

## MAUI 'AKEPA

## *Loxops ochraceus*

Other: 'Akepeu'ie

monotypic

### **native resident, endemic, probably extinct**

The 'akepas are a relatively distinct species-group of four taxa among Hawaiian honeycreepers, sharing the genus *Loxops* with the [Hawai'i Creeper](#); see [Hawai'i 'Akepa](#) and [Synonymies](#) for more on the taxonomic history of genus *Loxops* and species within. Specimens of Maui 'Akepa were first collected by Otto Finsch (1880), above Olinda, *Maui*; Finsch considered it the same as Dole's (1879) "*Hypoloxia aurea*" from Hawai'i I (see [Synonymies](#)). Palmer next secured a series of 20 specimens in 1892, upon which Rothschild (1893g), unaware of Finsch's name, described it as a new species "*Loxops ochracea*". Wilson and Evans (1899) and Rothschild (1900) sparred a bit on the naming, Rothschild ultimately pointing out that Dole's "*aurea*" referred to the Hawai'i 'Akepa and could not be applied to the Maui taxon (see also Stejneger 1900, Olson 1994, [Synonymies](#)). Banko (1979) and Lepson and Freed (1997) note the existence of 62 specimens of Maui 'Akepa, the last ones collected by Henshaw (1902a) near Ukulele 10-15 Jun 1901. Most specimens appear to have been secured at 1,000-2,000 m elevations above Olinda, although some may have been taken by Palmer as far E as Kipahulu Valley. Perkins (1903) considered it locally abundant on the northwest slopes of Haleakala in 1894; there are no records for the W Maui Mts.

Subsequent documentation of Maui 'Akepas include sight records only, and we are unsure how far into the 20th century it survived. Reflecting this uncertainty, Elphick et al. (2009) estimated that it was extirpated in 1905-1987 with an upper limit of 1919-2004. Munro (*in* Gregory 1928, 1936) searched for them in 1928 and 1936 without success, and based on the lack of reports, the species was listed as endangered by the USFWS in 1970 and by the State of Hawaii in 1982 (USFWS 1982c, 1983d, 1984d, 2006).

From 1950 to 1995 there were scattered reports of Maui 'Akepa from the upper slopes of Haleakala. Over 100 individuals reported in 1961 (*E* 22:20) were questioned by E. Bryan (*E* 22:21) but remaining observations include descriptions of 1-3 individuals from experienced observers into at least the early 1980s (e.g., Richards and Baldwin 1953, Casey 1973, Scott and Sincock 1977, Conant 1981, Engilis 1990), and at least some of these could well be correct. Based on observations of 8 individuals at four locations during the [HFBS](#) in 1980 (later questioned by USFWS 2006), Scott et al. (1986) estimated a population of about 230 individuals with a patchy relict distribution, perhaps concentrated at 1100-2100 m elevation in and W of the Waikamoi watershed (see also Scott et al. 2008). Other observations in the 1970-1980s occurred near the junction of Kipahulu Valley and Haleakala Crater. Since the 1980s several reports have been by observers spending one to a few days in the field whereas intensive surveys (Baker 2001, Reynolds and Snetsinger 2001, Simon et al. 2002, USFWS 2006) have failed to confirm them, and we consider these reports as unsubstantiated. We presume that the Maui 'Akepa if it survived far into the 20th century at all, may now be extinct, or close to it, the

victim of diseases and habitat deterioration resulting from cattle and pigs (Scott and Kepler 1985, Scott et al. 1985, VanderWerf 2013a).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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