

# KIWIKIU NEWS

Newsletter from Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project

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## Project Updates

### STAFF CHANGES & UPDATES

The teams at MFBRP continue to grow and change. Erin Bell and Bailey Wallace have finished their positions with our teams. We wish them luck in their future endeavors. Both will be greatly missed as a part of the MFBRP crew!

We want to wish a huge congratulations to Christa Seidl, Mosquito Research & Control Coordinator, as she finishes up and defends her PhD research. This is such an accomplishment!

Long-time MFBRP staff member Laura Berthold recently stepped into the new role of Avian Research Field Supervisor. Congrats Laura!

The MFBRP teams continue to grow!

- We have recently welcomed Josh Schreiber as part of our mosquito research & control team.
- Previous Kupu 'Āina Corps members with MFBRP, Lilli Patton and Hope Caliendo, recently stepped into staff positions with our kiwikiu team.
- This year we are excited to have two Kupu 'Āina Corps members, Hokuaka'ale Gilman and Rory Kuczek, serving with our honeycreeper and 'alalā crews.
- The kiwikiu collection team also welcomed Nathaniel Watkins, Tess Hebebrand, Alexandria Sinker, and Gus Forrest to the team.
- Enzo Reyes just joined as the Maui Nui 'Alalā Project Coordinator.

### FIRE CLEANING & NATIVE SPECIES PLANTING AT THE OFFICE

In August, multiple wildfires broke out devastating parts of Maui. One of these fires burned across the road from our office and the facilities at the Maui Bird Conservation Center for weeks. We are incredibly lucky and grateful to say that our crew and offices were safe from the fire but did sustain damage from falling limbs and uprooted trees. After the recent fires, it was clear that the land around our office needed some love and care. This land has for many years been covered in non-native trees and vegetation. Our native species are so well adapted and provide crucial ecosystem services such as collecting and storing water. With the non-native-dominated canopy, the soil in this area has become hydrophobic or poor at collecting rainwater. This causes erosion and other problems. Our staff were able to plant some native plants around our property that we hope will thrive and bring a little healing to this space. If you drive by, say hi to our new native plant friends!

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# The 'Alalā Project

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT UPDATE

We have continued to work with The 'Alalā Project partnership to keep plans of releasing 'alalā on Maui going. We are currently finishing up writing the reintroduction plan and the draft Environmental Assessment for this project. This has been a huge undertaking that has been in process for a while, and we are excited to start taking the next steps to make this project a reality. Once the Environmental Assessment has been posted and opened for public comment, we will co-host a community informational meeting to share what the release would look like and answer any questions. We are working towards the goal of releasing a cohort of 'alalā on Maui in the spring of 2024, pending the completion of all legal requirements. Stay tuned for project updates and the announcement of any community informational meetings.

## SITE SCOPING VISIT

Our team recently visited the intended release area and did a site scoping visit for the potential future 'alalā release. This information can help guide our team as we develop things like the release aviary that would house the 'alalā for the intended releases. The team also surveyed both for native and non-native vegetation as well as native snail populations. These surveys will serve as a basis to know both positive and negative impacts the release of 'alalā will have on these communities and how we can help mitigate any potential threats.

## SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING STATION DESIGN

There are many steps taken to ensure that the released 'alalā transition to the wild as best as they can. For instance, all of the release candidate birds will undergo training to help them recognize native fruits that they can find at the release location. We will also be supplementally feeding the released 'alalā to help them get through the initial hurdles of transitioning from captive care to being in the wild and foraging completely on their own. To accommodate this, we are looking at and testing different supplemental feeder options. Our goal is to have as little impact on the current ecosystem, i.e. not feeding non-native rodents, while providing safe and clean food to the birds in a remote location. This is something that has proven to be quite challenging but our crew is hard at work trying to find the best solution.

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# Mosquito Research & Control

## PILOT MOSQUITO RELEASES

The MFBRP Mosquito crew continued conducting Mark-Release-Recapture (MRR) surveys to better understand how far male mosquitoes travel. MRR surveys are a technique that can be used to study how mosquitoes disperse across a landscape, how long they live, and whether other environmental factors such as temperature and rainfall affect these results. Staff installed mosquito traps at set intervals, extending from a central release point and out to the furthest distance that a mosquito might be expected to fly. Traps were baited with lures targeted to attract male *Culex quinquefasciatus*, southern house mosquitoes. Incompatible male mosquitoes were released at a central point, and traps were checked for nine days to see how far the males flew in the forest.

MFBRP staff conducted four MRRs at our upcountry survey site from May to August. Staff checked traps every day during each MRR and documented traps that caught male *Culex*, the distance the trap was from the release point, and the catch date. Documenting the date and the trap's distance will help determine how far mosquitoes flew from the release point and how long they lived post-release.

MFBRP and partners are using this data to determine the numbers, density, and frequency of incompatible male mosquitoes being released in the Fall.

