

January 2025 Progress Report Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan



PREPARED BY HAWAII
INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL
PROGRAM SUPPORT



At a Glance

HIBP Progress

Highlights

Priority Pest
Updates

Looking Ahead

Acknowledgement



Message from our leaders



Sharon Hurd,
HDOA Director
HISC Co-Chair



Dawn Chang,
DLNR Director
HISC Co-Chair

"Biosecurity safeguards Hawaii's people, plants and animals and our quality of life with programs that inspect incoming cargo."

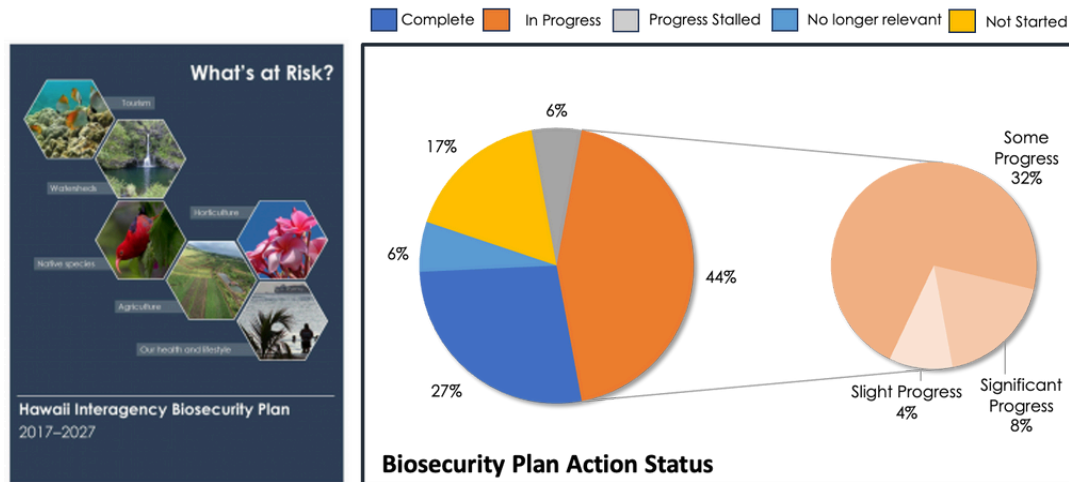
"Invasive species do not abide by political boundaries, jurisdictions, or sectors which is why collaboration and communication amongst our State Departments is critical."

This report provides an update on implementation of the State's Interagency Biosecurity Plan. The Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan (HIBP) addresses critical biosecurity gaps and provides a coordinated interagency path to a more secure future. It identifies policy, process, and infrastructure actions to address the most pressing invasive species issues in Hawai'i to be carried out over a 10-year period.

