

Forest Birds

O'ahu 'Alauahio or O'ahu Creeper

Paroreomyza maculata



Picture: Rothschild Collection

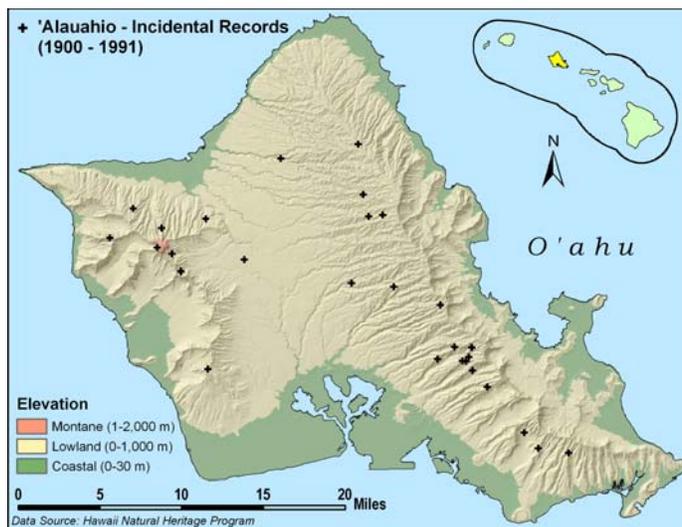
SPECIES STATUS:

Federally listed as Endangered
States listed as Endangered
State recognized as Endemic
NatureServe Heritage Rank G1 – Critically imperiled
IUCN Red List Ranking – Critically endangered
Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Hawaiian
Forest Birds – USFWS 2003

SPECIES INFORMATION: The O'ahu 'alauahio, or O'ahu creeper, is a small, sexually dichromatic, insectivorous Hawaiian honeycreeper (Family: Fringillidae) endemic to O'ahu. Males are olive-green above with bright yellow underparts and forehead, females are grayish-green above and yellowish-white below. The plumage of this species is very similar to that of the O'ahu 'amakahi (*Hemignathus flavus*). The song of the O'ahu 'alauahio has never been described. The O'ahu 'alauahio is insectivorous and forages by methodically searching and probing the bark of large branches and tree trunks. Like other Hawaiian creepers, 'alauahio joins foraging flocks during non-breeding seasons. Little is known about the life history or breeding biology of the species, but it is likely similar to that of the Maui creeper (*P. montana*).

DISTRIBUTION: Unknown. Probably extinct. Historical range is poorly known as it was likely declining when first discovered, but it historically occurred in both the Ko'olau and Wai'anae ranges.

ABUNDANCE: Unknown. Probably extinct. The last well-documented sighting was of two birds in 1985. O'ahu was not included in the Hawai'i Rare Bird Search in the late 1990s, so it is possible that the O'ahu 'alauahio still exists in remote valleys.



LOCATION AND CONDITION OF

KEY HABITAT: Unknown. O'ahu 'alauahio occupied mid-elevation forests of 'ōhi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) and koa (*Acacia koa*). Historically, the species is reported to prefer large koa trees, but they also were reported in areas without koa. All recent observations have occurred in mixed koa/'ōhi'a forest between 300 and 600 meters (1,000 – 2,000 feet). Forests

where the O'ahu 'alauahio historically occurred are largely managed by the State of Hawai'i, the USFWS, or the U. S. Military.

THREATS: Unknown. However, the O'ahu 'alauahio likely were susceptible to the same factors that threaten other native Hawaiian forest birds including: loss and degradation of habitat, predation by introduced mammals, and disease. For O'ahu 'alauahio populations, the following was likely of particular concern:

- Disease. This species' rapid decline, the fact that no habitat above 1,250 meters (4,100 feet) occurs on O'ahu, and that historical accounts report seeing the species only above 350 meters (1,500 feet) elevation suggests disease may have played an important role in the species' decline.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS: Unfortunately, few forest birds remain on O'ahu, and little if any, specific management is directed at forest birds other than the O'ahu 'elepaio (*Chasiempis sandwichensis ibidis*). The O'ahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge in the Ko'olau Range is near some of the most recent sightings, but whether the species still exists in the area is unknown. Should this species be rediscovered, the Rare Bird Recovery Protocol outlined in the USFWS Draft Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds would be implemented, and management in anticipation of that possibility should include:

- Continue protection and management of wildlife sanctuaries and refuges.

MONITORING: Initiate regular forest bird surveys on O'ahu and habitat monitoring. This information is needed to assess the efficacy of habitat management efforts.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES: Research priorities for most Hawaiian forest birds include developing improved methods for controlling rats (*Rattus* spp.) and feral cats (*Felis silvestris*) in native forests, determining the ecological requirements of *Culex* mosquitoes at mid- and high-elevation forests, and developing methods to control mosquito populations. Given that this species is likely extinct, there are no research priorities specific to O'ahu 'alauahio.

References:

Baker PE, Baker H. 2000. Kākāwahie (*Paroreomyza flammea*) and O'ahu alauahio (*Paroreomyza maculata*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 503 (Poole A, Gill F, editors.). Philadelphia, (PA): The Academy of Natural Sciences; and Washington DC: The American Ornithologists' Union.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Draft revised Recovery plan for Hawaiian forest birds. Portland, (OR): U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 428 pp.