

Photo

## Forest Birds

# Maui Nuku Pu'u

*Hemignathus lucidus affinis*

### 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 Maui nuku pu'u is a long-billed Hawaiian honeycreeper that uses its distinctive bill to excavate small weevils and larvae from epiphytes and bark. Breeding biology is presumed to be similar to that of its closest relative, the 'Akiapola'au (*Hemignathus munroi*). Nuku pu'u often joined mixed species feeding flocks.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Mixed shrub montane forest in Kipahulu Valley and the northeast slope of Haleakala at 1100 -2100 meters (3600 - 6900'). Historical records of the bird include mixed koa/'ohi'a forest from 1200 meters to timberline. Fossil records indicate it inhabited dry forests.

Map distribution

**ABUNDANCE:** The Hawaii Forest Bird Survey estimated an abundance of  $28 \pm 56$  nuku pu'u based on a single sighting. Individuals have been sighted on fewer than five occasions since then, and intensive surveys for rare birds on Maui between 1995 and 1999 did not detect nuku pu'u in the areas where last seen.

**LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT:** The Maui nuku pu'u was last seen in mixed shrub montane forests between 1100 and 2100 meters (3600 - 6900 feet). Historic and fossil evidence indicates that its range was much broader and that this habitat may be marginal. Areas where nuku pu'u were most recently sighted are managed for conservation as Forest Reserve by the state of Hawaii or by the National Park Service. Although the condition of these forests varies from intact to degraded, management can be considered stable.

**THREATS:** Reasons for decline are thought to be the same as for other Hawaiian honeycreepers. The most important are presumed to be predation by rats and mortality from introduced avian diseases.

**CONSERVATION ACTIONS:** No specific conservation actions were targeted specifically for the Maui nuku pu'u before 1995, when it was included in a rare bird search. If it is extant, it may benefit from ongoing surveys, habitat restoration and predator control in the locations

where it was last reported. 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 Maui forest bird population and habitat condition surveys.

**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.