

**ALVARO'S ADVENTURES**  
birding & nature tours



# **Hawaii**

## **April 16 – 24, 2024**

**Guided by Mandy Talpas.**

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*Palila*

Many years back Alvaro visited on holiday with his wife. After a great time on the Big Island, she asked “why don’t you do a birding tour to Hawaii?” She exclaimed “Everyone wants to come to Hawaii!” and she was right. Hawaii is special and has an allure that is clear and needs no explanation. For the beach goer it is obvious, coconut trees, sand beaches, warm weather. It is also a wonderful place to visit due to the extensive tourism infrastructure, flights that arrive from multiple airports, ample hotel options and some of the best food anywhere. Really, the food can be outstanding in Hawaii with its mix of local, Asian and European fare, sometimes mixed in creative ways. But for the birder, Hawaii is unique. It is similar to the Galapagos in that a group of birds colonized and became a brand-new set of species here, an adaptive radiation occurred. Unlike the Darwin’s Finches of Galapagos, the Hawaiian Honeycreepers which are relatives of our goldfinches and House Finches, are gorgeous in color and amazing in their beak types. More so than the finches! Sadly, many of Hawaii’s native birdlife has gone extinct or has become quite rare, but a nice assortment of amazing birds remain, and some are actually still common.

# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

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As part of the United States, you do not need a passport, or to exchange currency or even learn a new language. Still, Hawaii does seem exotic and different enough that it is common for mainlanders to talk about “returning to the US” from Hawaii, as it does seem like a different country at times. A Polynesian Island, the Hawaiian People are part of some of the most impressive seagoing cultures on earth. Their ancestors were able to pinpoint and arrive at far flung islands on hand made boats, truly amazing. We will also venture out to sea to watch birds, the very birds that used to inform the Polynesians of how close they were to land. While the mariners did have very accurate maps, and they knew how to read the currents and even cloud patterns that suggested islands were in the distance, it was the birds that told them the detailed story. Some birds were only found near land, others only well offshore. We will venture into their world, and hopefully find some local specialties like the Hawaiian Petrel, or Newell’s Shearwater, albeit their populations are small, and food and weather conditions will have to be right for us to have luck. Even so, we will see some good birds out there, and hopefully some nice whales or dolphins as well.

Our trip is led by Mandy Talpas, who lives in Hawaii and has a great grasp not only of the birds, but the ecology of the islands. As a resident of Hawaii, she brings with her not only knowledge of the islands, but a love for the place that is her home. You will enjoy seeing Hawaii with Mandy. She is a fantastic birder a fun guide, and an absolute expert on the birds of Hawaii.



*Red-footed Booby*

## The Birding Sites We Visit

**Oahu – Honolulu** —Our tour begins with your arrival in Honolulu. This is the largest city in the state of Hawaii and is on the island of Oahu. Islands in Hawaii are geologically

# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

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youngest in the East, and oldest in the West, as such Oahu is a middle-aged island. Oahu's south shore is more sheltered from the trade winds, and that is where Honolulu and Waikiki are situated. The North Shore of Oahu is known for its big winter surf, old agricultural estates and is more exposed to the trade winds. The feel of the North Shore is utterly distinct from that of the south. We will bird lowland on both ends of the islands, where ample diversity of the introduced species in Hawaii are found, as well as unusual shorebirds like the Bristle-thighed Curlew. We will also bird the highlands, to try and find the endemic Oahu Amakihi, and the wooded valleys to look for the Oahu Elepaio. A highlight will be right outside our hotel, where we can find nesting White Tern (Fairy Tern).

**Kauai** — Of the main islands in Hawaii, Kauai is the oldest. As such it is much greener, and the volcanic nature of the island is less apparent. The Waimea Gorge is a fantastic spot and highlight how much time there has been to erode this island, compared to the Big Island. The Na Pali coast with its massive cliffs may have been the site of a catastrophic situation where at once a huge chunk of the island fell into the ocean hundreds of thousands of years ago. It is estimated that this may have created the largest possible tsunami yet known on earth, a terrifying thought. As Kauai's highlands are green and lush, there are many endemic Hawaiian Honeycreepers up there, although some are becoming rarer due to multiple challenges. On the other hand, the north side of the island, where Kilauea Point is found, has an ever-expanding set of native seabirds. Control of rodents and other possible predators here finds a healthy population of Laysan Albatrosses, Red-footed Boobies, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters fly by Great Frigatebirds among other species. It is a great spot to watch and photograph. The Hanalei Valley with its taro fields and ponds is superb for waterbirds, including the Nene a species that has increased with conservation efforts.

