



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# News Release

*Pacific Islands External Affairs Office*

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## **Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds Available for Public Review**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today made available for public review and comment a Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds. Twenty-one bird species are covered by this plan, including 19 that are listed as endangered, one that is a candidate for federal listing, and one that is a species of concern. These species are from four families, with the majority being Hawaiian honeycreepers.

The draft revised plan will replace four earlier recovery plans written in the 1980s for most of the species. Recovery efforts for two other Hawaiian forest birds, the 'io or Hawaiian hawk and 'alala or Hawaiian crow, are being addressed in separate plans.

Subfossil records and observations by early naturalists in the Hawaiian islands indicate that most of the species included in the draft plan once occurred in much larger areas and at lower elevations. Hawaiian forest birds and their habitats are now threatened by habitat degradation by feral domestic animals (pigs, goats, and deer); predation by introduced animals (rats, cats, and mongooses); avian disease (malaria and avian pox); habitat loss due to agriculture, ranching, forest cutting, urbanization; and expansion of invasive nonnative plant species into native dominated ecosystems. Due to their small populations and narrow distributions, these birds also are subject to an increased likelihood of extinction from naturally occurring events such as hurricanes.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for species conservation, establish criteria for downlisting or delisting listed species, and estimate time and cost for implementing recovery measures needed.

The objective of the Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds is to provide a framework for the recovery of 21 species of Hawaiian forest birds so that their protection under the Endangered Species Act is no longer necessary. The desired objectives for each species are to restore populations to levels that allow the long-term survival of the species, to protect enough habitat to support these population levels, and to identify and remove the threats responsible for their endangered status.

The majority of recovery actions identified address threats to the birds' remaining habitat and disease and predation issues. Although efforts will vary from one area to another and by species, controlling feral ungulates that degrade forest habitat, promote the spread of introduced plant species, and

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create breeding sites for disease-carrying mosquitoes and eliminating invasive plants species are common habitat improvement actions specified in the plan. Controlling introduced rodents and feral cats, both of which prey on forest birds, is another common activity. Reducing the number of mosquito breeding sites is needed to control the spread of avian malaria and avian pox. Surveys and monitoring of forest bird populations will occur at least once every 5 years.

Most Hawaiian honeycreepers are now found only in upper elevation rain forests on the islands of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai. Hawaiian honeycreepers evolved from a finch-like ancestor in Hawaii through a process of adaptive radiation into an array of species with special feeding adaptations and habitat preferences.

The draft plan was written by the Hawaiian Forest Bird Recovery Team, which is composed of biologists from the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as avian captive propagation specialists, university scientists, and a representative from Kamehameha Schools, the largest private landowner in Hawaii.

A notice of availability of the Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds for a 60-day public comment period was published in the *Federal Register* on October 16. The plan may be viewed on the Fish and Wildlife Service website at <http://pacificislands.fws.gov>. A printed copy of the draft plan or a compact disk containing the document may be ordered by calling the Service's office in Honolulu at 808 792 9400. Written comments may be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, HI 96850.

Species addressed within the draft recovery plan are:

Common name	Scientific name	Estimated population	Status
O'ahu 'elepaio	<i>Chasiempis sandwichensis ibidis</i>	1,970	Endangered
Kama'ō (Large Kauai thrush)	<i>Myadestes myadestinus</i>	Last seen in 1989	Endangered
Oloma'ō (Molokai thrush)	<i>Myadestes lanaiensis rutha</i>	Last seen in 1988	Endangered
Puaiohi (Small Kauai thrush)	<i>Myadestes palmeri</i>	300	Endangered
'O'ō 'a'a (Kaua'i 'o'o)	<i>Moho braccatus</i>	Last seen in 1987	Endangered
'O'u	<i>Psittirostra psittacea</i>	Last seen in 1979	Endangered
Palila	<i>Loxioides bailleui</i>	3,390	Endangered
Maui parrotbill	<i>Pseudonestor xanthophrys</i>	500	Endangered
Kaua'i 'akialoa	<i>Hemignathus procerus</i>	Last seen in late 1960s	Endangered
Kaua'i nuku pu'u	<i>Hemignathus lucidus hanapepe</i>	Last seen in 1960s	Endangered
Maui nuku pu'u	<i>Hemignathus lucidus affinis</i>	Last seen in 1979	Endangered
'Akiapola'au	<i>Hemignathus munroi</i>	1,163	Endangered
Hawai'i creeper	<i>Oreomystis mana</i>	12,500	Endangered
O'ahu 'alauahio (O'ahu creeper)	<i>Paroreomyza maculata</i>	Last seen in 1985	Endangered

Common name	Scientific name	Estimated population	Status
Kakawahie (Moloka'i creeper)	<i>Paroreomyza flammea</i>	Last seen in 1963	Endangered
Hawai'i 'akepa	<i>Loxops coccineus coccineus</i>	14,000	Endangered
Maui 'akepa	<i>Loxops coccineus ochraceus</i>	Last seen in 1970	Endangered
'Akohekohe	<i>Palmeria dolei</i>	3,800	Endangered
Po'ouli	<i>Melamprosops phaeosoma</i>	3	Endangered
Kaua'i creeper	<i>Oreomystis bairdi</i>	2,000-3,000	Candidate
Bishop's 'o'o	<i>Moho bishopi</i>	Last seen in 1904	Species of Concern

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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