

KAU'A'I 'AKIALOA

Akialoa stejnegeri

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

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. But the AOU (1997) then split the Hawai'i population and lumped the other three populations, 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 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 Kaua'i 'Akialoa was the best known of the 'akialoas, persisting on *Kaua'i* through the 1960s. See Olson and James (1988, 1995) for the naming of this subspecies *stejnegeri* (Wilson) as opposed to "*procerus*" (Cabanis) recorded in most previous and some current literature ([Synonymies](#)). After being collected by the Knudsens sometime before 1888 (Stejneger 1887a, 1889) and named by Wilson (1890a), the distribution of the Kaua'i 'Akialoa was well-documented by naturalists in the late 19th century (Wilson and Evans 1899, Rothschild 1900, Perkins 1903, Munro 1944; reviewed by Banko 1984c), who collected some 115-120 specimens (Banko 1979, Lepson and Johnston 2000). They regarded 'akialoas as being fairly commonly distributed throughout the forests, from sea level to 900 m and above. However, they also noted many individuals with swollen feet, tapeworms, and other maladies suggesting a widespread epizootic and, by Apr-May 1900, Bryan and Seale (1901) recorded none below 1,050 m elevation.

As with so many other Hawaiian landbirds there are few subsequent records for the first half of the 20th century, when ornithological exploration was on hiatus. Munro (1944) failed to find it during visits to unspecified localities on Kaua'i after 1920 but individuals were observed at an unknown locality in 1936 (*E* 5:32) and in Wai'aleae Valley E of Waimea Canyon on 6 Oct 1941 (*E* 2:52 5:32). A small flock of 'akialoas was reported by Valdemar L. Knudsen (grandson of the collector) at an unknown locality in 1957, and two were observed (one collected) near the upper end of the Koai'e Stream in the Alakai Swamp 19-20 July 1960 (Richardson and Bowles 1964). The last substantiated observations were made in this same area in Mar 1965 (*E* 26:71) and along the Pihei Trail near the north edge of Alaka'i Swamp 12 Apr 1969 (*cf.* Conant et al. 1998, Reynolds and Snetsinger 2001). Sincock et al. (USFWS 1983c) failed to find 'akialoa during over 500 days of extensive fieldwork over all of Kaua'i in 1968-1975 (*E* 37:107) and subsequent targeted searches through 2005, including the [HFBS](#), were also unsuccessful (Scott et al. 1986, Conant et al. 1998, Reynolds and Snetsinger 2001, USFWS 2006); a reported observation from 1973 (HAS 1978-1986) appears to be an error. A few sight records in the 1970-1990s are unsubstantiated (likely of other species), and we presume the Kaua'i

'Akialoa is extinct. Based on Poisson analyses of persistence probabilities using confirmed and unconfirmed records, Elphick et al. (2009) estimated that the Greater 'Akialoa went extinct on Kaua'i in 1967-1973, with upper limits of 1984-1985; see also Scott et al. 2008. It was listed as endangered by the USFWS in 1967 and by the State of Hawaii in 1982; it continues to be listed in the extremely remote chance that individuals are rediscovered (USFWS 2006).

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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