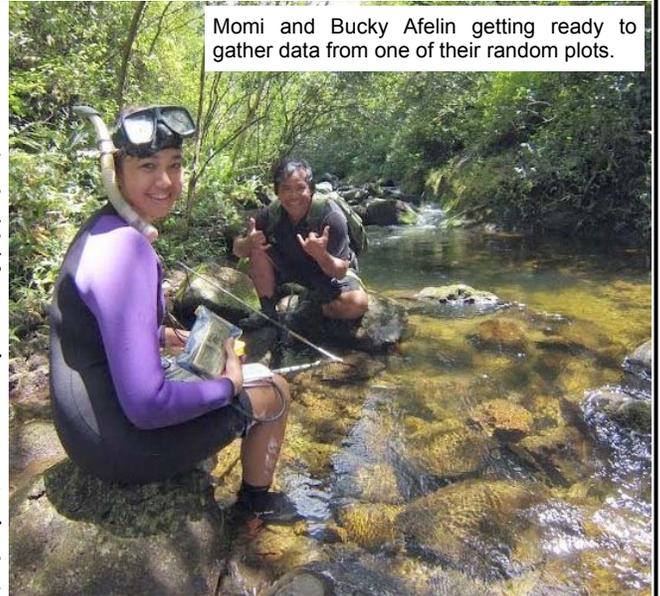


Tahitian Prawn, introduced to Pelekunu in the mid 1900s, now infests streams throughout Hawaii.

Hihiwai, a native Hawaiian limpet that can only be found in Hawaii. Populations are declining due to loss of habitat (perennial streams) and over harvesting.



Momi and Bucky Afelin getting ready to gather data from one of their random plots.



We are just one example of TNC's efforts to get the community involved in preservation, which if you ask me, is actually quite brilliant. Getting the community involved and having volunteers come in is the best way to get people to see why it's so important that we're aware of the damage we do to nature and how we can prevent/stop it.

Pelekunu Stream Monitoring

By Russell Kallstrom, TNC Information Coordinator

On Sept 17-18, I led TNC Molokai and Marine staff, two Molokai community volunteers and Akaku's Dan Emhof in the Pelekunu Stream Monitoring. We conducted our once every two year survey in Pelekunu stream and its tributaries to check on densities of native stream life including hihiwai (limpet), 'opae (shrimp), and 'o'opu (fish). These stream creatures have a two part life cycle: One part is in the stream where they spend their adult life laying eggs that hatch and wash out to the ocean. The second part is in the ocean where these hatched eggs/larva grow into a juvenile form or *hinana*, at which time, they head back to a stream and grow to adulthood there.

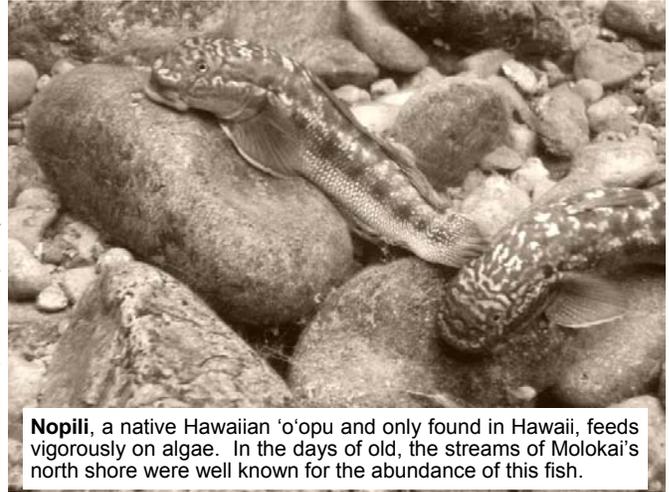
The 'o'opu in particular are quite amazing because in most, the pelvic fins on their belly have fused into a "suction cup" that allow these fish to climb waterfalls. These fish were a very significant source of protein for Hawaiians, and according to a survey of Mahele records by historians Maly and Maly, freshwater 'o'opu were at one time the most common type of fish reported as taken for food on the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawai'i Island ("Vol 1: Ka Hana Lawai'a", August 2003).

