

'ULA-'AI-HAWANE

Ciridops anna

native resident, endemic, extinct

monotypic

Few Hawaiian birds have engendered as much intrigue and relative attention as the 'Ula-'ai-hawane, known from only five specimens of largely undetermined origin (Banko 1979, 1987d; Olson 2012), collected on Hawai'i I. Judge Sanford B. Dole, who would later become Governor of the Territory of Hawaii, first described the 'Ulu-'ai-hawane based on one of two specimens (BPBM 19; Olson 1994) in the Mills collection (see Manning 1978, 1979), collected in 1859 or later, presumably near or above Hilo, *Hawai'i I* (Henshaw 1902a). Dole (1879) named it "*Fringilla anna*" after his wife, Anna (or possibly his cousin by the same name; Olson 2012; or maybe both), and Newton (1892; cf. Wilson and Evans 1899, Olson 2012), applied the generic name *Ciridops*, because its "peculiar combination of colors producing a most harmonious and elegant effect" (Dole 1879) reminded him of North America's Painted Bunting, *Emberiza ciridis* (now *Passerina ciris*); see [Synonymies](#). Earlier, Dole (1876) had listed the species without scientific name among birds taken back to Philadelphia for a Centennial display (Olson 1994, 2012). The second specimen, considered erroneously for some time as a co-type (Olson 2012), was passed from the Mills collection to Charles R. Bishop (founder of BPBM), to Wilson, to Rothschild, and is now at AMNH (459008; Olson 1994, 2012).

Two additional specimens, accompanying a small collection of unknown origin (Bangs 1910), wound up at MCZ in 1870, and became known as the "Harvard specimens" of 'Ulu-'ai-hawane (now MCZ 10995 and AMNH 230275). Olson (1992b) supplied an intriguing hypothesis that this collection represented the only bird specimens saved by William T. Brigham, first curator and director of BPBM, and that they may have come from Moloka'i. Brigham had mentioned to Dole (1869) that he had collected a new bird on Moloka'i "which the natives considered a 'malihini', or stranger...", and it was hypothesized that the 'Ulu-'ai-hawane specimens could have referred to this new bird. However, later evidence suggests that Brigham more likely purchased these two specimens from the Mills collection in 1864-1865, and that they therefore may also have been collected above Hilo, Hawai'i (Olson 2012). The fifth and final specimen of 'Ulu-'ai-hawane from Hawai'i was secured by Palmer's Polynesian helpers on 2 Feb 1892 near the headwaters of the Awini in the Kohala Mts (Rothschild 1900), for which he may have paid his helpers the (at the time) large sum of \$50.00 (Olson 2012). Palmer had made it a quest to secure a specimen while there (Munro 1944), but he never observed one himself. Now preserved as a study specimen and trunk in spirits at BMNH (1939.12.9.58), it proved a key specimen in the quest to understand the history and evolution of the Drepaninae through myology and osteology (e.g., Perkins 1901, 1903; Amadon 1950; Bock 1972; Richards & Bock 1973; Raikow 1977; James and Olson 1991; Olson 2012).

The 'Ulu-'ai-hawane was well known to Polynesians, its name essentially meaning "red bird eating hawani [loulou] palms" and this and other third-hand reports prompted Wilson and Evans (1899) and Perkins (1903) to predict that it had been widespread on Hawai'i I (at least the Kona, Hilo, and Kohala districts) in upper elevations where the native *Pritchardia* (loulou) palm trees were found (cf. Perkins *in* Evenhuis 2007:294, 299). Other than a few second-hand or unsubstantiated reports (Wilson and Evans 1899, Munro

1944; *E* 23:55-58; Olson 2012), the most credible being a second-hand report, from a friend of Wilson's, of observations in the Keanakolu region on the NE slopes of Mauna Kea (Wilson and Evans 1899), in about 1892, the species was never detected again in Hawaii. 'Ulu-'ai-hawane is known from the subfossil record of Moloka'i and congeners have been found on O'ahu and Kaua'i (Olson and James 1982b, James and Olson 1991, Olson 2012), indicating that the species was once more widespread. It may have been patchily distributed, reflecting the patchy distribution of loulu palm species in the Hawaiian Islands (Olson 2012).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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