

Photo

Forest Birds

Kaua'i Nuku Pu'u

Hemignathus lucidus hanapepe

SPECIES STATUS:

Federally Listed as Endangered
State Listed as Endangered
State recognized as endemic
Hawaii Natural Heritage Ranking G1—Critically imperiled,
T1 - subspecies critically imperiled globally

SPECIES INFORMATION: The Kaua'i nuku pu'u is a long-billed Hawaiian honeycreeper that uses its distinctive bill to excavate invertebrates from epiphytes, bark and wood. Breeding biology is presumed to be similar to its closest relative, the 'Akiapola'au (*Hemignathus munroi*). Nuku pu'u often join mixed species feeding flocks during the non-breeding season.

DISTRIBUTION: All sightings of the Kaua'i nuku pu'u have been in diverse mesic and wet montane forest at elevations of 610 to 1220 meters (2000-4000') on the southwestern slope of Kaua'i.

Map distribution

ABUNDANCE: There are fewer than a dozen historical records for the Kaua'i nuku pu'u. Intensive surveys between 1981 and 2000 failed to find the bird; it is likely that this bird is extinct.

LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT: The Kaua'i nuku pu'u was found in diverse mesic and wet forests between 610 and 1220 meters (2000 – 4000 feet). These elevations are presumably populated with disease-carrying mosquitoes. Areas where nuku pu'u were most recently sighted 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: Avian disease is possibly the most significant factor in the decline of the nuku pu'u. Habitat degradation likely affects the species. Rat predation may be a factor. The remaining population, if one exists, is likely to be genetically impoverished.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS: No specific conservation actions are targeted specifically at the Kaua'i nuku pu'u. If it is extant, it may benefit from habitat protection measures undertaken for other endangered forest birds. 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 nuku pu'u in any 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.

Pratt, K., S.G. Fancy, and C.J. Ralph. 2001 Akiapolaau (*Hemignathus munroi*) and nukupuu (*Hemignathus lucidus*). In the Birds of North America, No. 600 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc. Philadelphia, PA.