

Nihoa voyagers explore grasshopper problem



Two archaeologists on the trip will also document ancient Hawaiian ceremonial sites

ON ASSIGNMENT

Star-Bulletin reporter Diana Leone is on the 10-day educational cruise to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

By Diana Leone

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ABOARD THE HI'IAKAI >>

The Island of Nihoa lives up to its Hawaiian name, which means rigid or jagged.

The sheer cliffs of the 156-acre

island drop vertically into a rich,

deep-blue ocean that really does feel like the middle of nowhere. Five participants in an edu-

cators' voyage to the North-

western Hawaiian Islands left

the comforts of the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration ship Hi'ialakai

yesterday to spend the next week on this windswept rock.

Two archaeologists, two biolo-

gists and one teacher will

sleep in pup tents, eat canned

food heated on a camp stove

and drink only the water they

brought with them.

But they didn't get off at Nihoa

to be comfortable. Everyone

going ashore has a job to do.

Please see Teachers, A5

Please see Armor, A11

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Once the sun set the Iraq war began, the Pentagon is struggling to replace body armor tha

>> Scott Kekuewa Kiklo, a

University of Hawaii doctoral

candidate in archaeology, and

archaeologist Keahulani Souza

will map several ancient Hawa-

iian ceremonial sites.

The ceramic plates in w

worn by most personnel ca

withstand certain munitions

insurgents use. But more th

than 100,000 have been

lost since the Iraq war began,

according to the Defense Depar-

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GOOD MORNING

O H A , I T ' S S U N D A Y

More than just a beauty queen

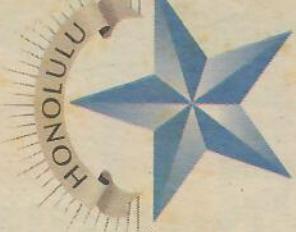
While Arlene Newman-Van Asperen showed up to a pageant interview with a shiner, it didn't stop her from being crowned Mrs. Hawaii. El



Unsettling debt settlements

Some companies across the nation promising to reduce people's debt are leaving many in worse shape than before. El

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AUGUST 14, 2005

75 cents

Analyst skeptical of Hawaii gas cap

The oil economist says a rumor could create a fuel shortage

TURTLES BECOME MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AT LANIAKEA BEACH



Teachers Barbara Mayer and Maggie Preuenens were so excited by the grasshopper saga that they crafted an online exercise for their students, asking them to guess what might have caused the population explosion.

The teachers Barbara Mayer and Maggie Prevensas were so excited by the grasshopper saga that they crafted an on-line exercise for their students, asking them to guess what might have caused the dilemma.

Continued from A1

>> Pete Oboyski, an insect biologist at the University of California at Berkeley, will see if a ravenous grasshopper that ate most of the island's plants in 2002 and 2004 has returned.

>> David Boynton, an environmental resource teacher at Kokee Discovery Center on Kauai and a photographer, will spend some time with each of the groups.

