



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

DAWN CHANG
CHAIRPERSON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2024

“MAKAHIKI O NĀ MANU NAHELE: YEAR OF THE FOREST BIRDS”
***Governor Green’s Proclamation launches year-long celebration of Hawai‘i’s
unique, imperiled birds***

(HONOLULU) – The year 2024 is for the birds, thanks to a proclamation signed by Governor Josh Green, M.D., today.

Forest birds arrived in Hawai‘i millions of years before the arrival of people and, in some cases, co-evolved with Hawaiian forests to provide critical services like pollination and seed dispersal. The proclamation recognizes the fundamental role these birds play in Hawai‘i’s ecology and culture, and kicks off a year-long campaign including events, volunteer opportunities, and new classroom materials.

“We are all living in bird habitat,” remarked Governor Green during the signing ceremony at the Hawai‘i State Capitol. “Native forest birds are a fundamental part of what makes Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i.”

Dawn Chang, Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, noted that “these manu or birds are part of our connection to place, our mo‘olelo, and part of who we are. Protecting Hawaiian forest birds is among our greatest kuleana.”

Of 84 Hawaiian forest bird species recorded in the fossil record or by observation, 58 have gone extinct and will never be seen again. Of the 26 species remaining, 24 are designated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at risk levels ranging from “vulnerable” to “critically endangered.” Four species of honeycreeper (the ‘akikiki, ‘akeke‘e, kiwikiu, and ‘ākohekohe) are considered at risk of extinction in the next 10 years or less without substantial conservation efforts.

Despite the dire situation, Friday's event was a celebration that focused on new signs of hope. In 2023, conservation partners implemented, the Incompatible Insect Technique (IIT) in Hawai'i, a new tool to control mosquitoes that carry deadly avian malaria. Combining mosquito reduction with predator control and fencing is thought to be the best chance for Hawai'i's forest birds to persist into the future.

The event was attended by partners including the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bishop Museum, The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i Audubon Society, and the Kaua'i and Maui Forest Bird Recovery Projects. These organizations and additional partners, along with Kamehameha Schools, developed the year-long "Makahiki o Nā Manu Nahele" campaign to raise awareness and engage students of all ages in caring for forest birds. A new campaign website at dlnr.hawaii.gov/dofaw/manu includes:

- detailed species profiles for Hawaiian forest birds, including photos of extinct birds from collections at Bishop Museum;
- forest bird audio mixes for Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i Island, allowing users to imagine how restored, bird-filled forests would sound;
- curricula and lesson plans on Hawaiian honeycreepers and other forest birds; locally-produced mini-documentaries featuring hula, birdsong, and behind-the-scenes footage of bird conservation efforts;
- activities, crafts, games, coloring books, and stickers for Hawai'i classrooms;
- opportunities to donate or purchase items that support bird conservation, and
- a year-long calendar of events including volunteer opportunities, festivals, workshops, contests, and performances.

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RESOURCES

(All images/video courtesy: DLNR)

HD video – Proclamation ceremony, Hawai'i State Capitol (Jan. 12, 2024):

<https://vimeo.com/902426914?share=copy>

(Shot sheet attached)

HD video – Forest bird carvings from Bishop Museum (July 21, 2023):

<https://vimeo.com/902068232>

HD video – 'Akikiki egg collection (May 10-12, 2023):

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/826525194>

Photographs – Proclamation ceremony, Hawai'i State Capitol (Jan. 12, 2024):

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/msjtfidcts72m2x3fvpva/h?rlkey=rzqaxb95ts66fi9obyjrrd7yj&dl=0>

Photographs – Forest bird carvings from Bishop Museum (July 21, 2023):

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/vv50y03gaythfpbighhuk/h?rlkey=rtqizsi91qzf2ngh5nc17v20d&dl=0>

Photographs - 'Akikiki egg collection (May 10-12, 2023):

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/pfuk7krlmeyyo6xsvy9tf/h?rlkey=k77x1u68lfgnhw7jo41gvvt1o&dl=0>

(Note: Graham Tabler photos should be credited to him, via DLNR)

Makahiki o Nā Manu Nahele: Year of the Forest Birds campaign hub:

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dofaw/manu>

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