

Hawai‘i Mamo (*Drepanis pacifica*)

Pepeluali (February) 2024

Description

- Extinct, 1898
- Family: Drepanididae
- Hulu (feathers) were glossy black with deep rich yellow on its rump, undertail, coverts, shoulders, and legs
- Long decurved bill for eating nectar from ‘ōhā (lobeliads) and lehua



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Distribution

- Endemic to the island of Hawai‘i
- Some believe mamo were once widespread and common; others believe they were never abundant, and only inhabited lower elevations
- Threats that lead to extinction:
 - Avian malaria
 - Habitat loss
 - Predation by mongoose and rats



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Cultural Significance

- Hulu are used for lei, ‘ahu ‘ula (cloaks), mahiole (helmets), kāhili, etc.
- Hulu mamo were the most prized
- More yellow=higher rank
- Mamo were harder to catch
- Highly skilled kia manu (birdcatchers) collected only a few hulu mamo at a time, usually during molting season, to reduce injury to the mamo
- Kamehameha I had an ‘ahu ‘ula made entirely of hulu mamo, containing about 450,000 hulu mamo from an estimated 80,000 mamo



Brook Kapūkuniahi Parker

Kinolau (body forms)

- Kinolau represent the relationships kūpuna (ancestors) observed in the natural environment based on physical/ecological similarities
- This concept provides the foundation for a holistic understanding of nature and is a distinctive characteristic of the kumulipo (Hawaiian creation chant)
- Other examples of mamo in nature:
 - Hawaiian sergeant (below)
 - Lehua mamo



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