



A New Name for the Kauai Amakihi (Drepanidinae: *Hemignathus*)

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The Kauai Amakihi was originally described by Wilson (1890) as *Himatione stejnegeri*. The species was removed from *Himatione* and placed in a new genus *Chlorodrepanis* by Wilson and Evans (1899), based on a manuscript later published by Perkins (1903). Amadon (1950) combined a number of previously recognized genera of Drepanidinae, including *Chlorodrepanis*, in *Loxops*, and in addition reduced *stejnegeri* to a subspecies of *Loxops virens*. Berger (1981) kept the subspecies status of *stejnegeri*, but transferred the species *virens* to an enlarged genus *Hemignathus*, based on my unpublished revision of the subfamily (Pratt 1979). The AOU Check-list (AOU 1983) followed Berger's usage.

Olson and James (1988) correctly pointed out that the epithet *stejnegeri* is unavailable for the Kauai Amakihi, whether as a species or subspecies, in the genus *Hemignathus*, because the combination *Hemignathus stejnegeri* had already been published by Wilson (1889) for the Kauai Akialoa (no junior synonyms are available) to replace the preoccupied *stejnegeri*, so long as this form is retained in the genus *Hemignathus*.

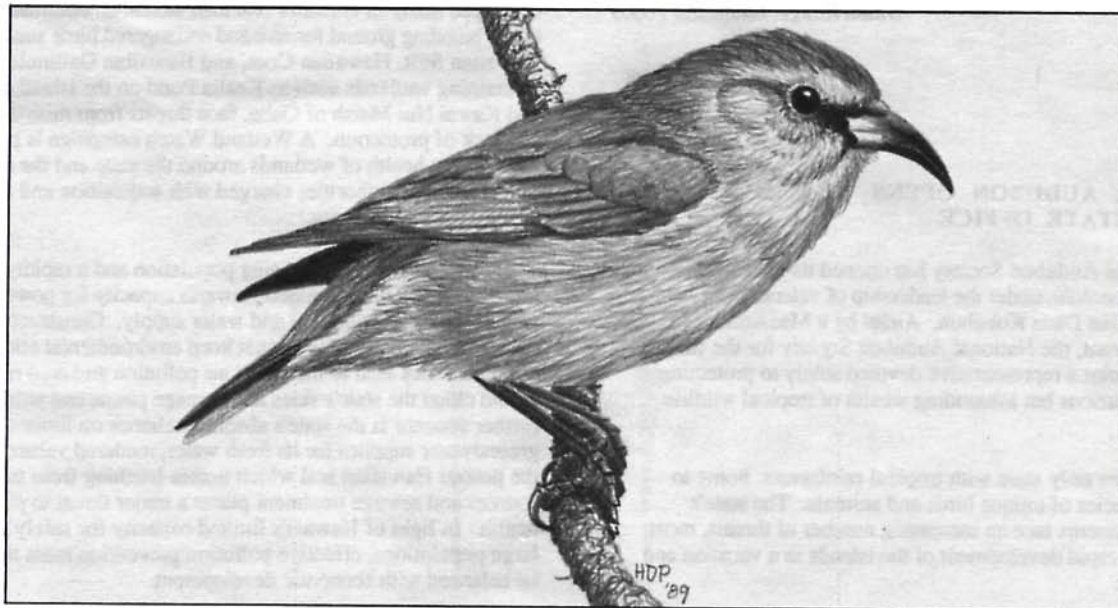
Olson and James (1988) considered a new name for the Kauai Amakihi to be unnecessary, as they disagree with my placement of that species in the enlarged genus *Hemignathus*; in any of the other genera proposed for this species the name *stejnegeri* would be available. They cited evidence from limb myology and cranial osteology in their argument that my concept of *Hemignathus* combined birds from distinct lineages. The portions of my work

pertinent to generic limits among the akialoas and amakihi are currently being revised for more formal publication. At that time, especially if Olson and James have by then enlarged on the brief remarks on generic characters in their 1988 paper, a proper comparative evaluation can be made of the arguments for and against retaining the Kauai Amakihi in *Hemignathus*.

