

KIOEA

Chaetoptila angustipluma

native resident, endemic, extinct

monotypic

This mysterious honeyeater is one of the largest and least-known of the Hawaiian landbirds known from historic times. Only four specimens from *Hawai'i I* exist in four widespread collections (Banko 1979, 1981a; Sykes et al. 2000), one collected and described by Peale (1848) in Nov 1840 (USNM A15771), perhaps in drier forests near the saddle between Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea (Perkins 1903), and the other three (BPBM 17, AMNH 458995, MCZ 27/mel/6/a/1) collected by Mills or his collectors (see Manning 1978, 1979), perhaps in the Ola'a tract between Volcano and Hilo (Wilson and Evans 1899, Rothschild 1900, Henshaw 1902a; but see Perkins 1903). The label of one of Mill's specimens (at MCZ) has "ca. 1859" written on it, indicating the last substantiated record of this species' existence. Peale (1848) noted that it was rare.

Subfossil evidence of Kioeas has also been found near Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a (Giffin 1993), and of it or congeners on O'ahu and Maui (Olson and James 1982b, James 1987, James and Olson 1991). This and the notation by Peale (1848) that it "frequents the woody districts...generally found about those trees which are in flower" suggests that it was dispersant on Hawai'i. Cassin (1855, 1858) described its unusual hair-like plumage ("*Chaetoptila*", Sclater 1871; see [Synonymies](#)), remarked that it was one of the most interesting ornithological discoveries of the United States Exploring Expedition, and regretted that only a single specimen had been secured at the time. It had been debated whether or not Kioea represented an independent colonization or that it split from the 'o'o's after their colonization (Munro 1927, Mayr 1943, Amadon 1950, Fleisher and McIntosh 2001); Amadon considered it to be closely related to *Gymnomyza* of Fiji and Samoa, and further believed that the o'o's may have evolved from the same invasion, despite a superficial resemblance to *Prothemodora*, the Tui of New Zealand. But Fleisher et al. (2008) showed that it is a basal taxon with the 'o'os (*i.e.*, it and the 'o'os derive from a single colonization event) that colonized Hawaii from N America 14-17 million years before present, and has diverged enough to be considered a unique family (Mohoidae, see [Kaua'i 'O'o](#)).

Dole (1879) attributed the Kioea to Moloka'i as well as Hawai'i I, perhaps due to confusion with the Bristle-thighed Curlew, also known as "*Kioea*" (long-legged) by native Hawaiians (Munro 1944, Banko 1981a), or perhaps simply as a typographical or other error. There is otherwise no evidence for this species occurrence on Moloka'i or any other Hawaiian Island in historic times.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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