

Oahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC): Highlights

HISC support to OISC funds the core of an island-wide effort to fulfill the Response and Control and Outreach sections of the HISC Strategic Plan (OISC outreach accomplishments can be found in the outreach section of this report). Volunteers concerned about the spread of fountain grass on Oahu founded OISC in the mid-1990s. Now, OISC systematically controls 18 plant and animal species, educates the public about invasive species, and is implementing an early detection strategy to find and control invasive species before they can jump the fence line. In FY08 HISC funds to OISC equaled \$434,000. OISC leveraged these funds to raise an additional \$190,097. HISC approved an allocation of \$413,200 for FY09 for OISC.

OISC surveyed 13,034 acres for 18 key target species, and 16 incidental species. In the process OISC surveyed controlled a total of 1,951 acres, 23,164 individual plants were treated, and a total of 7,336 worker hours were used.

Number of species detected and evaluated for feasibility of eradication: Prioritization processes identified and in place: OISC and the Bishop Museum have partnered together to implement the Oahu Early Detection (OED) program.

Through island-wide botanical surveys, OED has developed a list of 150 species that are currently being assessed for feasibility of eradication. These surveys have turned up 35 new island records—species that are known to be in the state, but never documented as being on Oahu.

In addition to the early detection program, OISC has evaluated all of the 18 species it works on for the feasibility of eradication. This list was begun from a wider list of at least 68 species identified as invasive, prioritized for threat and evaluated for feasibility of eradication at one of the founding meetings of OISC in 2002.

Number and area of priority invasive species eradicated and/or controlled: Number and names of species, habitats, ecosystems, agricultural, and managed areas protected because of control efforts: Between November 1, 2007 and October 31, 2008, OISC surveyed for and controlled 34 different plant, vertebrate and invertebrate species, including miconia and coqui frog, over 13,034 acres. Highlights are below:

- The numbers of both seedling and mature miconia have steadily decreased while the effort to find it has remained the same, indicating that the spread of miconia has been stopped. As a result of these systematic surveys and control work, native forest ecosystems and watersheds of the Koolau Range are being protected.
- All known populations of smoke bush (*Buddleja madagascariensis*) have been completely removed from the island, protecting mesic forest ecosystems of the Koolau and Waianae Range.
- Forests and summit regions of Palolo and Maunawili Valleys are protected from

Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*). This species of blackberry is only found in Palolo Valley and was creeping toward the native forests of the Koolau summit. OISC has been systematically controlling it, removing 3,151 plants over 128 acres during the reporting period.

- OISC has protected homes and natural areas along the Waianae coast from the increased risk of fire that an invasion of fountain grass would bring. OISC monitors and controls all populations west of Punchbowl and north of Lanikai.

Implementation of the priority response and control actions of the aquatic invasive species, WNV, coqui frog, and red imported fire ant plans

In accordance with Section 194-2 (a) (4), HRS, OISC aims to reduce and control coqui frog infestations on public lands that are near or adjacent to communities by working with the HDOA to keep all coqui frogs off Oahu. Control efforts implemented between 2004 and 2006, removed the Island's only naturalized population of coqui frogs. No frog has been heard there since November of 2006. However, coqui frogs are continually re-introduced to Oahu via plants imported from coqui-infested areas on the Big Island.

OISC did the following during 2008 to keep public lands and residential areas on Oahu free of coqui frogs:

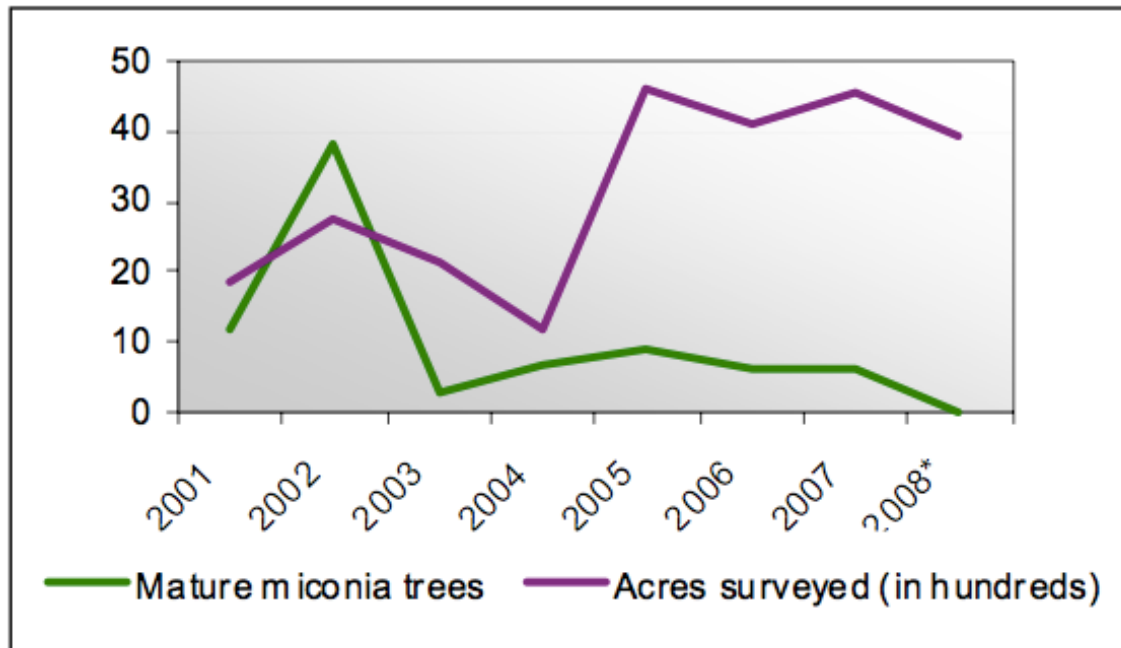
- In conjunction with HDOA, monitored nurseries that import plants from coqui-infested areas on other islands.
- Hand captured four frogs at the nurseries, before they were spread via plants.
- Cooperated with HDOA to conduct spray operations at a nursery with a more serious infestation.
- Spoke to night shift workers at retail garden stores to encourage them to report coqui frogs if heard.
- Responded to reports of coqui frogs from the general public. OISC personnel verified individual coqui frogs and removed them from Waialua, Mililani and Aiea.

Other accomplishments:

OISC received a "2008 Special Achievement in GIS" award from ESRI, the leading geographic information system software company. OISC was among 170 awardees chosen from more than 100,000 ESRI user sites worldwide "in recognition of their outstanding work in the GIS field."



Crews attempt to control the Himalayan blackberry, a thorny vine capable of smothering native plants and altering habitat.



Mature seed-bearing miconia trees compared to acres surveyed: The steady decline of mature trees while the acres surveyed has expanded or remained constant means that OISC has successfully interrupted the reproductive cycle of the tree and stopped its spread.