

2026 Aquatic Resource Legislation

Holoholo Fishers Talk Story Session

February 12, 2026

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Fishing

Oahu Uhu and Kala (HB1750, SB2972)

Temporarily prohibits the taking by spearing (at night) of uhu or kala in state marine waters around the island of Oahu, and prohibits the commercial sale of uhu and kala so taken (by spearing), until the DAR Holomua Marine Initiative process adopts applicable regulations.

Fishing

Spearfishing Safety (HB1765)

Establishes safety-warning requirements regarding spearfishing. Effective 7/1/2027.

"DANGER: SPEARFISHING INVOLVES BREATH-HOLD DIVING. PROLONGED SUBMERSION OR IMPROPER BREATHING MAY CAUSE HYPOXIA, LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, OR DEATH. NEVER DIVE ALONE."

To be implemented and enforced by DOH.

Fishing

Striped Mullet Bag Limit (HB1817)

Requires the BLNR to adopt rules no later than June 30, 2027, establishing a statewide daily bag limit of ten 'ama'ama per person during the open season.

Jug Line Fishing Ban (SB2973)

Prohibits the use of jug line fishing and other jug rig variant fishing methods in state waters.

Fishing

Commercial Aquarium Fishing Ban

Prohibits the harvesting of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

(HB1988, SB2996)

Prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

(HB2101, SB2535)

Fishing

Parrotfish Spearing (**SB244**)

Prohibits:

- (1) Commercial sales of parrotfish that have been caught by spearing; and
- (2) The spearing of parrotfish in state waters after sunset or before sunrise.

Fishing

Aquarium Fishing Fine Increase (SB839, SB2078)

Establishes a criminal penalty and monetary fines for aquarium fishing violations. Clarifies that each fish or aquatic life specimen taken in violation of certain fishing laws regarding aquarium fish and the possession and use of prohibited explosives, electrofishing devices, and poisonous substances constitutes a separate offense.

Lapakahi MLCD (SB510)

Directs DLNR to adopt rules lifting the moratorium on fishing in the Lapakahi Marine Life Conservation District.

Fishing

Bag Limits for Kala, Nenuë, and Uhu on Oahu (SB1262)

Establishes bag limits for kala, nenuë, and uhu fish around the island of Oahu.

- Two (2) kala, four (4) nenuë, one (1) uhu per person per day.
- No take of spectacled parrotfish.

Requires the Division of Aquatic Resources to conduct population assessments of these fishes and report to the Legislature every 2 years. Sunsets on 6/30/2035.

Water Quality

- Wastewater Technical Advisory Group (HB1730, SB2980)
- Wastewater Pilot Program (SB238)
- Wastewater Denitrification (SB471, HB2245, SB2753)
- Non-Chemical Sunscreen Dispensers (SB840, SB2426)
- PFAS Testing in Wastewater (SB2096)
- Water Retention Study (SB2144)
- Municipal Wastewater Treatment Standards (SB2971)
- Cesspools (HB1618, HB1749, HB1816, HB1921, HB1985, HB2060, HB2064, HB2079, HB2352, SB2243, SB2506, SB2525, SB2770, SB2926)

Plastic Pollution

- Single Use Plastics (**HB644**)
- Plastic Containers in Lodging Establishments (HB1948)
- Single Use Plastic Beverage Caps (SB2205)
- Single Use Plastic Utensils (SB2361)

Aquaculture

- Restorative Aquaculture Development Program (HB1572, SB2349)
- Aquaculture Oversight Transfer (HB1606, SB2350)
- Aquaculture Risk Assessment Framework (HB1832, SB3321)
- Aquaculture Research (**SB16**)
- Aquaculture and Scientific Research (**SB519**)
- Aquaculture Investment Tax Credit (**SB2028**)

Marine Protected Species

Cetaceans (SB1021)

Bans the keeping or breeding of cetaceans in captivity except in certain circumstances.

Sea Turtle Harassment (SB3014)

Increases the fines for taking or harassing protected turtles in the State from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Marine Protected Species

Feeding Feral Non-Native Animals Prohibition (**SB1537**)

Prohibits the feeding of feral non-native animals on state land within one-half mile of the ocean or a stream. Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enforce certain penalties for violations. Requires the counties to adopt or amend ordinances to prohibit the feeding of feral non-native animals on county land within one-half mile of the ocean or a stream and impose certain penalties for violations. Establishes an annual reporting requirement to the Legislature.

Marine Protected Species

Wildlife Viewing Guidelines (SB2944)

Requires the Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules that implement wildlife viewing guidelines that substantially conform to the wildlife viewing guidelines issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Requires annual reports to the Legislature until rules are adopted.