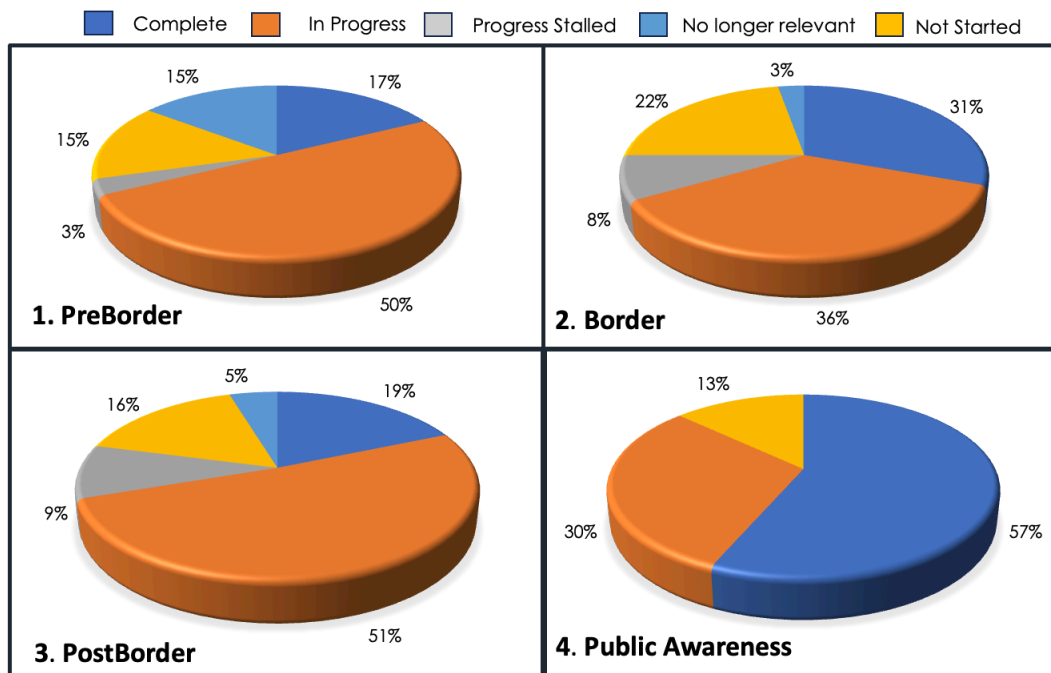
Looking at Progress

OVERVIEW: Of the actions identified in the Biosecurity Plan; 27% are considered complete and 44% are in some level of progress.

Each action addresses a gap in our biosecurity system and is broken into four areas of managing invasive species; PreBorder, Border, PostBorder, & Public Awareness. Overall progress on implementation of the plan and the breakdown of progress for each focal area is provided in the figures below.



1. **PreBorder (Pre)** Actions prevent the arrival of invasive species from reaching Hawaii's borders is the most cost-effective management strategy.
2. **Border (Bor)** Actions ensure effective surveillance, detection, and treatment of pests at the border.
3. **PostBorder (Pos)** Actions improve detection, eradication, or control the spread or impacts of pest plants, animals, and diseases after they are beyond the ports-of-entry and inspection process.
4. **Public Awareness (Pws)** Actions increase awareness and building public engagement for a comprehensive biosecurity program.



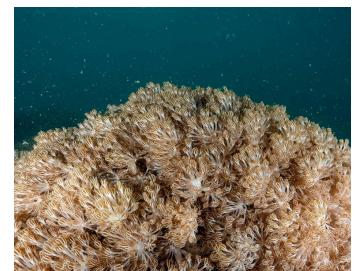
Biosecurity Plan Highlights



Highlight 1: ACT 231 “Biosecurity Bill”

PreBorder, Border, and PostBorder Actions were achieved by Governor Green and the Legislature approving a \$10 million increase to HDOA’s budget through Act 231 that includes critical positions and resources for biosecurity efforts. The 2024 Legislative Session brought a lot of attention to invasive species problems impacting the State, mainly due to the spread of high-impact pests like Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) and Little Fire Ants (LFA). *Photo HISC of HDOA Plant Quarantine Inspector looking for potential pests on imported produce.*

Public Awareness Actions achieved with the multi-agency collaboration with the launching of the “Don’t Let It Loose” campaign. Collaborators include DLNR, HDOA, U.S. Navy, and the University of Hawai’i through the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species and Waikiki Aquarium aiming to prevent the importation and possession of illegal and harmful marine aquarium species and to prevent the release of these invasives into the ocean. This is in light of recent discoveries of illegal, non-native marine aquarium species spreading across Hawaii’s reefs. *Photo U.S. Navy of invasive Unomia.*



Highlight 2: “Don’t Let It Loose” Campaign



Highlight 3: Developing Biosecurity Curriculum

Public Awareness Actions achieved with the University of Hawai’i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience securing funds to develop a new biosecurity curriculum for Hawai’i and the Pacific Islands providing a much needed pathway to buildup a biosecurity workforce across the Pacific Region. *Photo HISC of training on identifying mosquitos at Kahului Airport.*

Looking Ahead

Challenges to the Plan’s Effectiveness

Recent criticisms of the plan’s effectiveness come as many high-profile pests spread throughout the State and frustration grows on what looks like an inability to address our growing invasive species issues. A plan is only as good as the willingness of the departments, policy-makers and funders to support the implementation and the actions identified in the plan are still relevant to improving biosecurity. Funding has not kept pace with the plan’s

timeline. The plan calls for an investment of \$38M per year over the course of 10 years. Last legislative session we saw the first increase to HDOA and DLNR's budget, but it still falls short as we move into the eighth year of implementation. While we recognize the challenges and frustrations, we continue to believe vigilance and support to fully implement the Interagency Biosecurity Plan is best and only plan that we have to comprehensively prevent, protect, and manage the invasive species crisis.

