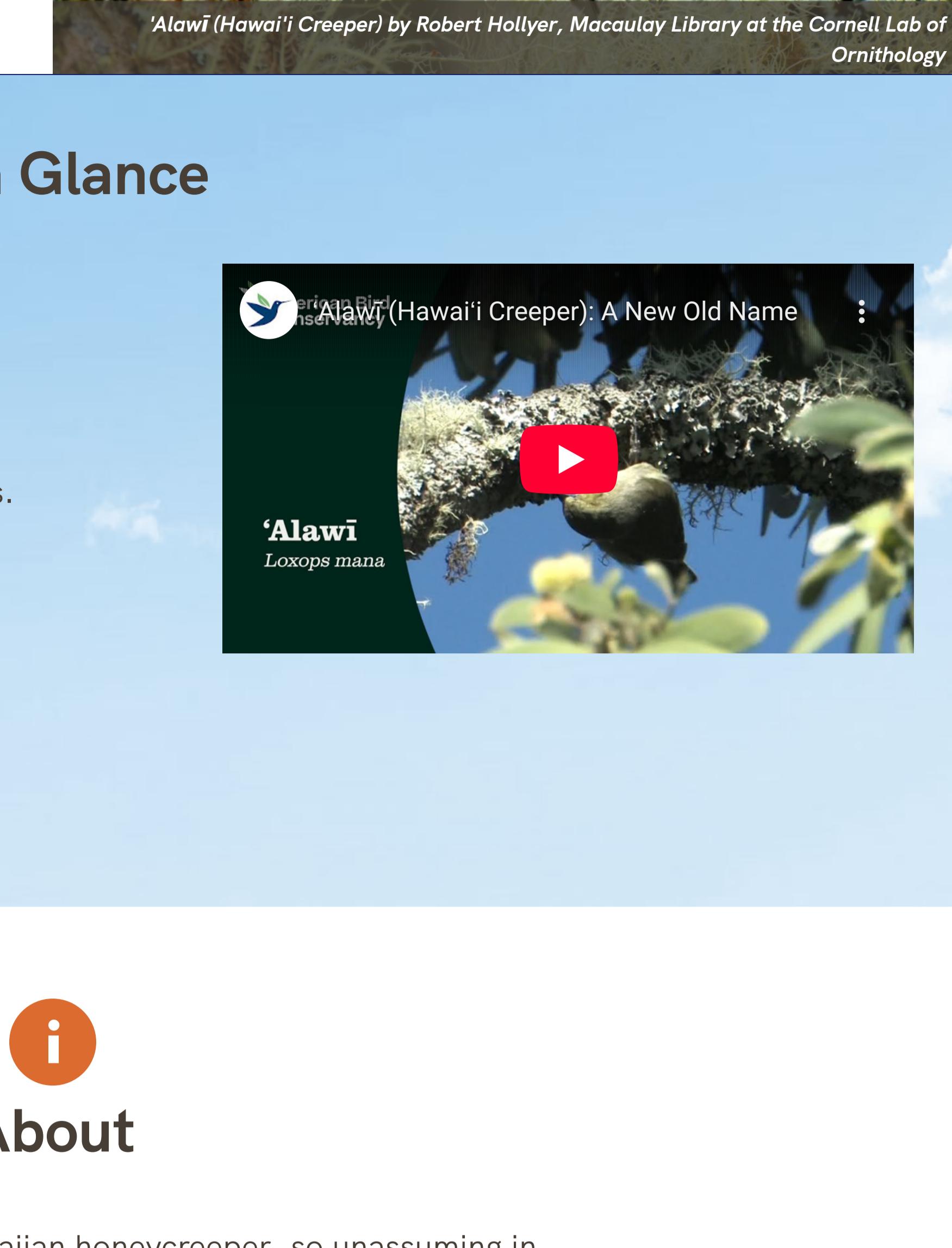


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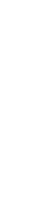
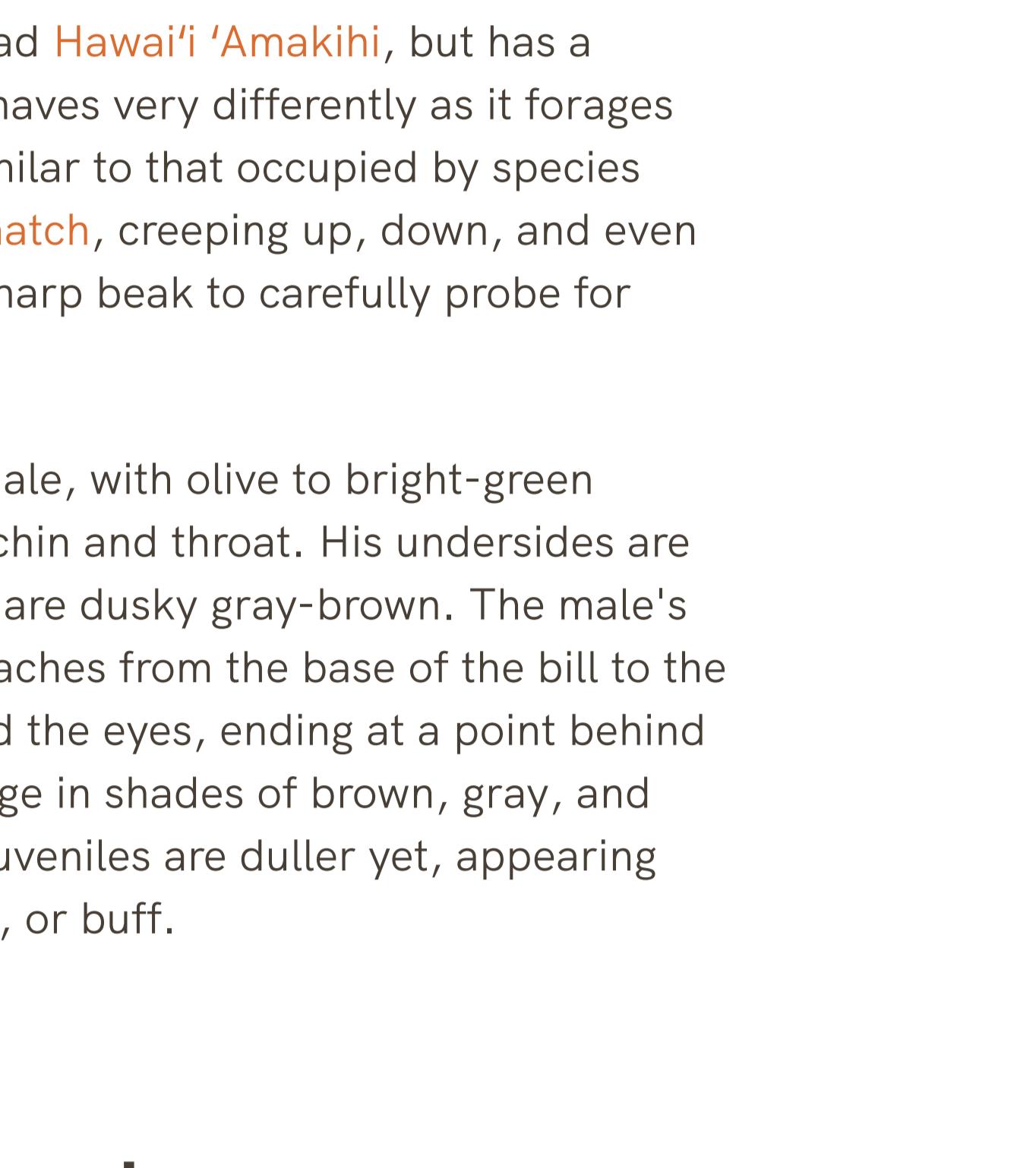
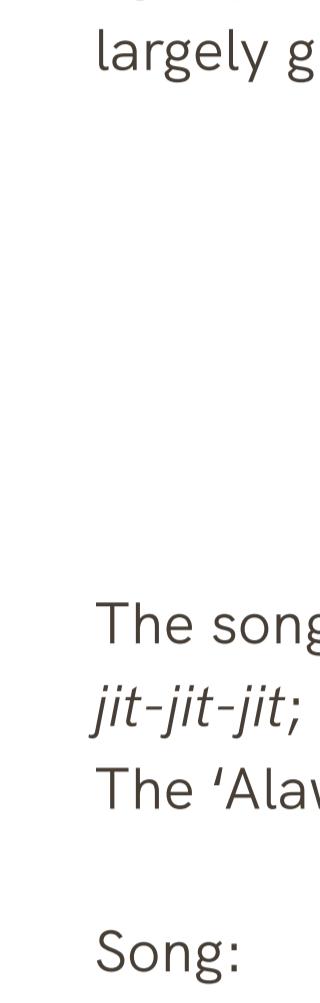
'Alawi (Hawai'i Creeper)

"A New Old Name"



'Alawi (Hawai'i Creeper) by Robert Hohler, Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

At a Glance

Scientific Name: *Loxops mana***Population:** 9,300**IUCN Status:** Endangered**Trend:**  Decreasing**Habitat:** Mesic forests dominated by 'ōhi'a and koa trees.

