AKEKE'E

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary
United States
Akeke'e
Loxops caeruleirostris

Collected from Kokee State Park, Kauai, Hawaii, 1970
The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

This cup of moss and lichen was built by a pair of Akeke’e in the crown of an Ohi’a Lehua tree. The last 4,000 of these small finches are found in the high rainforests of Kauai. Living above 1,800 feet, these survivors have escaped the mosquito-borne avian pox and malaria that have decimated so many other Hawaiian birds since the 1800s when European trading ships emptied their bilges on the island. Grazing and feral animals have also destroyed their habitats. Of Hawaii’s 113 endemic species, 71 have been lost. Of the 42 left, Akeke’e are one of the 32 listed as endangered.
The nests were photographed in four science co...