



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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WILL EXPLORE ISLANDS IN  
HAWAIIAN BIRD RESERVATION

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Plans for a cooperative scientific expedition to the islands of the Hawaiian Islands National Bird Reservation have been perfected by the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, with the Bishop Museum, of Honolulu. The start will be made from San Francisco, about March 21, the Navy Department cooperating by furnishing a 1,000-ton vessel for conducting the party from Honolulu to the various islands.

Dr. Alexander Wetmore, of the Biological Survey, will be in charge of the expedition, assisted by Charles E. Reno, of the same bureau. The work of the Biological Survey will be to make collections and gather information concerning the bird life of the islands, and to destroy a large colony of rabbits that has become established on one of the islands to the detriment of some of the land birds through the destruction of the scanty vegetation there.

The magnitude of the expedition's task may be appreciated when it is understood that the Hawaiian Islands Reservation consists of a dozen or more islands, reefs, and shoals that stretch westward from the Hawaiian Archipelago proper for a distance of more than 1,500 miles toward Japan, and that the average distance between these is something like 100 miles.

Included in the refuge is Laysan Island, celebrated as a breeding place for albatrosses and other sea birds, where in the past plumage hunters of other nations have committed serious depredations. Domestic rabbits were introduced on the island some years ago by a German who was then living there. The increase of these animals threatens to destroy what little vegetation there is on the island, and with its disappearance several species of small land birds peculiar to Laysan would perish.

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