

## Forest Birds

Photo

# Kama'o

*Myadestes myadestinus*

### SPECIES STATUS:

Federally Listed as Endangered

State Listed as Endangered

State recognized as endemic

Hawaii Natural Heritage Ranking GH—known only from historical occurrences

**SPECIES INFORMATION:** The Kama'o, or large Kaua'i thrush, is a medium-sized solitaire. Life history characteristics are presumed to be similar to the oma'o (*Myadestes obscurus*). The diet was reported to consist of fruits and berries, particularly of the 'ie'ie (*Freycinetia arborea*). Nesting is thought to occur in the spring, with a clutch size of one or two. The nest has not been described. It was often described rising into the air, singing a few notes and dropping into the understory. The Kama'o has not been seen since 1989.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Kama'o were rare by the mid-1960's, when they remained only in the uppermost regions of the Alaka'i Wilderness Preserve. Its original range extended from the moist forests near sea level on northern Kaua'i to the upland interior mountain forests.

Map distribution

**ABUNDANCE:** The Kama'o has not been seen since 1989. It is on the brink of extinction, if not already extinct.

**LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT:** Kama'o were most often seen in open canopy forests of 'ohi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) and 'olapa (*Cheirodendron* spp.). It is thought that Kama'o habitat would contain a diverse understory including epiphytes, tree ferns, and fruiting plants such as 'ie'ie, 'oha wai (*Clermontia* spp.) and 'ohelo (*Vaccinium* spp.). The 'ie'ie vines favored by Kama'o do not thrive in the higher elevation forests to which the bird is restricted. This suggests that it may be surviving in marginal habitat. Areas where Kama'o were most recently seen are managed as Forest Reserve or Wilderness Preserve by the state of Hawai'i. Although the condition of these forests varies from intact to degraded, management can be considered stable.

**THREATS:** Habitat degradation resulting from feral pigs, alien weed invasions and possibly even a change in invertebrate fauna likely affects the species. Good quality forest with abundant fruiting plants exists below their current range, so habitat destruction alone can not explain the decline. Avian disease is probably the most significant factor in the decline of the Kama'o. Rat predation may be a factor if Kama'o are low platform nesters. Introduced birds may compete

with the Kama'o for food and nest sites. The remaining extremely small population is likely to be genetically impoverished.

**CONSERVATION ACTIONS:** Because so little is known about the Kama'o, conservation efforts are limited to protecting the integrity of the remaining forest habitat in the Alaka'i Wilderness Preserve. Public education to gain support for conservation of endangered forest birds is also a priority. 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 regular surveys of Kaua'i forest bird populations and habitat conditions.
- Include Kama'o in future efforts to survey rare Hawaii forest birds.

**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.