We have adopted the State's Division of Aquatic Resources monitoring methods (Bill Puleloa was instrumental in helping us in Pelekunu), so we can compare Pelekunu to other streams statewide. From our data, we know that Pelekunu stream is one of the last and best remaining Hawaiian streams! Pelekunu still flows continuously, mauka to makai year-round, which allows the stream creatures to complete their life cycle. Thus, it still has all the native Hawaiian stream species that most other streams no longer have.

This year, Bucky Afelin and his daughter Momi joined the monitoring effort as community volunteers (see Momi's article on Page 1). Statewide, there is a growing interest in protecting streams and stream life. Roxie Sylva (TNC) of Hana, Maui also joined the monitoring. Roxie participated in the biennial effort to learn the stream monitoring protocol and take it back to her home community and potentially apply the monitoring system in valleys there like Kipahulu.

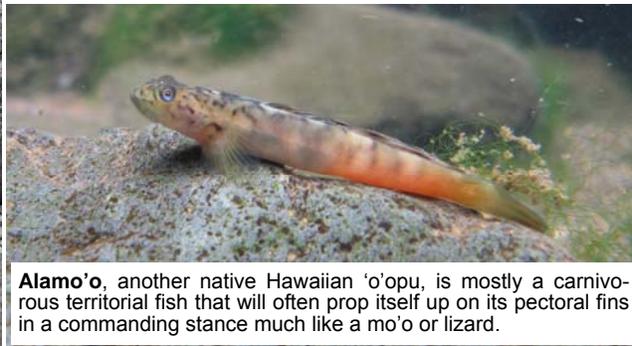
Finally, Dan Emhof of Akaku was invited to film and document the stream monitoring which is due to come out before Christmas.

Dan has previously done the "Kamakou 30th Anniversary" that is currently airing on **Akaku (Channel 54)**. You can also go to **Akaku.org** to see their TV scheduling.



Nopili, a native Hawaiian 'o'opu and only found in Hawaii, feeds vigorously on algae. In the days of old, the streams of Molokai's north shore were well known for the abundance of this fish.

Nakea is the largest of the native Hawaiian 'o'opu. This fish can be easily identified by the black dot near its tail.



Alamo'o, another native Hawaiian 'o'opu, is mostly a carnivorous territorial fish that will often prop itself up on its pectoral fins in a commanding stance much like a mo'o or lizard.

Mark This Date on Your 2014 Calendar...
Our Annual Earth Day Celebration will be on Friday, April 18th!

"Hunting Around"

By: Brian Naeole,
Animal Control Coordinator

In August, I flew to the island of Kauai for a four day work trip into the infamous area called the "Alaka'i Swamp." Along with other island co-workers; Francis Quitazol from Maui, Lester Gebin from Kona and our dogs, together we formed the "A-Team" to implement the Pro Hunt method of dog hunt sweeps in a 2,000 acre fenced-in unit.

After an overnight stay at the College of Tropical Agricultural Resource Center, accompanied by three Kauai staff members, we flew out at six in the morning serviced by two helicopters: one to ferry people and camp supplies, the other for air reconnaissance purposes. The recon bird would utilize two FLIR (infrared) units to locate animals then call in the second helicopter to respond with a Two Man-One Dog team. The air attack was called off due to rainy, foggy weather so plan B was put into action, the ground and pound mode. That first day using three Teams we hunt swept six lines to the far northwest corner of the preserve each line about a mile long. The area was pristine with Ohi'a trees growing cross wise to the ground causing a jungle gym obstruction for each hunter and dog to get through the lines. My hunt mate explained to me the trees were blown that way by Hurricane Iwa which had passed through the island twice from different directions.