**The Big Island (Hawaii)** — The Big Island is the largest of the Hawaiian main islands, and it is also the newest. In fact, the longest running volcanic eruption is still happening on the island. Note that a few years back the museum at Volcano National Park was destroyed by volcanic activity, as of late 2022 a new eruption on Mauna Kea, a separate volcano is ongoing. As such we do not visit the park, but we can arrange for a post-tour visit for anyone who wants to stay an extra day or two on the Big Island after our birding tour is done. The Big Island is the biggest and the highest of the islands, up on the flanks of the volcanos are wonderful native forests. We will visit the magical spot known as Hakalau, where multiple Hawaiian Honeycreepers can be found. Iiwi are common, and with luck we will find one of the world's oddest birds in terms of bill morphology, the woodpecker like Akiapolauu, or "Aki" for short. Another highlight on the Big Island will be our pelagic birding trip. Many birding tours to Hawaii do not venture offshore, and this is a shame as so much diversity is to be found offshore on a good day. Many Hawaiian seabird specialties are best seen from a boat, as the breeding areas are difficult to get to or restricted access.

# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

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## About the Physical Requirements & Pace

To reach the highland forests where the native birds are found and searching for pelagic birds by boat, will require us to start some of our days early, as we'll want to be near our destinations close to dawn. Other departures will be more leisurely, but we do make sure we are out in the morning when bird activity is highest, and the heat and/or chance of rain is lowest. Much of our birding will be easy walking on roads, wide trails, and boats. The Koolau Mountain trails (Oahu) will still be slippery and muddy. The Alakai (Kauai rainforest) is one of the wettest places on Earth with temperatures of 50 -70 degrees F and Hakalau (Big Island) is also a montane rainforest. Even if it's not raining, it will still be slippery and muddy. Shoes with good grip and ankle support are recommended. Birding along the north shore will be within short walks from the van. Much of the Kauai forest birding is possible from wooden boardwalks (some in poor state). Birding along the north shore of Kauai and Oahu will be within short walks from the van. You should be able to easily get in and out of a van (sometimes repeatedly), and able to walk at least three miles, some of it on slopes where traction may not be the best and where footing is uneven. You should be prepared to bird in hot and humid environments, expect some rain, and realize the highlands can be quite brisk or even cool. Sea conditions on the pelagic trip can range from calm seas to moderately choppy, so you must have decent balance and an ability to steady yourself on a moving boat if you plan to take the pelagic. Those with balance and stability issues should bring a collapsible walking stick with a wrist loop, and those who find it difficult to stand for long periods should bring a small travel stool.

**HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS:** Enjoy unparalleled views of the mountains and the ocean at the Queen Kapiolani Hotel, Sheraton Kauai Coconut Beach Resort, and Courtyard Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel. These beautiful beachfront locations feature guest rooms with complimentary high-speed wireless Internet, in room



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refrigerators, and private lanais just outside the hustle and bustle of the city.



#

*Pacific Golden-Plover*

## Itinerary for Hawaii

**April 16, 2024 (Day 1) – Arrival in Honolulu.** Upon arrival in Honolulu (HNL), take a shuttle, or cab, to the Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel in Waikīkī. Check in is any time after 3pm. We will gather in the lobby at 6pm to meet new friends before our welcome dinner together. Night in Waikīkī.

**April 17, 2024 (Day 2) – Birding in Oahu.** This morning we start our day in Kapi‘olani 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. After breakfast we will leave the city behind and enter the rainforests of the Ko‘olau Mountains in pursuit of O‘ahu’s endemic honeycreeper, the O‘ahu ‘Amakihi, before we transcend down into the valleys to search for the endangered O‘ahu ‘Elepaio. While on our endemic bird adventure

# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



we will most likely encounter White-rumped Shama, noisy flocks of Red-billed Leiothrix, an occasional Red-whiskered Bulbul, and chattering Warbling White-eyes. Night in Waikīkī

**April 18, 2024 (Day 3) – Birding O‘ahu’s North Shore.** Today we journey up the picturesque windward side to experience the serenity of O‘ahu’s North Shore in search of visiting shorebirds, such as the Wandering Tattler and sought-after Bristle-thighed Curlew. While cruising the coastline, famous for world class surf beaches and secluded coves with basking sea turtles, we are sure to find some flashy finches, such as the Saffron Finch and Chestnut Munia. The North Shore is also home to some of the last family farms on O‘ahu with crops of coffee, cacao, eggplant, papaya, pineapple, banana, and even scattered shrimp farms with Black-crowned Night Heron, the endemic Hawaiian Coot, Common Gallinule (endemic subspecies), and Black-necked Stilt (endemic subspecies).