In the meantime, most publications are likely to follow the AOU Check-list (AOU 1983) for nomenclature of Hawaiian birds. Because the Check-list regards the amakihi on Kauai as a subspecies of the Common Amakihi (*H. virens*), most writers will not be concerned with the nomenclatural problem unless they discuss subspecies. The Check-list itself refers to the Kauai form as the "*stejnegeri* group," and notice is given that some authors consider that group a separate species from the "*virens* group" found on the other Hawaiian Islands. Pratt et al. (1987) recognized the Kauai Amakihi as a species and used the improper combination *H. stejnegeri* for it. Rather than perpetuate such errors, and because I am largely responsible for the problem, I am obliged to propose a new specific epithet for the Kauai Amakihi in the genus *Hemignathus*. I suggest the name

Hemignathus kauaiensis

Nom. nov. for *Himatione stejnegeri* Wilson, 1890, preoccupied in *Himatione* by *H. stejnegeri* Wilson, 1899 (= *H. procerus* Cabanis, 1890).



The Kauai Amakihi - *Hemignathus kauaiensis*

Drawing by H. Douglas Pratt

In works that regard this form as a subspecies of *H. virens*, it will be known as *H. virens kauaiensis* and can be referred to as the "*kauaiensis* group." However, if the amakihi is excluded from *Hemignathus*, the proper epithet for the Kauai form will again be *stejnegeri* and *kauaiensis* will be a junior synonym.

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NATIONAL AUDUBON OPENS HAWAII STATE OFFICE

The National Audubon Society has opened its Hawaii office in downtown Honolulu, under the leadership of veteran environmentalist Dana Kokubun. Aided by a MacArthur Foundation grant, the National Audubon Society for the first time is able to appoint a representative devoted solely to protecting Hawaii's precarious but astounding wealth of tropical wildlife habitat.

Hawaii is the only state with tropical rainforests, home to numerous species of unique birds and animals. The state's pristine ecosystems face an increasing number of threats, most notably from rapid development of the islands as a vacation and tourist center.

The pressure exerted on the Hawaiian environment is manifested not only in construction projects, which raze forests and drain wetlands, but in the more insidious dangers posed by power generation and waste disposal already straining Hawaii's fragile natural environment. Air and water pollution could have disastrous long-term effects, and many in Hawaii warn that development must proceed carefully, lest tourism destroy the unique and exotic climate which insures its success.

As National Audubon's Hawai'i State Office Director, Dana Kokubun will begin a combined effort to focus the 1,600 members of the Hawaii Audubon Society on a concrete agenda of high priority local issues, as well as increasing awareness among the general public of the state's important conservation issues.

Ocean Pollution Hawaii's multi-billion dollar tourist industry relies to a large extent on the preservation of pristine island beaches and clear waters for ocean sports, snorkeling, cruises and whale-watching. A plan by the federal government calls for leasing 6.6 million acres of ocean floor surrounding the Hawaiian archipelago for sea bottom strip mining of cobalt. The operation of the mining equipment would cause up to 8000 tons of sediment sludge containing lead and mercury to be dumped into the ocean every day, possibly causing permanently murky water and introduction of deadly chemicals into the ocean food chain. At stake are Hawaii's precious coral reefs, sea turtles, ocean mammals including the endangered monk seal, and the fishing industry. The mining would also require a large processing plant which would discharge hazardous waste both into the air as exhaust, and in solid form onto the land.

Forest Management The mountain forests of Hawaii play host to a number of wildlife species found nowhere else in the United States, and whose survival depends on proper management of state and federal forests. Land-use violations in forest reserve lands have included bulldozing, cabin construction and illegal hunting in areas crucial to wildlife because of their isolation from human population. Failure of state and federal authorities to enforce laws protecting the forest sets a dangerous precedent for public land management in Hawaii, and puts the fragile ecosystem in grave danger.

Wetlands Preservation Booming coastal development has destroyed many of Hawaii's brackish wetlands, eliminating much of the breeding ground for rare and endangered birds such as the Hawaiian Stilt, Hawaiian Coot, and Hawaiian Gallinule. Remaining wetlands such as Kealia Pond on the island of Maui, and Kawai Nui Marsh of Oahu, face threats from mismanagement and lack of protection. A Wetland Watch campaign is planned to monitor the health of wetlands around the state and the activities of government authorities charged with acquisition and protection of these crucial habitats.

Clean air and water Increasing population and a rapidly growing tourist industry have strained Hawaii's capacity for power generation, waste disposal and water supply. Construction and operation of energy plants must keep environmental concerns in mind, lest they lead to increased air pollution and acid rain which would cloud the state's skies and damage plants and wildlife. Of further concern is the state's absolute reliance on limited groundwater supplies for its fresh water, rendered vulnerable by the porous Hawaiian soil which makes leaching from toxic sources and sewage treatment plants a major threat to public health. In light of Hawaii's limited capacity for safely sustaining large populations, effective pollution prevention must necessarily be balanced with economic development.