The second day, a helicopter ferried us in rainy, foggy, 35 mile an hour windy weather to the famous summit of Wai'ale'ale where I got a close up view of its lake. This area was more open, boggy and a lot harder to walk in, but the landscape view when the clouds lifted was breath-taking. From the summit, we hunt swept three lines back to camp. On the third day, we finished up hunting by covering six more lines near camp. In the three days of hard hunting we surmised no animals were in the areas we had covered. Because of time limitations we were unable to cover the far northeastern corner of the preserve. The Kauai Team had done a good job previously clearing out the area by ground hunting and snaring at locations where they were permitted to.

I'd like to thank our three Kauai camp mates; Nicolai Barca, Kyle Kagimoto and Lucas Behnke. They showed me what real "back country" camp out means; all of our drinking water was filtered from the stream and that "brown bagging" takes on a different definition when camping. For a better description in words and pictures of what I experienced on the Garden Isle, please read The Nature Conservancy's September/October magazine's article on page 50 titled "Pacific Invasion". A big "Mahalo Nui Loa" to Keren Gundersen of CTAHR, Jim Hobbs of Airborne Aviation and the other Kauai Program staff members for their generous hospitality, it was truly a memorable experience for me, stay tuned for the next Flash!



Brian Naeole and Molokai pup Leilyn at Mt. Wai'ale'ale.

Mahalo Nui Loa for Helping TNC & our Partners!

Keani & Kaponu Acasio, Bucky & Momi Afelin, Jennifer Ainoa, Billy Akutagawa, Myron Akutagawa, Opuulani Albino, Laakea Alcon, Anna Lou Arakaki, Joseph Ballocanag, George & Pat Benda, Dan Bennett, Nairene Bishaw, Marianna Campos, Eric Co, Cheryl Corbiel, Patricia Crandall, Jarrin Kalei Davis, Ryan Deseixas, Arleone Dibben-Young, Lance Dudoit, Lisa Dudoit, Stephanie Dunbar-Co, Jimmy Duvauchelle, Dan Emhoff, Steve Eminger, Mortica English, Rosie English, Shia English, Wendy Espaniola, Lenora Espaniola, Byron Espaniola, Micaiah Esteron, Julia Faraon, Bill Feeter, Pomai Gomes, Mark & Coral Gonzales, Michael Grinnell, Evelyn & Joyce Haase, Kekama Helm, Nohe Hernandez, Aulani Hiro, Julia Ho, Rachael Jennings, Darlene & Ted Johns, Blaze Juario, Darlene Kaahanui, Camille Kahalewai, Tyliah Kahaulilio, Iokewe Kalima-Moses, Johnathan Kauwenaole, Solomon Kawai, Tessie Keliikuli-Peters, Cammiy Kimball, Keoni Kuoha, Shannon Lopez, Pat & Leo Lucas, Doug & Lil Macmillan, Lahilahi Manaba, Jeromie Manuel, Margaret Marcom, Penny Martin, Ruben Mateo, Walter Mendes, Jason Misaki, Deserae Naeole, Audrey Newman, Kaydence-Lee Oswald-Kalawe, Tati Paaluhi, Tyson Pactol, Walter Paleka, Joshua Pastrana, DJ Pelekai, Ryan Peralta, Mikiala Pescaia, Keison Poaha-Alcon, Cassandra Ragonton, Jenny Reeder, Cyrus & Phyllis Siu, Shraedon Starkey, Laura Summers, Kathy Tachibana, Sheldeen & Bobby Takeo, Roblen Talon, Tyreen Tengan, Rosie Torres, Lloyd & Linda Yonemura, **Kilohana School:** Lawena Aki, Barbara Brake, Divine Brown, Brian & Braxton DeMello, Mapuana Dudoit, Malu Duquette, Laila Juario, Dianthe & Kaua Kaili, Reese Kaupu-Tollefsen, Leah Lavoie, Maya Lima, Ta'ua Lima-English, Thalia Meyer, Gabrielle Miguel, Lorri Misaki, Jayden Napoleon-Pico, Zyrhus Pawn-Kalilikane, Chaves Petronave, Elisia Poole, Keala Puaoi-Traxler, Ililani Sawyer, Kamaehu Ward, **Ka Honua Momona:** Mervin Dudoit Sr., Kahana Kanoa, Malu Lani-Kaakimaka, Jon Brito, **MHS MEPO Club:** Robert Bento, Camille Borden, Sarah Jenkins, Kiloaulani

