

Photo

Forest Birds

Kakawahie

Paroreomyza flammea

SPECIES STATUS:

Federally Listed as Endangered

State Listed as Endangered

State recognized as endemic

Hawaii Natural Heritage Ranking GH—known only from historic records

SPECIES INFORMATION: Kakawahie, or Moloka'i creeper, were small, sexually dichromatic, insectivorous Hawaiian honeycreepers endemic to the island of Moloka'i. Males were flaming scarlet while females were a dull rusty color. Kakawahie gleaned invertebrates from vegetation and bark in wet 'ohi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) forests. Little is known about the breeding biology of the Kakawahie, but it is presumed similar to the Maui creeper (*Paroreomyza montana*).

DISTRIBUTION: Unknown. Possibly extinct. Kakawahie were common in native forests on east Moloka'i at the end of the 19th century. It was last detected on the west rim of Pelekunu Valley in 1963.

ABUNDANCE: Unknown. Possibly extinct. There have been no sightings since 1963.

LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT: Unknown. Kakawahie were known to inhabit the wet 'ohi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) forests and other heavily wooded native areas of eastern Moloka'i. The areas where last seen are managed by the state as Natural Area Reserve or by private landowners for conservation purposes. These are considered stable, except for the presence of disease-vector mosquitoes and feral ungulates in unfenced areas.

THREATS: Causes of the decline of this species are unknown. Kakawahie would have encountered the same threats as other Hawaiian forest birds: habitat loss and degradation, predation by introduced mammals, and avian disease. The latter may have been especially severe on Moloka'i as there is no habitat above the range of the mosquitoes which carry avian diseases.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS: No actions specifically target Kakawahie. If they exist, they likely benefit from management actions undertaken on behalf of other forest birds on eastern Moloka'i. Should this species be rediscovered, the Rare Bird Recovery Protocol contained in the USFWS Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds would be enacted.

MONITORING:

- Continue forest bird population and habitat condition surveys on Moloka'i.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

- None at this time.

References:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds. Region 1, Portland, OR. 428pp.

Baker, P. E., and H. Bakre. 2000. Kakawahie (*Paroreomyza flammea*) and O`ahu Alauahio (*Paroreomyza maculata*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 503 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.