

'AKIKIKI

Oreomystis bairdi

Other: Kaua'i Creeper (<1997)

monotypic

native resident, endemic, endangered

Although early naturalists separated the "creepers" in the Hawaiian Islands (on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui, and Hawai'i I) into as many as five genera and six species (e.g., Perkins 1901, 1903, *in* Evenhuis 2007:380; *E* 15:11-14; [Synonymies](#)), Amadon (1950) decided it was "more convenient" to consider them all as a single species, "*Loxops maculata*," the "Creeper" (e.g., Berger 1972). Pratt, however, reviewed the systematics of these taxa in 1979 (Pratt 1992a, 2001; see also Raikow 1977, Johnson et al. 1989, Pratt 2009) and concluded that they should be re-split into Perkins' original five species and two genera, *Oreomystis* of Hawai'i and Kaua'i (where *O. bairdi* is endemic) and *Parareomyza* of O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, and Maui (with subspecies of a single species from Lana'i and Maui; see [Synonymies](#)). Pratt's treatment is now widely supported (Lerner et al. 2011, Pratt 2014, AOU 2015), although see [Hawai'i Creeper](#) for generic placement of that species. *Oreomystis* and probably *Parareomyza* have more-recently been viewed as outlying basal taxa, unrelated to the other thin-billed Hawaiian honeycreepers (Johnson et al. 1989; Tarr and Fleischer 1995; Fleischer et al. 1998, 2001; Freed 1999; Lovette et al. 2002; James 2004; Olson 2009; Reding et al. 2009; Lerner et al. 2011).

Based on specimens of the 'Akikiki collected by the Knudsens, Stejneger (1887a) first named the genus "*Oreomyza*", but this name had been assigned earlier that year to a crane-fly, so he changed it to *Oreomystis* (Stejneger 1903; see [Synonymies](#)). Stejneger (1889) also described "*O. wilsoni*" from Kaua'i but this turned out to be based on juveniles of *O. bairdi* (Wilson and Evans 1899, Rothschild 1900, Foster et al. 2000). Banko (1979) summarizes 93 specimens of 'Akikiki found in collections at the time.

Early naturalists (Wilson and Evans 1899; Rothschild 1900; Bryan and Seale 1901, 1915; Perkins 1903; summarized by Banko 1984b) considered the 'Akikiki common at elevations of 300 m and upwards, especially on the S and W slopes of *Kaua'i*, but by the 1930s-1940s the 'Akikiki appears to have withdrawn to elevations above 900 m (Munro 1944; *E* 2:52, 7:39). They were found commonly in upper elevations in 1960 by Richardson and Bowles (1964) but by 1968 there was some indication of decline (*E* 29:19-22; Berger 1970, 1972, 1981). Surveys conducted in 1968-2008 indicate further significant declines in numbers and contraction of range, away from Kokee SP and into the central portion of Alakai Plateau. Sincock et al. (USFWS 1983c) estimated 6,800 remaining in 1968-1973 and Scott et al (1986) found similar densities in a part of Sincock's study area during the [HFBS](#) in 1981, but by 2000, Foster et al. (2000, 2004) estimated that < 1,500 remained and were confined to a 36 km² area (reduced from an 88 km² area estimated in 1988), and by 2007 this estimate had fallen to 1,312 birds (USFWS 2007b; see also Walther 1995, Conant et al. 1998, Denny 1999, VanderWerf and Roberts 2008). Camp et al. (*in* Gorresen et al. 2009) estimated a population of about 3,500 in 2008 but Paxton et al. (2016) estimated that populations had declined by 71% during 1981-2012 and 7% during 2000-2012, to an estimated 468 individuals (range 231-916) in 2012. Based on these declining populations, the 'Akikiki became a candidate for State and Federal Endangered Species status in the 2000s (USFWS 2006, 2007b; see Trombulak et al. 2006) and was listed as an Endangered Species in 2010 (VanderWerf 2013a, Hammond et al. 2015, BLI 2016). Nesting success during 2012-2014 was high,

suggesting that low survivorship may be the primary cause of these declines (Hammond et al. 2015), perhaps as related to avian diseases. By 2015 a captive propagation program had been initiated and intensive studies were being undertaken on basic biology, movement patterns, population genetics, demography, and predation control as related to conservation management (Crampton 2016). During 2010-2016 small numbers (≤ 5 per day) were being found in the interior Alaka'i Plateau of Koke'e SP.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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