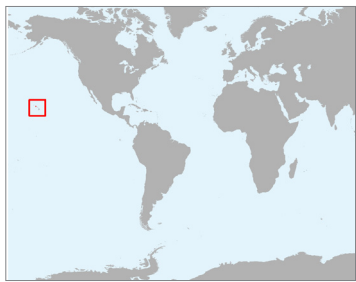




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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Lo'ulu

The **Lo'ulu**, *Pritchardia kaalae*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. This palm is endemic to mesic and dry forest on a few ridges of the Wai'anae Mountains, on the island of O'ahu in Hawai'i. It grows up to 5m tall with the characteristic large fan-shaped, or palmate, leaves.

It is thought that the introduction of the Polynesian Rat (*Rattus exulans*) by Polynesian settlers brought about a collapse of *Pritchardia* populations due to fruit predation by the rats. Currently threatened by severe habitat degradation and continued predation by rats, as well as feral pigs, goats, and deer, fewer than 130 individuals of Lo'ulu survive, clinging tenaciously to steep ridges or hiding in deep, narrow valleys. Its restricted range increases its susceptibility to a single, disruptive event, like hurricane or fire.

Successful protective management of this palm in Mokulē'ia and Mākua Kea'au Forest Reserves and Mt. Ka'ala Natural Area Reserve, by the United States Army Environmental group, through rat control and fencing to exclude large, grazing predators, has led to acceptable regeneration. The University of Hawaii is also currently conducting seed viability and storage studies for species of *Pritchardia*.



The production of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the IUCN Red List Partnership.