



SERVING HAWAII

FROM MAUKA TO
MAKAI



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ALOHA FRIENDS,

For the past few years, we have created holiday cards showcasing the grand beauty of Hawai'i – our beautiful beaches, lush mountain ranges, and towering waterfalls. This year, we invite you to turn your gaze to our nahele (forests), to discover some of the smallest of our residents, our threatened and endangered forest birds.

Once abundant, Hawai'i's forest birds have experienced devastating losses due to habitat destruction, disease, predation, and other factors. Hawai'i has been called the endangered species and extinction capital of the world. Well over half of identified native bird species have become extinct since humans inhabited Hawai'i, and many remaining species are dangerously close to extinction.

Fortunately, there are several groups working tirelessly to save these precious birds. Our hope in our holiday greeting this year is to spotlight the exquisite beauty and resilience of our remaining Hawai'i forest birds, and to inspire you to champion their survival and population recovery, as well. One day, perhaps Hawai'i's skies will be rich again with their beauty and song.

THIS IS 'Alauahio

Photo: Zach Pezzillo

THIS IS 'Elepaio

Photo: Zach Pezzillo

HONU'APO
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Photo: Bryan Shirota

'i'iwi

VULNERABLE

Known for its striking red color and black wings and tail, the 'i'iwi thrives on nectar from various flowers, particularly those of the 'ōhi'a tree. 'i'iwi are important pollinators for the 'ōhi'a. This beautiful bird can be found on Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kaua'i, but their numbers are decreasing, and the species is listed as threatened by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The 'i'iwi are vulnerable to mosquito-borne disease like avian malaria, a disease that can kill a bird within days of a single bite from an infected mosquito.



Photo: Zach Pezzillo

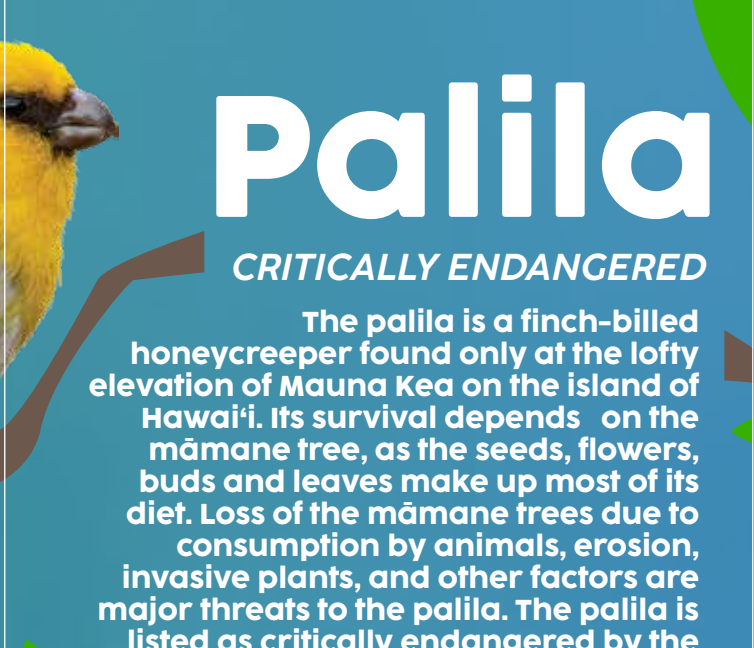


Photo: Bryan Shirota

Kiwikiu

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

The kiwikiu, or Maui parrotbill, measures about five to six inches long and uses its stout bill to crush, tear, and dig at the bark of trees and shrubs to find insect larvae, its favorite prey. They mate for life and care for their young for up to eighteen months. Once abundant on both Maui and Moloka'i, the kiwikiu is now found only on Haleakalā on Maui. Some of the greatest threats to the kiwikiu are avian malaria, predation, and habitat loss. The kiwikiu is considered critically endangered, and is at risk of becoming extinct within the next three years.



Palila

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

The palila is a finch-billed honeycreeper found only at the lofty elevation of Mauna Kea on the island of Hawai'i. Its survival depends on the māmane tree, as the seeds, flowers, buds and leaves make up most of its diet. Loss of the māmane trees due to consumption by animals, erosion, invasive plants, and other factors are major threats to the palila. The palila is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), but efforts are being made to restore māmane trees to Mauna Kea to help the population recover.

'Akiapōlā'au

ENDANGERED

The 'akiapōlā'au uses its unique sickle-like bill to peck into the bark of koa and māmane trees to find its favorite food, longhorn beetle larvae. It then fishes out its meal with the hook-like portion of its bill to enjoy its feast. This stocky honeycreeper is endemic to Hawai'i Island, and is state and federally listed as endangered. Like so many of our forest birds, it is susceptible to habitat loss, mosquito-borne disease, and predation.

Photo: Bryan Shirota



'Ākepa

ENDANGERED

The 'ākepa is one of the smallest of Hawai'i's forest birds. Now extinct on O'ahu and Maui, it is only found on Hawai'i Island. The 'ākepa is a cavity nester, finding its home in holes in 'ōhi'a and koa trees instead of building nests. They use their bills to open seed pods and buds to find insects and spiders to eat, or nectar to drink from 'ōhi'a and other flowers. The endangered 'ākepa faces threats from habitat loss, mosquito-borne disease, and predation by rats. Groups like the Friends of Hakalau Forest are working to conserve their habitat and protect the species.