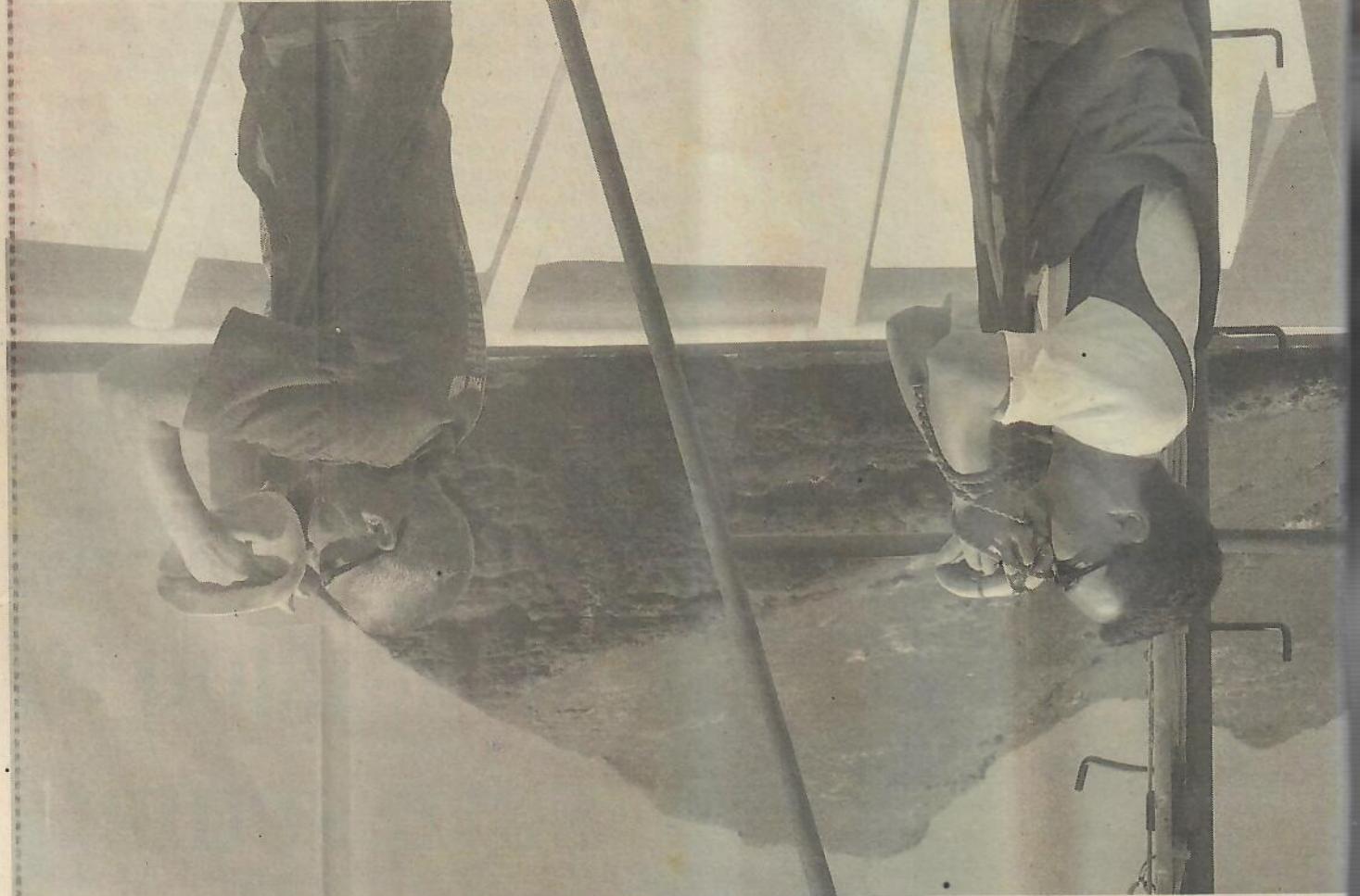
Siive Gray bird grasshoppers (Schistocerca nitens), and he'll check on the 36 local native insect species known to live on Nihoa.

Even if the grasshoppers — which are related to the "locusts that wrought plagues of biblical proportions" — are not taken a toll, he said.

The grasshoppers are on all the main Hawaiian islands and have been seen on French Frigate Shoals and Mokumanā-mana (Nēcker) Island, but had

Teachers: Students will learn about Nihoa discoveries via online exercise

Scot Kekeuewa Kikiloi and ship electronics technician Mike Cumley blew conch shells yesterday to announce the arrival of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ship *Hawaiian* at Nihoa Island.





DIANA LEONE / DLEONE@STARBULLETIN.COM

Scott Kekuewa Kikiloi and ship electronics technician Mike Crumley blew conch shells yesterday to announce the arrival of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ship Hi'ialakai at Nihoa Island.

Teachers: Students will learn about Nihoa discoveries via online exercise

Continued from A1

something she has done seven times before.

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Oboyski will count the invasive gray bird grasshoppers (*Schistocerca nitens*), and he'll check on the 36 local native insects known to live on Nihoa.

Even if the grasshoppers — which are related to the "locusts that wrought plagues of biblical proportions" — are not there this year, they may have taken a toll, he said.

The grasshoppers are on all

never been seen on Nihoa in such warming numbers until 2002.

Other insect biologists reported that "most of the vegetation was completely chewed off," in 2002 and 2004, Oboyski said.

Oboyski will test five "flavors" of oils for their use as possible attractants for the grasshoppers. One will be orange oil, because a scientist who opened a fresh orange on Nihoa found that he was surrounded by grasshoppers within minutes, where before there had been none.

That anecdote about the sometimes serendipitous progress of scientific discovery set off a lively discussion among teachers on this voyage and the scientists who are sharing their research with them.

Teachers Barbara Mayer and Maggie Prevenas were so excited by the grasshopper

TEACHERS AT SEA



ON THE NET

>> Trip postings from teachers and other information:

hawaiianatolls.org

>> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands: www.fws.gov/pacific/pacificislands/wnwr/pnorthwestnwr.html

>> Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve: www.hawaiireef.noaa.gov

the dark cloud of grasshopper overpopulation may be that one of Nihoa's rare birds, the Nihoa Millerbird (*Acrocephalus familiaris kingi*), seems to have increased in numbers over the grasshopper years.

Flint, ever the cautious scientist, said it's not clear whether the larger Nihoa Millerbird numbers are because they've reproduced well on a diet of grasshoppers, or if it's simply easier to spot the secretive birds on bushes devoid of leaves.

Taking advantage of the unusually calm waters around Nihoa, the other nine teachers on this voyage snorkeled in its waters and circled the island in an inflatable boat.

They saw several of the sights that are just about guaranteed on a trip to Hawaii's most remote islands: monk seals, a shark and marine debris.

Two of those sights, unfortunately, were in the same eyeful.

population explosion.

They'll ask Oboyski to share what he observed on Nihoa