Night in Waikīkī

**April 19, 2024 (Day 4) – Fly to Big Island.** We will fly to the Big Island after breakfast to bird Saddle Road for Short-eared Owl (endemic subspecies), Eurasian Skylark, Chukar, California Quail, Wild Turkey, Erckel’s Spurfowl, Black, and Gray francolins and more. From the high elevations of Pu‘u La‘au along the slopes of Mauna Kea, we will drive through Waikoloa in search of more introduced species, like Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, African Silverbill and Red Avadavat. Night in Kona

**April 20, 2024 (Day 5) – Birding Big Island’s native forest** Today we experience Hakalau aka Hawai‘i’s honeycreeper heaven! Hakalau Forest NWR is a publicly restricted montane cloud forest refuge and is home to many of Hawai‘i’s endangered plants, native arthropods, and endemic birds. We will search for the unique Hawai‘i ‘Alawī (creeper), the gorgeous day glow orange Hawai‘i ‘Akepa, the stunning long billed ‘Akiapōlā‘au, the ‘Io (Hawaiian Hawk), Hawai‘i ‘Elepaio, and ‘Ōma‘o (Hawai‘i Island’s endemic thrush) with beautiful I‘iwi, Hawai‘i ‘Amakihi, and ‘Apapane all over the blossoms of ancient 'Ohi'a trees enshrouding us. We will bird Saddle Road on our way to the refuge looking for Short-eared Owl (endemic subspecies), Eurasian Skylark, Chukar, California Quail, Wild Turkey, Erckel’s Spurfowl, Black, and Gray francolins and more with a stop in Waikoloa in hopes of more introduced specialties, like Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and African Silverbill. Night in Kona

**April 21, 2024 (Day 6) – Pelagic Birding Big Island.** We embark on a pelagic birding charter out of Honokohau Harbor with an experienced local captain for (Hawaiian) Black Noddy, Brown Noddy, Sooty Tern, Brown Booby, White-tailed Tropicbird, Great Frigatebird, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, and Bulwer’s Petrel with hopes of finding: Masked Booby, Hawaiian Petrel, Black-winged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, Juan Fernandez Petrel, White-necked Petrel, Newell’s Shearwater, Christmas Shearwater, Leach’s Storm Petrel, Band-rumped Storm Petrel, the list of possibilities is high, but if we

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are lucky we will see one or two of these goodies. We may see incidental cetacean sightings, and more! Night in Kona

**April 22, 2024 (Day 7) – Flight to Kaua'i and Birding Kaua'i.** Our flight today, from KOA to LIH is at around 10am. After breakfast we fly to Līhu'e and discover the beauty of Kaua'i's north shore in pursuit of impressive seabirds along Kīlauea Lighthouse NWR's stunning coastline and more endemic water birds amongst Hanalei NWR's historic lo'i ponds. While scanning the rugged cliffs of Kīlauea covered with Red-footed Boobies and surveying the skies for Brown Booby, spectacular Red-tailed and White-tailed tropicbirds, majestic Laysan Albatross, and soaring Great Frigatebirds, we will enjoy up close views of Hawai'i's state bird, the Nene (Hawaiian Goose). We will then explore Hanalei valley's lush important bird area for more of Hawai'i's endangered water birds, such as the Hawaiian Duck. Night in Kapa'a

**April 23, 2024 (Day 8) – Birding Kaua'i.** We embark on a rainforest adventure with astounding views of Waimea Canyon, the Pacific's Grand Canyon, on our journey into Kōke'e State Park to find Kaua'i's endemic Kaua'i 'Amakihi, 'Apapane, 'Anianiau, and Kaua'i 'Elepaio. Other forest birds we should encounter in Kōke'e include Red Junglefowl, the skulky Japanese Bush Warbler and melodious Chinese Hwamei. Night in Kapa'a

**April 24, 2024 (Day 9) –: Birding Kaua'i and Departure Day from Lihue, Kaua'i.** On our last morning on Kaua'i we will search for the rare Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush and any of Kaua'i's specialty species we haven't already found before we check out at 11am.