About

The 'Alawi is a small, inconspicuous Hawaiian honeycreeper, so unassuming in appearance that the first scientists who collected it didn't even realize that this bird was a unique species. In addition, researchers only made the connection between the Hawaiian name "'Alawi" and the bird described as the Hawai'i Creeper in 2017. The Kumulipo, the Hawaiian cosmological and genealogical chant, mentions the 'Alawi as a "child" of the 'Alalā (Hawaiian Crow), and other traditional Hawaiian epics refer to it as a small, quick bird.

While the 'Alawi may lack the bright colors or unusual bill shapes or features of other native Hawaiian birds, this little honeycreeper is equally as interesting.

The 'Alawi is somewhat similar to the more widespread Hawai'i 'Amakihi, but has a broader mask and straighter, bi-colored bill, and behaves very differently as it forages through the trees. It occupies an ecological niche similar to that occupied by species such as the Brown Creeper and White-breasted Nuthatch, creeping up, down, and even upside-down along native trees as it uses its short, sharp beak to carefully probe for prey.

The male 'Alawi is slightly more colorful than the female, with olive to bright-green upperparts, a grayish head, and a contrasting paler chin and throat. His undersides are pale bright yellow to olive-yellow, and wings and tail are dusky gray-brown. The male's most prominent field mark is a blackish mask that reaches from the base of the bill to the eyes (an area known as the lores) and extends around the eyes, ending at a point behind them. Female 'Alawi have even more subdued plumage in shades of brown, gray, and light yellow, with a dusky, rather than dark, mask. Juveniles are duller yet, appearing largely grayish, with tinges of olive green, dull yellow, or buff.

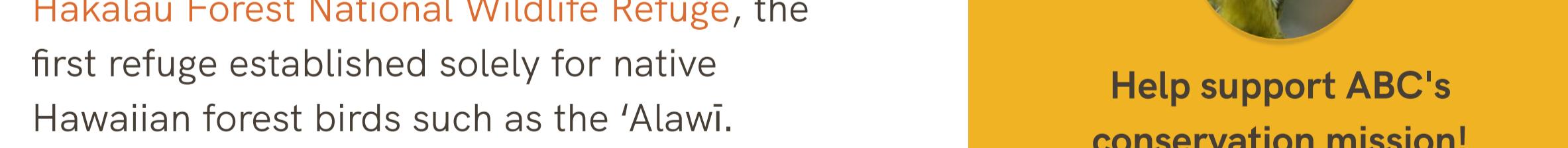


Songs and Sounds

The song of the 'Alawi is a descending trill described as dee-dee, dee-dee-dee, or jit-jit, jit-jit-jit; it usually sings several songs in succession. Only the males sing.

The 'Alawi call is a soft *squeet*.

Song:



Call:



