



## Marine Invertebrates

### Pūpū mo‘o or chitons

*Acanthochiton viridis*  
*Ischnochiton petaloides*

**SPECIES STATUS:**  
IUCN Red List - Not considered  
Endemic

**SPECIES INFORMATION:** Pūpū mo‘o or chitons are primitive seashore molluscs. They both feed by browsing on algae adhered to hard substrates. Both the kuakulu or green chiton (*A. viridis*) and the flat chiton (*I. petaloides*) have separate sexes and external fertilization. The adult kuakulu, 28 millimeters long (one inch), is larger than the adult flat chiton (10 millimeters long or one-half inch).

**DISTRIBUTION:** They occur on rocky and hard substrates throughout the islands.

**ABUNDANCE:** Unknown

**LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT:** Key habitat for both the kuakulu and flat chiton are reef flats and tidepools. Kuakulu, however, prefers small depressions on limestone reef flats and holes or areas underneath the rubble of tidepools. Flat chitons prefer areas under rocks in both tidepools and reef flats.

**THREATS:** None identified.

**CONSERVATION ACTIONS:** The goals of conservation actions are to not only protect current populations, but to also establish further populations to reduce the risk of extinction. In addition to common state-wide and island conservation actions, specific actions include:

- Ensure healthy habitat is maintained.

**MONITORING:**

- Survey for populations and distribution in known and likely habitats.

**RESEARCH PRIORITIES:**

- Improve understanding of factors affecting the species population size and distribution.

**References:**

Hoover JP. 1998. Hawaii’s sea creatures, A guide to Hawaii’s marine invertebrates. Honolulu, HI: Mutual Publishing. 366 pp.

Kay AE. 1979. Hawaiian marine shells reef and shore fauna of Hawaii, section 4: Mollusca. Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press. 653 pp.