Oahu Amakihi



# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

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## Your Guide

**Mandy Talpas.** As a tremendous lover of birds and wildlife Mandy has dedicated her life



to avian conservation. From the time she was a young girl in northeastern Pennsylvania, she collected natural history observations in her backyard, volunteered at a wildlife rehabilitation and education center, and rescued many unwanted pet parrots.

Mandy earned a Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Studies from East Stroudsburg University and began conducting countless environmental education programs as a Naturalist, a Lead Conservation Educator at an AZA accredited zoo, and a Bird Banding and Education Specialist at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. She continued to broaden her scientific studies and field skills with the Ornithology Lab at Villanova University pursuing graduate school. Her passion for parrots led her to the remote forests of Manu, Peru, where she worked to save endangered

macaws, as well as studying tropical ecology in Costa Rica, Mexico, Belize and Guatemala. Mandy is grateful to have made Hawaii her permanent home. She has conducted biological assessments on Kauai and Oahu, worked as an avian field technician, assisting endangered forest bird conservation efforts with Oahu Elepaio and continues to volunteer with local non-profits working to save Hawaii's endangered forest birds and seabirds across the islands. Mandy has led hiking, history, nature, sightseeing, food, nature and birding tours for other companies for years and is thrilled to have started her own business leading birding tours full time in Hawaii with seasonal birding trips abroad. She is eager to share her knowledge and enthusiasm of Hawaii's culture, history, wildlife, and most especially, its unique and fascinating birds.

**ALVARO'S ADVENTURES**  
birding & nature tours



## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$7100 from Honolulu and ending in Lihue, Kauai. Fee includes inter-island flights.

**DEPOSIT:** \$500 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** Dec 18, 2023

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$1375

**LIMIT:** 8

## Additional Information

**DOCUMENTS:** Hawaii is in the United States, as such no special entry requirements exist for entering the state. Note however, that your luggage will be checked for any potential invasive insects, and you cannot bring fresh fruit into Hawaii from other parts of the US. If you are not a US Citizen, please check on requirements necessary for entry to the United States.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Please plan to arrive in Honolulu on or before April 16, 2024. We are happy to arrange for an extra night for you if you decide to arrive a day early, and this is recommended given the long flight and time change. When you arrive make your way to the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel in Waikīkī, taking a shuttle, cab or ride sharing option. Flights back home at the end of the tour can be booked any time from the Lihue airport (Kauai) on April 24, 2024. Again, if you decide to stay longer, we can help you with extra hotel bookings.

Be sure to check with Alvaro's Adventures to confirm that the flights you have will work with our itinerary and to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. We are not responsible for these fees.

**AIRPORT TRANSFERS:** Roberts Hawaii and Speedi Shuttle offer transfers from Honolulu airport to Waikiki hotels (where tour begins) and from Kuai hotels (where tour ends) to Kuai airport. Cab services for 2 or more people in one group might be less than shuttle rates. You may also wish to use ride sharing apps, as you see fit.

<https://www.speedishuttle.com> (Honolulu and Kuai)

<https://www.robertshawaii.com/airport-shuttle/> (Honolulu and Kuai)

<https://charleystaxi.com/> (Honolulu)

# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The tour fee is \$7100 for one person in double occupancy from Honolulu. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 8, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9, all ground transportation (except transfer from airport to hotel), entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leaders. The price also includes the inter-island flights from Oahu to the Big Island, and then Big Island (Kona) to Kauai.

The above fees do **not** include your airfare to and from Hawaii, airport taxes, visa fees, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to guides or staff, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the main tour is \$1375. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the enclosed Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$500** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by Dec 18, 2023. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**SMOKING:** This is a non-smoking tour.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Alvaro's Adventures for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

# ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

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**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY).

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Alvaro's Adventures, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Alvaro's Adventures acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Alvaro's Adventures accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, and other pertinent matter provided by Alvaro's Adventures. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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birding & nature tours



*Nene - Hawaiian Goose*