



AKEPA

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

HAWAII AKEPA

By Anthony Ramires

Hi, I'm a Hawaiian Honeycreeper. My name is Hawaii 'akepa. I live in only 3 places, the Hakalau Forest, the upper forests near Kau, and near Hualalai. I'm an endangered animal, in the year 2000, our population was 14,000. We were listed endangered in 1975. The food we eat is spiders and nectar from various flowers. I'm about 5 inches in length. I'm bright orange, all-male birds of my species are bright orange.

There are different types of Akepa, there's the Hawaii Akepa which I am, and the Maui Akepa, the Maui akepa males are bronze yellow. The female akepa has a greenish top and a yellow belly. We live high up above the forests, about 4,500 feet high. My species also fly in little flocks.

The reason why our population is so small is that the akepa only lays 1 - 2 eggs, if we could lay 4-5 or higher, our population would definitely increase. Another reason that our population is slowly decreasing is because of diseases around the forests. Some diseases are avian malaria, and avian pox, those diseases definitely killed a lot of our species.



Our species need to be in tree cavities a lot, many trees we nest on are ohia and koa. A lot of the trees are decaying and dying so we don't have many places to nest. There are a lot of factors to why my population is dying, my species is very endangered, and when there are no trees to nest in, it definitely changes our environment and makes us adapt differently.



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I am affected by adaptive radiation, my beak is medium-sized. My beak is used for drinking nectar, eating small bugs, and small seeds. The birds I've evolved from had different beaks from me, they might have had beaks good for eating big seeds, or beaks good for eating bugs. Over time my beak changed due to my environment.

My beak can do almost everything needed to do in my environment, I have enough resources to survive in my environment, I can eat bugs, seeds and drink nectar. The only problems are my predators and diseases that my species get. Over the past 200 years, my environment has changed drastically. I used to live in Oahu but now I don't, now I live on Maui and the Big Island. Most of my population lives on the Big Island though. We left due to the environment changing in Oahu, there weren't as many trees to nest in, so we left, this is the founders effect, we didn't use the bottleneck effect since we didn't need to leave due to us dying or something out of our hands.