2025 Legislative Session

Included in this year's Executive Budget is a big plus up in Biosecurity that is needed to truly address the extent of the problem. **(Fulfills Actions PreTifs 2.2, BorTifs 1.1, PosTifs 1.2, PosTifs 1.1, 2.3, 2.4, 1.11)**

- \$4.25M increase for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council
- \$500k to support research and extension for little fire ant efforts
- \$12.7M for the continuation of ACT 231 that increases HDOA's Biosecurity capacity

Administrative Rule Updates

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture began the rule-making process in 2024 to amend Chapter 4-72 which would provide greater clarity for the Department to stop, inspect, and quarantine agricultural commodities that may carry pests from intra/inter island. Updates to these rules is a priority identified in the Plan and hoping to see those updates finalized in 2025 **(Fulfills Actions PosPol 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5).**

Climate Change, Invasive Species, and Islands

Climate change is not mentioned in the current version of the Biosecurity Plan, but it is being considered as implementation continues and the interactions between climate change and invasive species become more apparent. Research has shown the effects of climate change and invasive species are often synergistic, with devastating consequences; natural disasters, species extinctions, and community displacement.

In October 2024, Hawai'i hosted the Invasive Species Advisory Council (ISAC) that provides expertise and input to the National Invasive Species Council (NISC). Two white papers that focus on climate change and islands were produced by the ISAC and provide meaningful recommendations on how to address these threats and will be important to integrate into future planning efforts: [🌐 ISAC White Papers | U.S. Department of the Interior](#)



Agencies are currently deploying landscape scale mosquito birth control on Maui and soon Kauai to protect native forest birds. Photo Jack Jeffery



Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke providing opening remarks at the October ISAC meeting. Photo Civil Beat



Additional funding to HDOA can help with management of agricultural pests like Two Lined Spittlebug. Photo HISC

Priority Pest Updates

In April 2024 the **Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA)**, the **Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)**, and the **University of Hawai'i (UH)** signed a joint agreement to tackle the threats posed by **invasive high priority pests; coqui frog, little fire ant, and coconut rhinoceros beetle**. Part of the agreement includes the development of response plans, protocol for data sharing, and regular communication to better coordinate interagency response efforts. The actions of this agreement achieve several actions under Border and PostBorder.

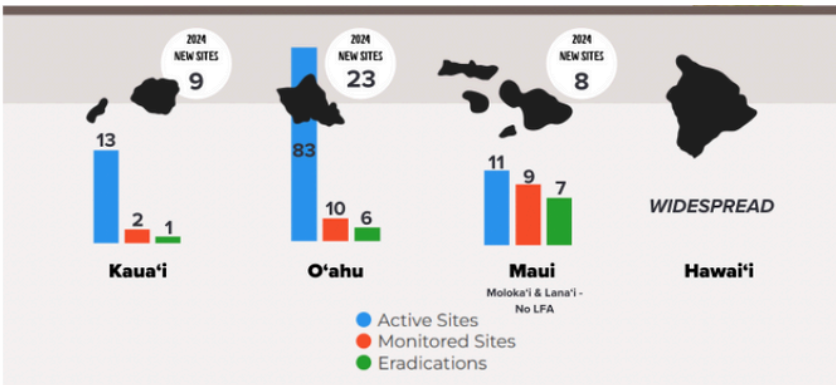
Status Update by County

Worked is a coordinated effort primarily amongst the UH projects; Invasive Species Committees, Hawaii Ant Lab, and the CRB Response Team; and HDOA.

Little Fire Ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*)



Photo HAL



Coqui Frogs (*Eleutherodactylus coqui*)

