

PRECAUTIONS FOR MINIMIZING HUMAN IMPACTS ON ENDANGERED LAND BIRDS

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

The Nihoa finch (*Telespiza ultima*), Nihoa millerbird (*Acrocephalus remota*), and Laysan finch (*Telespiza cantans*) are inquisitive birds that constantly inspect and probe their environment while foraging. While this probably benefits them in their natural environment, it can be problematic when humans bring in equipment or set up encampments. Things that we normally would not think of as hazards to wildlife become sources of finch or millerbird mortality (usually by drowning, entanglement, and entrapment). In order to avoid the unintentional killing of these endangered species, it is imperative that visitors to Nihoa, Laysan, and Pearl and Hermes Atoll be aware of the different hazards that humans pose to passerine birds. The guidelines below derive from documented mortalities and will help you “bird-proof” your operation, but additional hazards exist, so use common sense at all times.

1. The burn barrel must be attended **at all times** when burning trash; be vigilant. When not burning, any vents or rust-eaten holes in the barrel or lid must be covered (e.g., with rocks).
2. Buckets must always be overturned so that they won't collect rainwater.
3. Laundry buckets must have lids on them while laundry is soaking.
4. Water-filled buckets for dishwashing (or any other chore) must always be attended.
5. Desalinator garbage cans should have netting placed between the can and the lid. Make sure the lids close properly; faulty positioning of hoses can interfere with proper closure.
6. Tarps (e.g., those covering propane, etc.) must be tucked in tightly so that they don't collect rainwater.
7. Fabric with loose threads should be burned; little feet can become entangled when fabric is hung out to dry. Cut loose threads off tents and tarps.
8. Anything with small mesh (e.g., bird nets or insect nets) should be put away to avoid foot entanglement.
9. Water jugs should be aligned with ample space between rows so that finches won't get trapped. Always keep jugs capped.
10. For stability reasons, buckets should not be stacked more than two high. Keep an eye out for leaning buckets or water jugs, and level the sand beneath them if necessary.
11. Tents should be zipped at all times (day and night) so that finches and millerbirds cannot enter.
12. Finches and millerbirds should be discouraged from eating people-food so as not to augment the camp population any more than it is already. Dependency by the finches on the camp will result in suffering when temporary and more-permanent field camps dissolve.