

OLOMA'O

Myadestes lanaiensis

Other: Hawaiian Thrush (1983-1985), Moloka'i Thrush, Lana'i Thrush monotypic

native resident, endemic, endangered, presumed extinct

The Oloma'o is the Hawaiian solitaire that resided on Maui Nui but is now probably extinct. It has variously been considered conspecific with solitaires on other islands (see [Kama'o](#) and [Synonymies](#)) but the AOU (1985) split this group into four species, following Pratt (1982). Olson (1996a) and Gill and Donsker (2016) considered the '[Amaui](#)' of O'ahu as a subspecies of Oloma'o but more recent molecular evidence (R. Fleischer, pers. comm.) supports the separation of these two taxa as species. Thus, the Oloma'o occurred historically on Moloka'i, and Lana'i, and was almost certainly the thrush known to native Hawaiians and found in the subfossil record on Maui (see Perkins 1903, *in* Evenhuis 2007:318; Olson and James 1982b; James and Olson 1991), although no historical records from Maui exist.

Bryan (1908) described the Moloka'i population as a different subspecies ("*M.I. rutha*") from the nominate taxon of Lana'i, based supposedly on its grayer throat and breast, and this opinion was followed by many subsequent taxonomists (see [Synonymies](#)). Wilson and Evans (1899) felt the two populations were "identical", Rothschild (1900) noted differences but felt them too weak for subspecific recognition, and Pratt (1982) could find no consistent differences while comparing series of specimens, but Olson and James (1994a) regard *rutha* as probably a valid subspecies. Munro (1944) reported that the Lana'i bird had a weak or no song whereas the Moloka'i bird had a full song, evidence that questionably contributes to subspecies status (*cf.* Pratt 1982, Wakelee and Fancy 1999). Here we consider them the same subspecies.

The best known population of Oloma'o resided on ***Moloka'i***, where at least 52 specimens were collected (Banko 1979, 1980d) and field observations were recorded until 1980. Early naturalists found the thrush to be fairly common and widespread on Moloka'i between 1888 and 1907 (Wilson and Evans 1899, Rothschild 1900, Perkins 1903, Schauinsland 1906 [see *E* 57:76-79], Bryan 1908, Munro 1944). They appeared to be particularly common at Halawa valley at the island's e. end. By the mid-1930s, however, the Oloma'o had become scarce (Munro 1944, Richardson 1949, *E* 23:56). N. Pekelo observed two near Pu'u Haha in Jul 1963 (*E* 24:18, 24:46, 33:68) causing the USFWS (1984d) to switch their categorization of the Oloma'o from "Extinct" to "Endangered" (*E* 32:4-5), a status it currently maintains (USFWS 2006, 2009). The last substantiated observations were of two near Pu'u Waha'ulu in Jul 1975 (Scott et al. 1977), 2 there in summer 1979 (Kepler and Scott 1980), and 3 on Olokui Plateau (between Wailau and Pelekunu valleys) in summer 1980, during the [HFBS](#) (Scott et al. 1986); we consider reports from 1988, 1994, and 2005 (USFWS 2006, 2009; BLI 2016) as unsubstantiated. Based on [HFBS](#) data, a population of 19 individuals was estimated in 1980 (Scott et al. 1986). We presume this population is extinct, although no fieldwork has occurred on near-inaccessible Olokui Plateau since the last observations were made there (Reynolds and Snetsinger 2001) and some still consider it "possibly extinct" (e.g., Scott et al. 2008, USFWS 2009, BLI 2016). Translocating [O'maos](#) from Hawai'i I to Moloka'i has been raised as a possibility (Lieberman and Kuehler 2009).

On *Lana'i*, populations of Oloma'o showed a similar trajectory, being common in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Wilson and Evans 1899; Rothschild 1900; Gregory 1924, Munro 1944, 2007) but declining precipitously between 1923 and 1934, the last year it was reported (Munro *in* Gregory 1935). Munro attributed the decline to the proximity of expanding Lana'i City and to bird diseases brought by poultry and carried to the forests by mosquitos. Wilson (1891a) first described the species from specimens collected on Lana'i in Jun 1888, predating the first descriptions of the Moloka'i population (see [Synonymies](#)). Forty-four specimens of Oloma'o from Lana'i are known from museums worldwide (Banko 1979, 1980d).

Based on Poisson analyses of persistence probabilities using confirmed and unconfirmed records, Elphick et al. (2009) estimated that the Oloma'o went extinct on Lana'i in 1933-1934 and on Moloka'i in 1910 (based on specimens) or 1988 (based on specimens and sight records), with upper limits of 1923 and 2009, respectively.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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