

HAWAI'I 'ELEPAIO

Chasiempis sandwichensis

Other: *Apekepeke* (juvenile)

monotypic

native resident, endemic

The Hawai'i 'Elepaio was formerly a subspecies of 'Elepaio (*C. sandwichensis*) until split by the AOU (2010) based on differences in vocalizations (VanderWerf 2007b), morphology, ecology and behavior (Pratt et al. 1987; Conant et al. 1998; VanderWerf 2013a, 2015), and genetic analyses (VanderWerf et al. 2010). See [Kaua'i 'Elepaio](#) for a nomenclatural history of the three species in the Hawaiian Islands, and see also [Synonymies](#) and [O'ahu 'Elepaio](#) for additional information on the 'elepaios.

C. Clerke's description (*in* King 1779) of a "small bird of the flycatcher kind" appears to be the first post-contact mention of Hawai'i 'Elepaio. Subsequently, early taxonomists split the 'elepaios on Hawai'i into three subspecies, nominate "*C.s. sandwichensis*" restricted to Mt Hualalai and the drier w. slopes of Mauna Loa, "*C.s. ridgwayi*" ranging most extensively from the wetter se. slopes of Mauna Loa to the e. slopes of Mauna Kea and the Kohala Mts, and "*C.s. bryani*" with the most restricted range in the center of the island, limited on the drier sw. slopes of Mauna Kea from 1,900-3,000 m elevation (Pratt 1980b, Banko 1981a). Here we follow VanderWerf et al. (2010), who showed through genetic analyses that the recognition of these subspecies was not warranted.

The Hawai'i 'Elepaio was formerly abundant on Hawai'i I at lower elevations (e.g., Sclater 1881, Perkins 1893, 1903; Wilson and Evans 1899, Henshaw 1902a) but during the first half of the 1900s they declined in both range and population size (Pratt 1980b; Banko 1981a; VanderWerf 2008, 2015). The occurrence of pox in these populations may have been a factor (VanderWerf 2001). During the [HFBS](#), Scott et al. (1986) estimated a population size of 189,500 in 1977-1979, including 63,000 individuals in the range of what was formerly considered subspecies *sandwichensis* (see above), 124,000 individuals of former *ridgwayi*, and 2,500 individuals of former *bryani*, and suggested that the last population be carefully monitored (see also Scott and Kepler 1985, Scott et al. 1985). More recent surveys through the 2000s indicate stable populations in some regions of e. Hawai'i I but decreasing population densities in some sections of the island (*E* 66:55; Reynolds et al. 2003; Camp et al. 2009, 2010a, 2010b; T. Pratt et al. 2010), with an overall population of about 200,000 individuals (Gorresen et al. 2009). During the 2000s-mid 2010s, Hawai'i 'Elepaio remained fairly common in upper-elevation forests and as low as 300 m elevation, showing no significant trend in 1972-2014 according to Volcano [Christmas Bird Count](#) data ([Graph](#)). Single-location high counts during 2010-2016 were of 22 in the Ola'a Forest Reserve upslope of Volcano 19 Dec 2015, 20 at Pu'u' La'au GMA 8 Mar 2015, and numerous counts of 10-15 at these locations and at Hakalau NWR and in Kipukas near the Saddle Road; the great majority of counts during this period were of <10.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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