

‘Akikiki (Kaua‘i creeper)



Distribution

Once common on the Alaka‘i plateau and in other upper elevation forests on the island of Kaua‘i, ‘akikiki populations began to rapidly decline in the early 2000s. These population declines match studies showing increasing malaria prevalence in native forest birds and changes in climate favorable to mosquitoes. Furthermore, field biologists are observing mosquitoes throughout the natural range of ‘akikiki where historically, mosquitoes did not occur. Wild populations are now restricted to high elevation ‘ōhi‘a forests on the Alaka‘i plateau.

Behavior

In captivity, ‘akikiki have shown some breeding success (six chicks successfully fledged by parents), but the population has remained mostly static. Previous methods emphasized parent-rearing to assure chicks are more behaviorally fit for release. However, new breeding efforts and methods will focus more on hand-rearing to increase population size.

Current Status

Estimated wild population in 2021 is 45 individuals. In addition, there are 43 individuals in captivity. Estimated year of extinction for the wild population is 2022 to 2025, most likely 2023.

Link to ECOS <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6617>