DLNR Support/Mandates

Coral Reef Herbivore Study (SB246)

Requires DLNR to conduct a study on the populations of coral reef herbivores around the island of Oahu and an analysis of policies and strategies to increase the populations of coral reef herbivores around Oahu, in consultation with the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and other experts. Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

MLCD Carrying Capacity Program (SB2084)

Requires DLNR to establish and conduct the Marine Life Conservation District Carrying Capacity Program. Requires DLNR to submit a report to the Legislature and adopt administrative rules. Appropriates funds.

DLNR Support/Mandates

Aquatic Invasive Species (SB1072)

Appropriates funds to support the efforts of the Division of Aquatic Resources in the removal of the majano anemone from Kaneohe Bay.

CIP – Kalauha‘iha‘i Fish Pond (HB2422)

Appropriates funds for capital improvement projects in the nineteenth representative district.
- \$500k for Kalauha‘iha‘i Fish Pond

DLNR Support/Mandates

DAR Support for Mangrove Removal (SB3053)

Appropriates moneys to the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources for mangrove removal and shoreline and stream maintenance in the Nineteenth Senatorial District and nearby areas, including the West Loch and Middle Loch shorelines.

New Management Authority

Community Co-Management

Authorizes DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers. Authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement. **(HB2218, SB2685)**

Authorizes DLNR and community-based organizations to enter into community co-management agreements concerning state lands. Authorizes DLNR to dispose state land through community co-management agreements. Establishes qualifications for community-based organizations that may enter into community co-management agreements. **(SB2979)**

New Management Authority

Hierarchy of Duty for Public Trust Resources (HB2230)

Establishes a hierarchy of duty for public trust resources to be applicable to the decisions made by DLNR in the management of the State's public natural resources.

MLCD Closure Authority (HB2432, SB2975)

Authorizes DLNR to close all or portions of any marine life conservation district for various periods of time and to adopt rules for the regulation of commercial activity within a marine life conservation district.

New Management Authority

Coral Reef Resilience (HB2599)

Requires DAR to manage the aquatic life and aquatic resources of the State with the highest priority given to protecting, restoring, and maintaining ecosystem integrity and use the best scientific data available.

Requires DAR to set goals to substantially increase coral-reef resilience around Oahu and develop a framework to meet those goals, with annual reports to the Legislature.

New Management Authority

Oahu Reef Resilience (SB3201)

Requires DAR to:

- (1) manage and administer aquatic life and resources, with the highest priority being to protect, restore, and maintain ecosystem integrity, using the best scientific data available;
- (2) restore and maintain reef ecosystems and indigenous species to a level that is not less than 80% of their natural biomass potential; and
- (3) expand and maintain live coral cover at not less than 25% on reefs that have historically supported naturally occurring live coral cover.

Requires DAR to develop plans and take actions to increase reef resilience around the island of Oahu by certain dates. Requires annual reports to the Legislature.

New Management Authority

Watershed and Coral Reef Ecosystem Legal Rights (SB3323)

Recognizes watersheds and coral reef ecosystems as legal persons with inherent and inalienable rights to exist, flourish, and naturally evolve. Establishes enforceable ecosystem rights grounded in public trust doctrine and Native Hawaiian customary stewardship.

Authorizes citizen enforcement, restorative and injunctive remedies, civil penalties, and continuing duties of ecological repair, including for historic harms. Provides for open representation, community consultation, co-governance, and supremacy over conflicting laws.

Education & Economic Development

- Environmental Stewardship Curricula (SB2213)
- Marine Trade Training Apprenticeship Program (SB2228)
- Blue Economy Working Group (SB2374)
- Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program (SB3050)
- Office of Marine Affairs (**HB1829**, SB2907)

Other

- Kaneohe Bay Regional Council (HB2361)
- 'Ōpae 'Ula State Shrimp (**SB1082**)
- Environmental Review Exemption for Fisheries Actions (**SB22**)
- Freshwater State Recreation Area Wildlife Sanctuary Corporation (**SB2606**)

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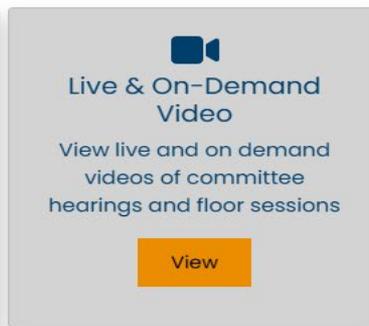
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