## SCOUTING FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL SITES

Currently, MFBRP staff are investigating suitable locations to install traps that will target female *Culex* within the Incompatible Insect Technique (IIT) treatment area that was proposed in the East Maui Environmental Assessment for the suppression of non-native mosquitoes. A control monitoring site will be established where the MRRs took place that will also have traps installed to target female *Culex*. Results from the control site will be compared to results from the treatment site to monitor the effectiveness of IIT treatment. Staff will be going out in the following months to install traps at the two sites.



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## Avian Research & Management

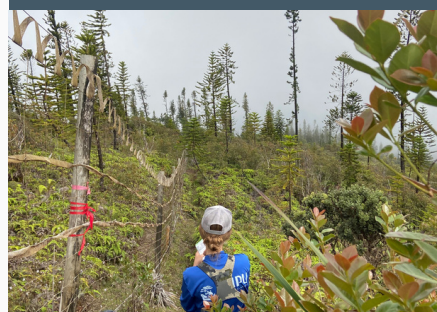
The MFBRP honeycreeper crew is continuing to survey for kiwikiu and 'ākohekohe in their field sites. We conduct predator control to help protect nesting birds within the Hanawi Natural Area Reserve on windward East Maui. We have also been entering and compiling our data from point count surveys. This allows us to review detections of rare species like the kiwikiu and 'ākohekohe, updating their population estimates as well as their species' ranges. Unfortunately, the sizes of their ranges have decreased during the last five years, likely due to the spread of mosquitoes and avian disease. We are working with partners on publishing reports on forest bird populations on both Moloka'i and East Maui.

In September, we conducted our annual rapid assessment of the western population of kiwikiu found within The Nature Conservancy's Waikamoi Preserve. We fortunately found about ten kiwikiu pairs within this section of their population; however this is less than what we found in the area a few years ago. We have not detected mosquitoes in the area, but we have detected birds with avian disease.

This team has also been busy preparing to collect wild kiwikiu for captive care and holding within the Maui Bird Conservation Center. In order to prevent extinction in the wild, MFBRP will be collecting a number of kiwikiu to hold in human care until it is safe to return the kiwikiu to the wild (i.e. mosquitoes and disease has been reduced). To prepare, the team has been surveying for kiwikiu visiting various sites along the edges of the kiwikiu range. We also hired a very talented team to preform this task and created protocols with the Maui Forest Bird Working Group (a group of over 10 organizations dedicated to the recovery of Maui's rare forest birds). Prior to the first capture trip last month, our team was able to do an intention ceremony to help the project move forward and give honor to the intentions of this work.

### LANA'I

In June, MFBRP team members performed variable circular plot point counts along transects on Lanaihale with support from Pulama Lana'i. We are happy to report that 'apapane are still being detected here. The following month, other team members assisted Pulama Lana'i with their predator control efforts in the area that help protect nesting birds, like the 'ua'u.



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## NEWS & EVENTS

### HAWAI'I CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

In July, the MFBRP team traveled to O'ahu to participate in the annual Hawai'i Conservation Conference. The first time it has been in person since 2019. Our project hosted an informational booth, sharing the work that we do. Multiple MFBRP staff members presented and co-authored various presentations which include the following:

- [Kiwikiu Conservation Translocation and How Disease Thwarted Everything](#)
- [Avian Malaria Monitoring in The Nature Conservancy's Waikamoi Preserve](#)
- [Testing Efficacy of Various Lure Types for Catching Male Culex](#)
- [Status and Trends of the Birds on Moloka'i](#)

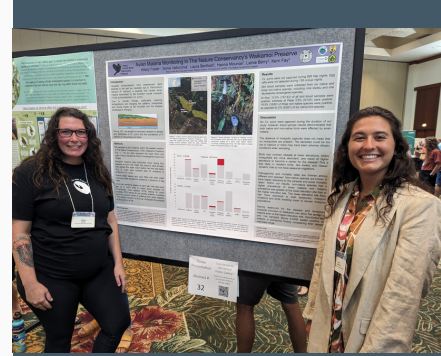
When not presenting posters or giving presentations, our team was able to listen to informational talks, participate in relevant conservation discussions, and network with conservation professionals.

### BISHOP MUSEUM

While on O'ahu in July, our team was able to participate in an amazing behind-the-scenes tour of the bird collection housed at the Bishop Museum. The collection has specimens of native and non-native bird species, quite a few are no longer found in the wild. We want to send a big mahalo to Molly Hagemann for taking her time to show us around, talk with us, and answer all of our questions! This was such a great learning opportunity, and we appreciate everything you do to help tell the story of these birds.

### MBCC/MFBRP WORK DAY

Some of our team recently lent a helping hand to our conservation partners at the Maui Bird Conservation Center on a work day. Our team helped prepare materials needed to repair aviaries that sustained damage during the recent storms and also got a chance to see some of our favorite friends cared for at this facility. Always a treat to see kiwikiu up close and rewarding to help one of our conservation partners!



