

KAKAWAHIE

Paroreomyza flammea

Other: Moloka'i Creeper (<1997)

monotypic

native resident, endemic, presumed extinct

The Kakawahie, endemic to *Moloka'i*, was described by Wilson (1889a) based on three specimens that he collected in Jun 1880 while lost in the fog above Kala'e, although it is possible that individuals had already been collected by the local R. Meyer family as early as 20 Dec 1870 (Banko 1979, 1984b). Early collectors and naturalists (Wilson and Evans 1899, Rothschild 1900, Perkins 1903, Schauinsland 1906) found them to be common in the forested areas in the valleys and ridges of the island, including down to "a few hundred feet above the sea" in Pelekunu Valley (Perkins *in* Evenhuis 2007:161). At least 134 specimens were collected overall, through 1907, when Bryan (1908) and Munro (1944, *E* 5:24) found them "still quite common" and collected 36 specimens between 9 Mar and 4 Jun (Banko 1979). The name Kakawahie means firewood, perhaps because of the male's brilliant flame color (Henshaw 1902a) or because its chip notes resembled the chopping of wood (Wilson and Evans 1899). See ['Akikiki](#) and [Synonymies](#) for the taxonomic history of this species.

There were few further observations from Moloka'i during the 20th century to document the decline of Kakawahie. Munro surveyed the island for birds for a month in 1936 and failed to find it (Munro 1944, *E* 7:62, 24:29-30, *in* Gregory 1928) but he evidently did not get into the upper elevation forests as 1-2 ['Apapane](#) were the only native forest birds recorded. W. Donagho reports a second-hand record for the upper Pelekunu Valley in 1936 (*E* 23:56), whereas Richardson (1949) along with D. Woodside failed to locate them on a 5-day trip to Olokui Plateau and upper Wailau Valley in Feb 1948. The last records of this species were by N. Pekelo, who describes two birds near Pepeopae Peak 21 May 1961, three at an unknown locality 8 Jun 1962, two heard and one seen at unknown localities 29 Apr 1963, and two pair between Waikolo and Pelekunu valleys in late Apr-early Jun (probably May) 1963 (Pekelo 1963, 1964). The combination of plumage and behavioral notes are sufficient to rule out other Moloka'i birds and we consider these as the last substantiated records of the species; a mention for a sighting as late as 1967 (*E* 37:107) appears to be in error. Searches in 1972 (Pratt 1973), 1975 (Scott et al. 1977), 1979-1980 (Scott et al. 1986), and 1988 and 1995 (P.E. Baker and Baker 2000, Reynolds and Snetsinger 2001) failed to turn up Kakawahie and we presume it is now extinct. Based on Poisson analyses of persistence probabilities using confirmed and unconfirmed records, Elphick et al. (2009) estimated that it went extinct in 1910-1969, with upper limits of 1920-1985. The Kakawahie was listed as endangered by the USFWS in 1970 and by the State of Hawaii in 1982 (USFWS 1984d, 2006).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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