

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT – September 2011

Field Updates 2011

Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project had a productive season of several demographic monitoring trips into the State of Hawaii Hanawi Natural Area Reserve (Frisbee Meadows and Poouli Camp) and The Nature Conservancy's Waikamoi Preserve. These trips enabled us to search for Kiwikiu, their young, and nests while also erecting nets in order to capture unbanded Kiwikiu for genetic population structure analysis and pair identification.

Hanawi NAR: Overall, the team put in 464 person days and over 3000 hours of work. Days of searching came up with two nests at each site. The Frisbee Meadows nests were from two different pairs but both failed. The Poouli Camp nests came from the same pair. The pair re-nested and was successful the second time. This young bird was actually banded this year as well. We can hopefully follow this bird and see if he successfully breeds in a few years. The team re-sighted 32 individual birds, found 34 pairs of which 19 had produced a young bird. One Akohekohe and 17 Kiwikiu were newly banded here during the season.

Waikamoi Preserve: We continued working here in order to start replicating our studies from Hanawi. MFBRP put in 138 days with 800 hours. Most of the work was banding birds; 3 Kiwikiu and 1 Akohekohe were caught. Twelve pairs with three having young were seen; 5 individual Parrotbill were resighted.

In the fall, we will continue our work in Waikamoi Preserve. We have four banding trips scheduled. Our goals are to band more individual Kiwikiu for genetics analyses and to aid in identification during the breeding season.

Thank you to all who have helped to collect the data this year. We look forward to working with our volunteers during the fall and hope for successful banding trips.

Remember to look for updates at www.mauiforestbirds.org. And like us on Facebook!



2011 MFBRP Team: Laura Berthold, Cameron Rutt, Joel Kutylowski, Stephanie Wheeler, Kelly Iknayan, Vitek Jirinec, Robby Kohley, Hanna Mounce, Alex Wang



Mahalo to Whole Foods for Supporting MFBRP

Mahalo Nui Loa! Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project would like to thank **Whole Foods Market in Kahului** and those who participated in their Recycle Your Change program. They rose over \$1300 for bird research through this fundraiser.

Pictured here are MFBRP staff, Hanna Mounce, Kelly Iknayan, and Laura Berthold with Whole Foods marketing supervisor, Elyse Ditzel and store team leader, Ray Stockton.

A FIRST DIVORCE!

Birds are renowned for their sexual monogamy (pairing with only one mate) among vertebrate animals. There is around 90% monogamy found among bird species whereas mammals are closer to 7%. Swans have even become an age-old symbol of fidelity and everlasting love. This tends to be especially true in long-lived species and birds that invest heavily in their young. So it comes as no surprise that the Maui Parrotbill, with its high life expectancy (an age of 16 was documented this year) and long juvenile dependency on its parents (5-17 months), would be monogamous. In fact, this has been found to be the case up until now.

Since 2006, when MFBRP began monitoring the core population of Parrotbill, the only re-pairing of color-banded birds has been when a pair's mate has disappeared. In that sense, a re-pairing of a bird to a new mate is a strong indicator that its previous mate is now deceased.

This is what was assumed by field technicians this season when it was confirmed that the birds nicknamed "Smurfette" and "Zeus" were sharing a territory and had a juvenile. There was no sign of their previous years' mates, "Papa Smurf" and "Hera". We typically nickname our pairs to make identification easier for our field technicians from year to year and to keep pairs straight when we are comparing notes with one another.

Three months into the field season, it seemed unlikely that either of the mates would have been overlooked since both of their previous territories were in the very center of the Frisbee Meadows Grid. But lo and behold, while hiking up Trail 5 one day in late April, Laura Berthold resighted "Hera" with an unbanded male! This was an exciting find because it is the first time a Maui Parrotbill has been seen re-paired with another bird while its existing mate was still alive. Even stranger, "Zeus" and "Hera" successfully fledged a young chick last year. Other species of monogamous birds may re-pair if they find that their mates are unsuccessful at reproducing; thus, this doesn't seem to be the reason for this divorce. Whether this was just a fluke or part of a more regular-occurring but undocumented breeding behavior remains to be seen. "Hera" and her unbanded male didn't show any breeding activity this season, so it remains a mystery as to whether or not she has actually repaired. Even after years of studying a species, much is still to be learned about these enigmatic and elusive forest birds.



Top: Contributing author to this article, Alex Wang with a Maui Parrotbill.

Bottom: An unbanded Kiwikiu perches on a branch.

Maui Brewing Company Benefit Nights



MFBRP will be having two more pint nights this year at the **Maui Brewing Company**. Remember that half of the sales from the night's pints will go to help fund bird research.

The fundraisers will be held on Fridays, **September 30th**
and December 30th, 6pm to midnight!



Mahalo to the Brewery and to all those who have been attending the benefit nights. Don't miss your last chances to drink beer for a cause. The last one should prove especially fun!

Kahana Gateway Center - 4405 Honoapiilani Highway, Just North of Lahaina

Day in the Life of a Transect

Imagine everything that you need for the next three days is on your back: tent, sleeping bag, clothes, food, water (water filter for additional water), emergency kit, map, and GPS unit. Your task: the State of Hawaii Forest Bird Transects. Three days, 40 stations, 4500' elevation descent, camping on a rocky mountain side in the middle of the rainforest. Sound like fun to you? Well our field technicians and other biologists did these surveys this year and it was HARD WORK!