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In addition to our research and management tasks, MFBRP's teams have been busy with training up on the difficult tasks that we do such as bird banding, ATV/UTV and trailer driving, helicopter operations, and being prepared to deliver wilderness first aid. Some of our crew attended a recent Hawai'i-Pacific Aviation Weather Safety Workshop on O'ahu organized by the National Weather Service Forecast Office. Our mosquito research and control team also held a team bonding and DISC assessment which will assist them in working together. In order to do all of the work we do we need to have a very knowledgeable and prepared staff!

Recent events MFBRP participated in:

- Maui County Agriculture Fest
- Mākena Golf Club Tournament
- Hawai'i Conservation Conference
- Pilina Project at Makawao Library
- Malama i ke kai
- Celebrating Hawaiian Honeycreeper Day in Hilo



Upcoming events where you can find MFBRP:

- Maui Mauka Conservation Awareness Training
  - Oct 17th at UHMC campus CSB conference room, guest speaker Jordan Tabura with the Hawai'i Invertebrate Program
  - Oct 30th held via Zoom, 1-hour mini-training
  - Nov 14th at Kealia Pond NWR, guest speaker Jenni Learned with Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project
- Hawai'i Island Festival of Birds- Oct 21st in Hilo
- 'Ōhi'a Love Fest/Arbor Day event at MNBG-Nov 4th, 'Ōhi'a Love Fest on Hawai'i Island in Hilo Nov. 4th and in Kona Nov. 18th
- Maui Huliau Careers in Conservation- Nov. 12th
- Hanna Mounce will be representing and presenting on the work MFBRP does at the International Conservation Translocation Conference in Fremantle Australia



Looking to donate stock to a worthy cause? You can now donate stock to our fiscal sponsor Nā Koa Manu Conservation. To find out more information or donate stock click [here](#).

Looking for a gift for that bird lover in your life? Head over to our online store and check out the MFBRP and 'Alalā Project merchandise that we have available. Money raised through our store purchases goes back to helping the birds and the work that we do. We are in the process of creating and rolling out some new merch for the holiday season. Keep an eye out for new additions soon! Visit <https://mauiforestbirds.org/shop/>

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# MAHALO TO VOLUNTEERS & MORE

- MFBRP is lucky to have support from partners and volunteers. We would like to thank those who helped on recent field trips:
  - Alisia and Ricky Silva
  - Libby Faris
  - MP Chino (from Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project)
  - Nick Schleissmann
  - Peter Luscomb (from Pacific Bird Conservation)
  - Carmen Vicén
- We also want to acknowledge and show our appreciation for the pilots and personnel from Windward Aviation whose expertise has allowed MFBRP to get into our remote field sites as well as apply logistically challenging management applications. Supporting conservation is one of the many important tasks that Windward does- we would also like to thank them for their work fighting the difficult Maui wildfires.
- The DLNR-DOFAW wildfire crew and Jennifer Pribble at Maui Bird Conservation Center should also be acknowledged for their firefighting efforts. The Wildfire crew worked many hours to protect the Olinda area where MFBRP's office and the Maui Bird Conservation Center are located.
- Mahalo nui to Trinette Furtado and Hokuaka'ale Gilman for helping to arrange and lead the intention-setting ceremony for our kiwikiu crew. It was a beautiful day and experience that meant a lot to our team.

Mahalo to The Western Section of The Wildlife Society for supporting us during our fundraiser to help clean up after the fires. They helped to share this fundraiser and matched donations up to \$1000. We truly appreciate your support and sharing our efforts!

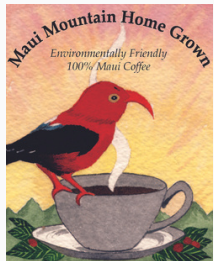


Mahalo to Maui Mountain Homegrown Coffee and Birds and Beans Coffee. These two organizations put together a fundraiser to help support MFBRP after the recent fires. Through their donations, time, and support we were able to replace gear that we had donated to those in need and were able to get our teams back out into the field. Maui Mountain Homegrown Coffee has been a long-time sponsor and supporter of ours. We cannot thank these organizations enough for all that they do.

To learn more about these organizations, or to order some amazing bird-friendly coffee check out their websites:

<https://mauihomegrowncoffee.com>

<https://birdsandbeanscoffee.com>



# MAHALO FOR THE SUPPORT

We want to say a big mahalo to everyone who supported us through our recent fundraiser campaign to help us clean up after the fire. Your support and donations helped us to get back on our feet. We couldn't do the work we do without your support!



We want to say a big mahalo to everyone who supported us through this years Give Aloha campaign put on by Foodland Hawai'i. Thanks to your support we raised over \$500 to support our work with the native birds. Mahalo nui loa!



Mahalo to everyone who has supported us by donating HawaiianMiles. These donations help our crews to fly inter-island for meetings, workshops, presentations, and trainings.

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