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Review of *The Island Waterfowl* by Milton W. Weller, and *The Hawaiian Goose: An Experiment in Conservation* by Janet Kear and A. J. Berger

Paul A. Johnsgard
University of Nebraska - Lincoln, pjohnsgard1@unl.edu

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THE ISLAND WATERFOWL.
By Milton W. Weller. Iowa State University Press, Ames. $10.95. x + 121 p.; ill.; index. 1980.

THE HAWAIIAN GOOSE: AN EXPERIMENT IN CONSERVATION.

By Janet Kear and A. J. Berger. Buteo Books, Vermillion (South Dakota). $30.00. 154 p. + 13 pl., ill.; index. 1980.

Both of these books deal with insular species of waterfowl. The volume by Weller concentrates on the ecological forces that have shaped the comparative ecologies and morphologies of some 30 forms of Anatidae that are confined to the islands of the world; the Kear and Berger book deals with the interesting history of the ill-fated Hawaiian goose, or nene, which has at least temporarily been saved from extinction by herioc conservation measures of the Wildfowl Trust and Hawaiian wildlife personnel.

Weller's volume is primarily of interest for his compilation of historical population data, and for the breeding biology and ecological information that he provides for each species. But he has also attempted to make some generalizations on the physical environmental factors influencing the rate of colonization of islands, the morphological and behavioral responses of species to insular existence, and conflicting pressures toward niche segregation versus species packing in environments having limited resources and habitat diversity. Weller also deals briefly with the special conservation problems posed by species adapted to islands, and urges that research and survival strategies be initiated for several of the imperiled island forms.

The Hawaiian goose provides a case study in the problems and possibilities of preserving and perhaps restoring an endangered insular species of waterfowl by its captive propagation and eventual re-establishment in the wild. Valuable information on such topics as the effects of inbreeding on egg fertility and the apparent effects of an alien climate on egg-laying, egg size, and adult weight cycles are provided. There are also data on the influence of parental age on clutch-size, egg weight, egg fertility and hatching success, all of which probably have general relevance to goose biology. The book provides a fascinating account of how critically important private initiative was in preserving this species, long before federal funds or programs were available. The final release of hand-raised birds back into the wild, with its sudden diametric shifting of selective pressures, is fully recounted and the still uncertain degree of its success is emphasized. The obvious cost in human time and effort of thus preserving a species, to say nothing of the genetic cost to the species, is a sobering prospect for all conservationists.

PAUL A. JOHNSGARD, *Life Science, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska*