

## HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL FINAL REPORT FY16

**Proposal Title:** Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach Program Support

**Content Area:** Outreach

**Applicant:** Brian Neilson, DAR Biologist, brian.j.neilson@hawaii.gov

**Project Overview:** Public awareness and support for AIS threats is critical in order to prevent further introduction and spread. Educated members of the public can help identify harmful species, report new detections, and maintain support for local, state, and federal programs. The continued support for outreach of AIS issues on Oahu and neighbor islands is essential to achieve HISC's vision of protecting Hawaii's economy, natural environment and the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's people and visitors. For the AIS program to be effective, it is imperative to engage the public, improve awareness, and garner support. Outreach is a critical component of invasive species management and extremely cost effective compared to invasive species control measures. These programs can succeed if outreach becomes an increasingly important aspect of invasive species management and will result in a more aware and educated general public that can help prevent invasive species introductions and spread.

### **Project Outcomes**

- Developed a "Don't let it loose" outreach campaign targeting aquarium customers. We printed aquarium fish bags, decals, and stickers, with the "Don't Let it Loose" logo for pet and aquarium shops to educate customers on how to properly dispose of unwanted pets. We are in the process of meeting with pet and aquarium store managers and owners to engage them as partners in the project. The project is part of a national campaign, so a website is already established for the project.
- Produced AIS focused outreach materials for public events, workshops, and community work days. The AIS team engaged in a variety of events this year including the IUCN DLNR booth, International Coral Reef Symposium booth, Hunting and Fishing Day, classroom visits and community algae removal and survey events.
- DAR recently hired a full time outreach person for Oahu who included AIS as a regular part of his curriculum and talking points.