

O'AHU 'AKIALOA

Akialoa ellisiana

Other: 'Akialoa (<1983), Hawaiian Akialoa (1983-1997),
Greater 'Akialoa (1997-2015), *Kipi*

monotypic

native resident, endemic, extinct

The 'akialoas collectively consist of four taxa, found historically on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Lana'i, and Hawai'i, that have variously been considered one, two, three, or four species (see [Lesser 'Akialoa](#) and [Synonymies](#)). Many authors in the 20th century considered them four subspecies of one or two species within genus *Hemignathus*, often with the Kaua'i population split and the other three lumped into one polytypic species. But the AOU (1997) instead split the Hawai'i population from the other three, into Lesser 'Akialoa and Greater 'Akialoa, respectively. Based on additional evidence (Olson and James 1995; Pratt and Pratt 2001; James and Olson 2003; Pratt 2005, 2014), and with some uncertainty, the AOU (2015) split all four populations into separate species and into genus *Akialoa*, retaining the name [Lesser 'Akialoa](#) for the Hawai'i population while recognizing the O'ahu 'Akialoa, [Kaua'i 'Akialoa](#), and [Maui-nui 'Akialoa](#) as species.

The O'ahu 'Akialoa was probably never common, having been missed by Bloxam (1827a, 1827b), Wilson (1890a), and several other collectors on *O'ahu* during the 1800s (Olson and James 1994a; *E* 6:33). Deppe and Townsend (see Townsend 1839) found the bird in Nu'uuanu Valley in 1837, collecting several specimens of which three are still known, the type and two more-recently found that were mislabeled as other 'akialoas (Olson and James 1995, Lepson and Johnston 2000). These specimens were likely collected partially or entirely during 11-15 Jan 1837 during an expedition by Deppe and Townsend to Nu'uuanu Valley in which many birds were collected (Townsend 1839). Perkins (1903, 1913, *in* Evenhuis 2007:103-104; see also Banko 1984c) observed two O'ahu 'Akialoas along a ridge above Nu'uuanu in Oct 1892. He shot one but it fell over a steep edge and the specimen could not be located. We consider this as the last substantiated observation of O'ahu 'Akialoa. Subsequent observations, including one on Mt Ka'ala in 1935 (*E* 23:55), singles on the Kipapa Trail about 4 km above Mililani in 1936 and 1937 (Munro 1944, *E* 23:55), and one e. of Mt. Palehua above Makakilo 19 Feb 1939 (Northwood 1940a; description on file BPBM) are considered insufficient to extend the known existence of the O'ahu 'Akialoa beyond 1892, but given the survival of the Kaua'i 'Akialoa into the 1960s, it is possible that one or more of these sightings are valid. It or congeners have been identified in lowland fossil and subfossil deposits of O'ahu (Olson and James 1982b, James 1987, Hearty et al. 2005).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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