

## MAUI NUKUPU'U

## *Hemignathus affinis*

Other: Nukupu'u (< 2015)

monotypic

### native resident, extinct

The nukupu'us collectively consist of three taxa, on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui, that have largely been considered subspecies until 2015 when, following Pratt (2005, 2014), they were split into three species by the AOU (2015). See [O'ahu Nukupu'u](#) for more information. On *Maui*, Finsch (1880) indicated that "*Hemignathus obscurus*", perhaps indicating Maui Nukupu'u as distinct from [Hawai'i 'Amakihi](#), was the most abundant species on the island in July 1879, but other early naturalists indicated that it was the least common of Maui's native birds during the 1890s (e.g., Perkins *in* Evenhuis 2007:202-208). The first 13 specimens of Maui Nukupu'u were collected by Palmer at about 1,500 m elevation above Olinda, in Aug 1892 (Banko 1984c); based on this series, Rothschild (1893g) gave it full species status (as distinct from the earlier described O'ahu and Kaua'i nukupu'us) and named it *H. affinis*. An additional 20 specimens were secured by Perkins in 1894 and 1896 (Banko 1979, 1984c). Palmer collected them as high as 2,150 m elevation (Rothschild 1900), and Perkins (1903) considered it to be fairly common (up to 12 observed in a day) between 1,200 and 1,500 m. Both collectors regarded the species' range to be rather restricted, to a small area on the nw. slope of Mt. Haleakala. Henshaw (1902a) may have been the last ornithologist to observe the Maui Nukupu'u in the field, noting that they were generally confined to Maui's upper-elevation forests in Jun 1901.

Munro (in Gregory 1929) and Richards and Baldwin (1953) failed to find Maui Nukupu'us despite careful searches. Pratt and Pyle (2000) noted an additional 27 sight records between 1967 and 1996 (e.g., Banko 1968, Conant and Stemmermann 1980, Scott et al. 1986, Reynolds and Snetsinger 2001; *E* 37:107, 41:59, 41:77, 44:6, 50:68; *HFW* 9[3]:3) which they considered unsubstantiated. Confusion with the similar 'amakihi, which can sometimes have abnormal bills, seems to be the primary source of misidentifications of nukupu'us (Pratt and Pyle 2000; also, *cf.* Olson and James 1994b regarding the interpretations of Cassin). Based on Poisson analyses of persistence probabilities using confirmed and unconfirmed records, Elphick et al. (2009) estimated that the [Kaua'i](#) and/or Maui nukupu'us went extinct in 1901, with an upper limit of 1906; see also Scott et al. (2008) and Roberts et al. (2010). Although proclaimed "extinct" by the USFWS in 1966 (Banko 1968), the Maui Nukupu'u was subsequently listed as endangered by the USFWS in 1967 and by the State of Hawaii in 1982, and it continues to be so listed (USFWS 1983c, 1984d, 2006). We consider the Maui Nukupu'u extinct.

There are no substantiated records of nukupu'us for the island of Hawai'i, although a much larger congener is known from the fossil record (James and Olson 1991, 2003; Olson and James 1994b; Burney et al. 2001; Pratt et al. 2001). A specimen collected during the U.S. Exploring Expedition in 1840-1841, along with Peale's (1848) account of "*Hemignathus lucidus*" on Hawai'i, caused Olson and James (1994b) to speculate on the species' historical presence there, but the specimen turned out to be of the O'ahu subspecies (R. Fleischer *in* Pratt et al. 2001, James and Olson 2003). van Riper (1982a, 1982b) noted a bird he thought to be a nukupu'u in the Kohala Mts 29 Jun 1971 (originally considered an [Akiapola'au](#); *E* 34:1), but as with other 20th-century sightings

(T.K Pratt and Pyle 2000), we consider this record unsubstantiated, perhaps a [Hawai'i 'Amakihi](#) with a deformed bill.

### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

### [Literature cited](#)

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