

## liwi Report

The liwi is a native Hawaiian bird. It is bright red with black wings and a black tail; it also has a pink beak. They are small birds, they only weigh between 16 and 20 grams and are about 6 inches in length. Its scientific name is *Vestiaria concinna*. The l'iwi is also known as the Scarlet Honeycreeper. The liwi is also indigenous to Hawaii which means it is found nowhere else in the world.

To attract a mate male liwis will sing and sway on a perch while flapping their wings. The males would also feed the females and that would make them a permanent pair. Breeding starts when the Ohia trees flower. The female with help of the male will build a cup shaped nest high in the Ohia tree. She lays usually two white eggs covered in brown spots. liwi eggs hatch usually after fourteen days. The juvenile liwis are not red or scarlet they are a greenish yellow with green splotches. They will start to turn red and black after 24 days.

The liwi's beak is specially designed to sip nectar from a flower. One of their favorite flowers to drink nectar is from the Ohia tree. Other things that the liwi eats are insects and the nectar from the lobelia flower. To drink nectar from the lobelia flower they will pierce a hole at the base of the flower and extract the nectar with their tubular tongues. Also the liwi's beak has shrunk over the past 100 years because the lobelia flowers were becoming endangered. liwis also have many different cries. They vary from strange metallic squeaks to flute like calls

liwi feathers were highly prized by the Ancient Hawaiians who used them to decorate their capes. This relates to the liwi's scientific name, because in Latin *Vestiaria* means clothing and *concinna* means scarlet covered.

liwis are endangered because of habitat loss due to the destruction of their forest and disease like avian malaria (*Plasmodium relictum*). One bite from a mosquito that has avian malaria or avian pox can cause death to an liwi 90% of the time. liwis are still fairly common in Hawaii but they are rare on Oahu and Molokai. Sadly, they are no longer found in Lanai.

## Bibliography

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