

## ‘AKEKE’E

## *Loxops caeruleirostris*

Other: 'Akepa (< 1991), *O'u holowai*; Kaua'i 'Akepa

monotypic

### **native resident, endemic**

The 'Akeke'e has always been found chiefly at higher elevations (> 1000 m) only on *Kaua'i* and, until very recently, has been considered fairly common to common. It was first collected by Wilson in 1888 above Makaweli and described as a new genus (Wilson 1889a). Rothschild (1900) and others correctly placed it with *Loxops*, and Amadon (1950) considered it conspecific with 'Akepas, but it is now universally considered a full species (Pratt 1989b, 2005; AOU 1991, 1998; Tarr and Fleisher 1995; Lepson and Pratt 1997; see [Synonymies](#)). Wilson noted that it was unknown to other collectors on Kaua'i (e.g., Knudsen; *cf.* not noted by Stejneger 1887a, 1889) and that it therefore must be uncommon (Wilson and Evans 1899). But other early naturalists (Rothschild 1900, Perkins 1903, Bryan and Seale 1915, Munro 1944) considered it numerous and occurring in flocks, once the challenging terrain of higher-elevation forests was penetrated (Banko 1979 summarizes information on 93 specimens known at the time). They were occasionally reported from below 1000 m, perhaps having been driven down by storms (Perkins 1903).

As with many other Hawaiian forest birds, there was a dearth of 'Akeke'e observations between 1901 (Bryan and Seale 1901) and 1940 but it was found to be common again during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, albeit with a slight withdrawal in range to higher elevations (e.g., Richardson and Bowles 1964, Eddinger 1972, Walther 1995, Jacobi and Atkinson 1995, Lepson and Pratt 1997, Conant et al. 1998; *E* 22:1-3, 26:30-31; summarized by Banko 1984b). Sincock et al. (USFWS 1983c) estimated a total population of 5100 in 1968-1973, including a small isolated population of 17 birds on private lands atop Mt. Makaleha. Scott et al (1986) estimated 1700 during the [HFBS](#) in 1981, in an area where only 526 were estimated by the USFWS (1983c), Denny (1999) considered them common, and Foster et al. (2004) noted significant density increases between 1981 and 2000. However, populations apparently underwent declines in both size and range during the second half of the 2000s (USFWS 2007, Camp et al. *in* Gorresen et al. 2009), prompting state and USFWS officials to propose its listing as an Endangered Species in 2008, and for it to be listed as critically endangered by BLI (2009). Population estimates by DOFAW and USGS were of 3536 birds in 2007 (USFWS 2007), down 30% from those obtained in 1983, but populations were estimated at about 7,900 in 2008 (Camp et al. *in* Gorresen et al. 2009).

### [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

### [Literature cited](#)

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