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Mo'omomi Shearwater Night-Banding

By Momi Afelin, Molokai High School Sophomore



I knew about the Nature Conservancy through a grant I had written in 8th grade to create a garden of native plants at Molokai Middle School. TNC's Uncle Ed Misaki helped me with

selecting appropriate native plants. At the end of last school year, I contacted Uncle Ed again, this time to see what kinds of volunteer work I could do with the Nature Conservancy. This is how I came to volunteer with the Mo'omomi Shearwater Night-Banding.

After the long dusty ride to Mo'omomi Preserve with Wailana Moses (*TNC's lead on this project*), we (*16 volunteers/Partners, 3 DOFAW staff*) broke off into groups of three- one person to hold the shearwater, one to band it, and one to record the information. The adult birds are in underground nests and we had to reach into their burrows to retrieve them and band them. Some birds were very feisty and took a lot of work for our volunteers to get them banded. Banding the birds was a very unique and interesting experience and it is very important to track their populations to ensure they are thriving. It felt great knowing that I was a part of something that made a difference and could impact this species for years to come. I felt very blessed to have been provided with this rare opportunity.

The bird's nesting home, Mo'omomi Preserve, is a very special place dedicated to the preservation of many endangered species. Not only does it do a great service to nature by providing a piece of land that virtually is untouched by humans, except to be monitored, but it also is breathtakingly beautiful. I am lucky to have come along and learned so much and I look forward to volunteering in future events with the Nature Conservancy.

Did You Know...

By: Wailana Moses, TNC Weed Control Coordinator

...Kahili ginger is not native to Hawaii?!?! Yes, it is true. Kahili ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*) also known as the Himalayan ginger is native to Asia. It is a huge threat especially to island ecosystems like Hawaii which is home to much of the world's threatened biodiversity.

Kahili ginger is a habitat-modifying weed that can easily grow up to 8 feet tall. It forms vast, dense colonies that choke out other vegetation and prevents forest regeneration. It can permanently alter the habitat by reducing nitrogen levels which will only allow certain types of plants to grow in that kind of altered environment...which means our native species will not survive in an area taken over by Kahili ginger! It can also block streams and alter water flow! Scary!! Kahili ginger is so bad that it is on "Hawaii's Most Invasive Horticultural Plants" list and on the "World's 100 Worst Invasive Alien Species" list. This weed is recognized throughout the world as BAD!! Places like Australia, Africa, New Zealand, French Polynesia, Micronesia and Jamaica are being invaded by Kahili ginger! Since being introduced to Hawaii in the 1950s, Maui, Kauai, Hawaii Island and Lanai has been fighting to save their forests. Over the past decade, the Molokai/Maui Invasive Species Committee (MoMISC) along with the Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been keeping a vigilant eye out for any Kahili in our Molokai forests. Surveys in September, revealed that Kahili ginger has escaped into the wild on our beloved North Shore. It is the first "un-cultivated" population known on Molokai! The other known populations are found at private homes. Kahili ginger can spread by birds and humans.

We need your help to prevent more Kahili from escaping into the wild. If you have Kahili ginger, please cut off old flower stalks before it seeds, bag it and make sure it goes to the County landfill. You can also remove your Kahili ginger plant from your yard. We would be happy to remove it for you for FREE. Please don't hesitate to call MoMISC at (808)553-5236 ext. 6585. For more information on Kahili ginger call us or visit the Global Invasive Species Database online at <http://www.issg.org/database/welcome/>. Mahalo!



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