We were able to survey nine transects, five of which we did the whole length three times, and three of which we did the top portions six times. This was in order to collect more precise data, especially for the rare birds that are not easily detected on these transects.



Jason Omick of the State of Hawaii, Division of Land and Natural Resources, Department of Forestry and Wildlife sits under his hammock tarp on one of the toughest transects.



Cameron Rutt listens carefully for birds.

Teams of two went out on these transects, which are spaced about 1 km apart on the northeast slope of Haleakala Volcano. The trails vary in length and amount of stations. Typically there were about 30 to 45 points. These stations are where our trained ornithologists stand for eight minutes listening to all the birds in the forest and writing down all that they see and hear. The next station is about 130 m down the trail. Since they are following the mountain down, we usually start at about 7000 feet in the pristine native forest- lots of ohia and ohelo. Then as you move down the mountain to lower elevation, typically the transects stop at about 2500 feet, it becomes non-native forest- strawberry guava and ginger. The birds change as well. More native birds are at the top, including the rare ones, and then mostly all non-native birds at the bottom. Apapane and Amakihi will still be detected at lower elevations but not as numerous. Different non-native birds will be at lower elevations than at higher ones. For instance, Northern Cardinals aren't usually detected until lower.

For a researcher, this is a great opportunity to experience the forest and gain insight on the populations of the birds. USGS/BRD, Hawaii Volcanoes analyzed the data to update the population estimates of the native birds. We can use these data to see if their populations are stable or declining. This will then enable informed management decisions to be made.

Flatbread Fundraiser

On **November 1st, 2011** from 5pm to 10pm, **Flatbread Company in Paia, Maui** (89 Hana Hwy) will be hosting a fundraiser for the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project.

Dine in at this delicious restaurant and enjoy one of their many pizzas. They use local, fresh, and healthy ingredients on their flatbreads. MFBRP receives a portion of the proceeds from this benefit night.



A silent auction with MFBRP gear, art, and gift certificates will also be available.

Requesting Silent Auction Items

We are still in need of some donations for our silent auction at Flatbread Company in November. If you would like to donate a certificate, service, or piece of artwork to our silent auction, please contact Laura at laura@mauiforestbirds.org. **MAHALO!!**

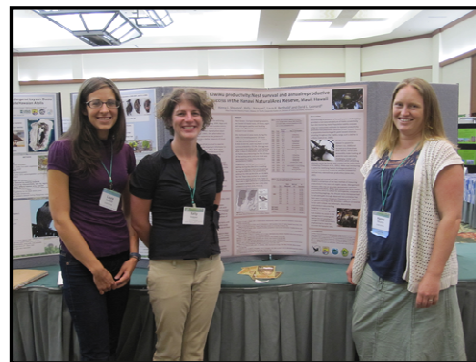
In the News...

Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project's Hanna Mounce (with co-authors Kelly Iknayan and Laura Berthold) presented a poster this year at the Hawaii Conservation Conference in Honolulu in August.

The poster titled *Kiwikiu productivity: Nest survival and annual reproductive success in the Hanawi Natural Area Reserve* was about the difference in our productivity estimates with examining nest success of *Kiwikiu* versus monitoring adult pairs and detecting juveniles per pair. We found that we had a more accurate picture of productivity for this species with finding juveniles per pair.

We also will be presenting these data at The Wildlife Society's conference in Kona, Hawaii as a formal presentation in November.

Another manuscript is in the works about *Kiwikiu* survivorship. Using Program MARK, we were able to analyze our data on banding birds and resighting them. We will get a better estimate of survival through this program and paper.



Laura Berthold, Kelly Iknayan, and Hanna Mounce stand by their poster at the Hawaii Conservation Conference.

MFBRP RESEARCH TECHNICIAN POSITIONS:

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS (6) needed beginning February 6, 2011 for studies of *Kiwikiu*. Position lasts for 20 weeks.

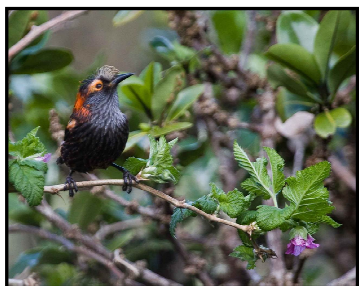
Primary field duties will be: (1) documenting reproductive behavior and re-sighting *Kiwikiu*; (2) mapping pairs and individuals; (3) collecting field data on nests (4) assisting staff with other ongoing projects. Office duties include, but are not limited to office, vehicle and grounds maintenance, and data entry.

Preference will be given to applicants who have experience with passerine research, re-sighting color-banded forest birds and experience in wilderness settings. Assistants must be able to work and live in remote field camps under extremely physically and mentally demanding conditions, to work independently and responsibly, have a good work ethic and take personal initiative. To apply, complete the job application at www.mauiforestbirds.org by **SEPTEMBER 30th**.

If you have any further questions please email employment@mauiforestbirds.org.



Kokua Your Local Environment by Supporting MFBRP



Thank you to all of our supporters, we can't do our work without your help!

If you'd like to support our work, please send your tax-deductible donation at any time with a check made out to *Tri-Isle RC&D*. Mail your check to MFBRP, 2465 Olinda Road, Makawao, HI 96768. Check out our website for other ways to help MFBRP.

Photo by Robby Kohley.