

# Ku Kia'i Manu Ku Kia'i La'au Ku Kia'i Hakalau

Stand with the birds, stand with  
the forest, stand with Hakalau



Aloha,

## The native forest birds of Hawai'i and their habitat need help now!

The chain of Hawaiian Islands sprang from volcanoes in the depths of the Pacific Ocean over 50 million years ago. The nearest continents are over 2,500 miles away, creating the most geographically isolated island group in the world. This isolation and evolutionary changes created a diverse and unique fauna and flora. Native Hawaiians developed a long-standing relationship with and reverence for Hawaii's native forest birds since inhabiting the island chain centuries ago.



They identify the forest birds as kupuna (ancestors), 'aumākua' (family gods) and akua (gods) and recognize the interwoven connectivity and necessity of preserving their shared forest habitats.

Our iconic birds and plants are facing an urgent conservation crisis, as described succinctly by Paxton et al, April 2022.

*"Across the Hawaiian Islands, native forest birds have been experiencing population declines that have accelerated in the last one to two decades. Introduced diseases, particularly avian malaria, are the greatest threat to forest birds today. Further, climate change has increased temperatures in the high-elevation forests, facilitating the spread of disease into areas that were once largely disease-free. Rapid population declines have now (2022) pushed four Hawaiian honeycreeper species to the brink of extinction on both Kaua'i and Maui."*

## There is Reason for Hope

Forest management and restoration CAN and DOES make a difference. Today, the healthiest populations of native birds and associated plant species are found in intact native forests that are heavily managed at the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge (HFNWR).

Data from annual bird surveys summarized over 1987-2019 provide compelling evidence that HFNWR is the most valuable location on Hawai'i Island for the support of native forest birds. We must do everything we can NOW to conserve and protect these especially valuable habitats.

## Our Work and the Vision Going Forward

The Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR (Friends) was established in 2006 to partner with Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge in helping preserve native Hawaiian forest ecosystems.



Along with other volunteer groups, the Friends has participated in a variety of efforts since then by providing thousands of hours of volunteer work and funding for:

- Propagation and planting trees and shrubs to restore koa-ōhi'a forests. Over 5,000 acres of forest have been restored.
- Planting over 576,000 individual native plants.
- Construction of a 10,000 gallon tank to store water for the plant nursery.
- Removal of aggressive introduced plant species. About 260 acres of blackberry, gorse, and holly are being treated annually.
- Mitigating the impact of malaria carrying mosquitoes. The Friends have helped fund initial pioneering work by Dr. Patrick Hart at the University of Hawaii at Hilo to create an early warning system that will identify the presence of mosquitoes and mosquito larvae habitat in locations and elevations where they have not been detected before.



Habitat restoration work is expensive and laborious but must be continued until threats can be permanently eliminated. The many management needs, often occurring when least expected, have motivated us to establish an endowment to provide a steady stream of funding. The endowment (managed by the Hawai'i Community Foundation), started in 2015 with \$63,000, has doubled three times to more than \$700,000. Our long-term goal is to raise \$3.5 million and support annual disbursement of roughly \$140,000 to support multiple conservation activities.



The Friends have identified four key projects to support once the endowment has reached its capacity to begin releasing funds to support vital work.

- 1) Feral pig control to reduce mosquito larval habitats thereby reducing the threat of avian malaria-bearing mosquitoes.
- 2) Forest restoration efforts in areas adjacent to and above the refuge to increase areas of high-quality forest bird habitat at higher, mosquito-free elevations. For these projects, we will work collaboratively with groups including the Mauna Kea Watershed Alliance.
- 3) Removal of all larval mosquito habitat identified by early warning detection system. Further development of the early warning system for malaria-carrying mosquitoes.
- 4) Control of rats, mongoose, and other predators to improve survival and increase reproduction of birds.

## Your help is needed now

This work is critical and long-term. We are building, not just for today, but for the future of Hawai'i as well as the entire world. The people, wildlife, fauna and flora of these great islands **CAN** live together in harmony and in health, but only if we have **YOUR** support to make it happen. What we have started at the Hakalau Forest NWR, combined with what is being done elsewhere in the islands **MATTERS**. Please... help us in this great work.



# DONATE

A stable and robust endowment is essential to provide a reliable source of funds for the foreseeable future to support the many necessary conservation activities and to reduce the threats to survival of forest birds. Your gift will ensure our endangered birds have a future for generations to come.

If you would like to donate online, please visit the Friends of Hakalau website <https://friendsofhakalauforest.org/endowment/>.

Friends of Hakalau National Wildlife Refuge is a 501c (3) organization and your donation is tax deductible.

If you wish to contribute by CHECK, please make the check out to “**Hawai’i Community Foundation**” (be sure to note “Hakalau Forest Endowment” on the check) and mail it to: **Hawai’i Community Foundation**  
**827 Fort Street Mall**  
**Honolulu, HI, 96813**



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