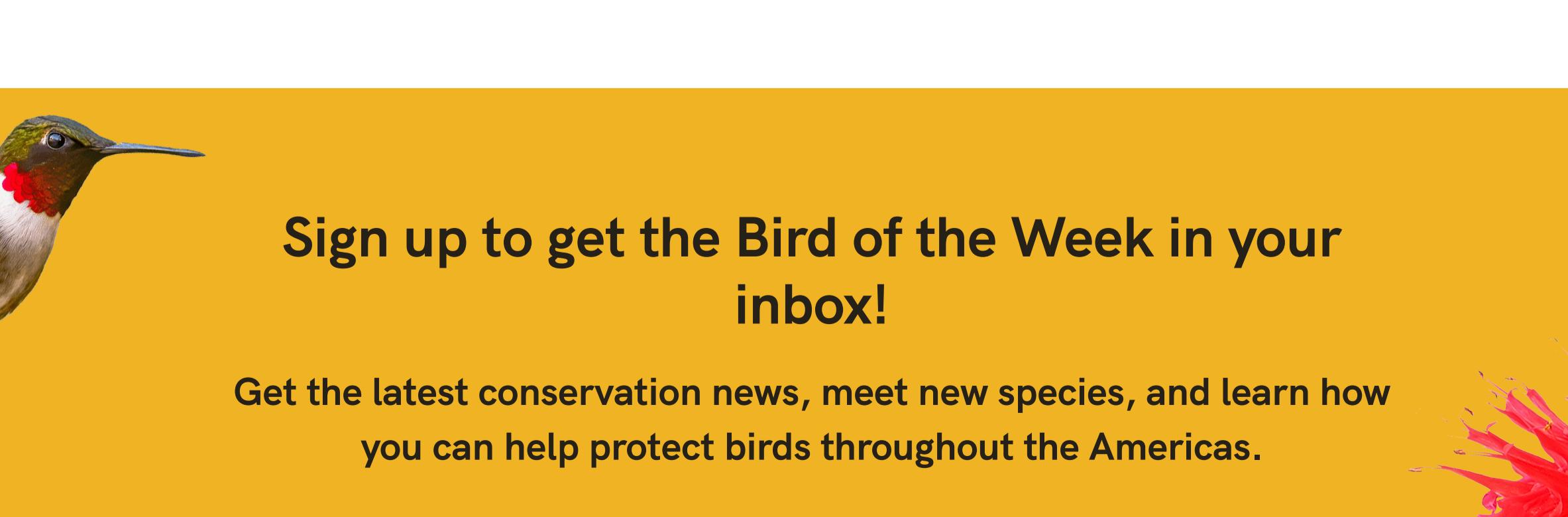
Breeding and Feeding

The 'Alawi's breeding season lasts from February through June. During this season, pairs occupy a home range of 10 to 17 acres, defending a 33- to 66-foot territory around their nest.

Post-breeding, 'Alawi and Hawai'i 'Ākepa family groups become the core of mixed feeding flocks that include other native birds such as the 'Akiapōlā'au, Hawai'i 'Amakihi, 'I'iwi, 'Apapane, and Hawai'i 'Elepaio.

The 'Alawi forages in a distinctive creeping manner with its body held close to the tree bark. It works its way along tree branches in short, jerky movements as it quickly picks and probes for prey hidden under loose bark, moss, and lichen. It sometimes clings to the underside of a branch while foraging.

This honeycreeper is mainly insectivorous, gleaning spiders, spider eggs, insects, larvae, and eggs from the branches, trunks, and foliage of 'ōhi'a and koa trees. It sometimes sips nectar from 'ōhi'a flowers.



'Alawi (Hawai'i Creeper) foraging. Photo by Robert Hohler, Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The 'Alawi is socially monogamous and maintains long-term pair bonds. The male displays by "dancing" for his mate — uttering short, rapid bursts of single-noted calls as he hops to and fro or in place. He also brings his mate food during his courtship display.

The female 'Alawi builds an open-cup nest of bark, rootlets, lichen, and moss, usually close to the trunk of a native koa or 'ōhi'a tree. A small percentage of 'Alawi nests are built in naturally-occurring bark crevices or tree cavities.

The female 'Alawi lays a clutch of one to three (typically two) eggs, and incubates them herself, while her mate delivers food. The eggs hatch after around 13 days, and both parents feed the chicks. The female continues to brood the nestlings, and both parents feed the young for about a month. After fledging, juveniles remain dependent on their parents for another four to six weeks. Both parents continue to feed their young during that time.

'Alawi will re-nest after nest failures, and a pair may raise two sets of offspring in a season. Although nest success is very low, adults have a high annual survival rate.

Region and Range

The 'Alawi occurs in four disjunct populations: on windward Hawai'i, and in the Kaua'i, Kona, and Hualālai regions.

'Alawi are sedentary (nonmigratory) and show strong site fidelity throughout the year and between years.

'Alawi (Hawai'i Creeper) range map by ABC

Get Involved

Polices enacted by the U.S. Congress and federal agencies have a huge impact on Hawai'i's birds. You can help shape these rules for the better by telling lawmakers to prioritize birds, bird habitat, and bird-friendly measures. To get started, visit ABC's Action Center.

Our Hawaiian partners frequently need help with habitat restoration and other projects benefiting birds. If you live in or will be visiting Hawai'i and would like to volunteer, check the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project, and Mauna Kea Forest Restoration Project.

American Bird Conservancy and local partners are restoring forests, protecting critical habitat, and much more to save native Hawaiian birds. This is a monumental undertaking, requiring the support of many, and you can help by making a gift today.

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