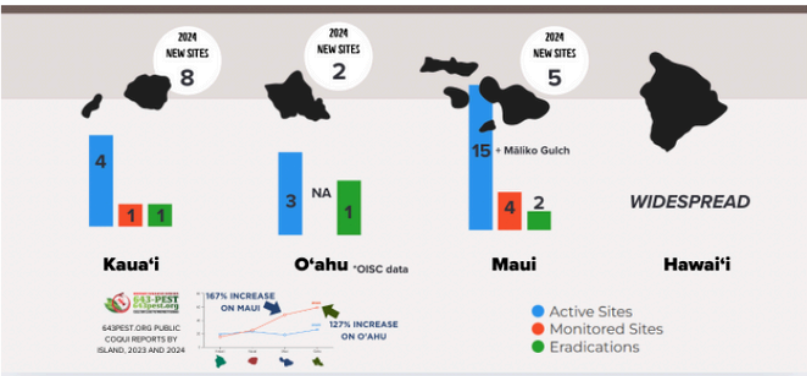
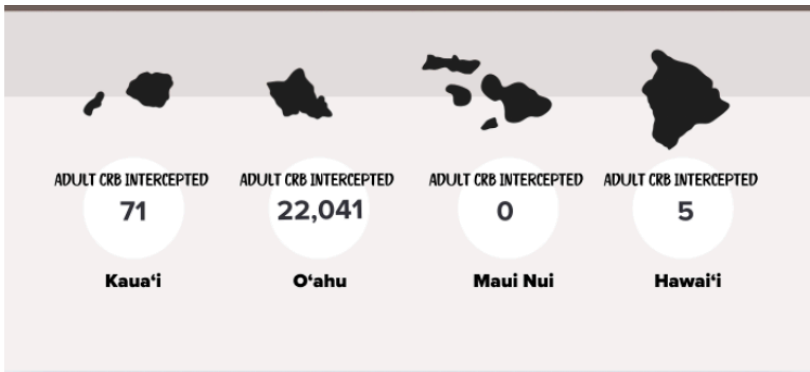


Photo HDOA

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*)



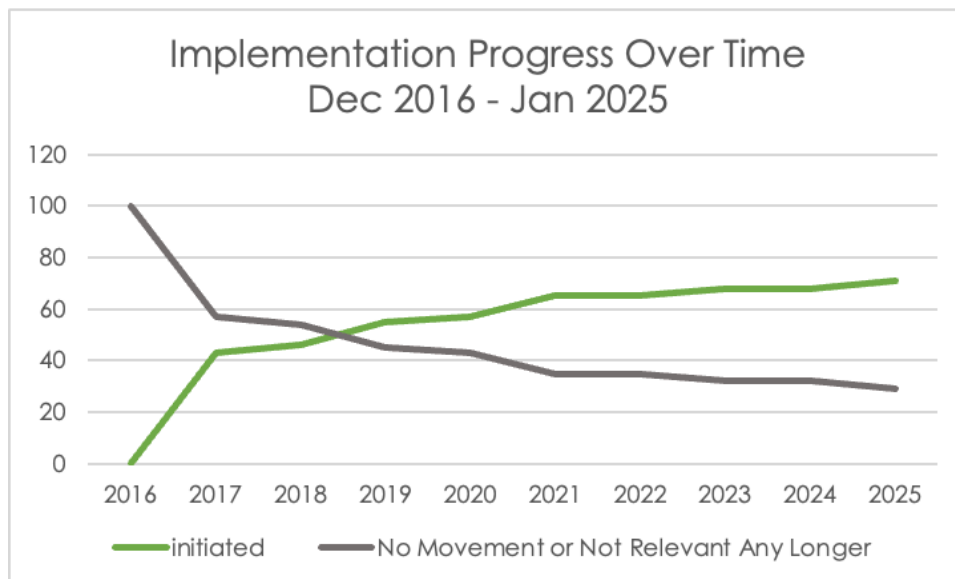
Photo HDOA



More information about the joint agreement can be found at: [🌐 2024 MOU for High Priority Pests](#)

Outlook

The HIBP launched in January 2017. A lot was accomplished during the first year of implementation. What remains are more complex actions that require funding or policy-level changes and the coordinated efforts and willingness of our entire partner network, policymakers, and our community.



The end of the 10 year plan is fast approaching and progress continues. A thorough review of the plan and actions was conducted in 2024 to ensure the best and appropriate steps are being taken to move actions forward and to prepare for the next Biosecurity Plan. The 2024 review resulted in changes to status terminology, action language, number of actions, and lead agencies.

Further Reading

Include links to supplementary material.

- [2024 Actions Spreadsheet](#)
- [Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Page Webpage](#)
- [Hawai'i Green Growth Invasive Species Dashboard](#)

Acknowledgements

For further information, please reach out to Chelsea Arnott at chelsea.l.arnott@hawaii.gov.

This Progress Report was prepared with information and support from:

Department of Agriculture: Jonathan Ho, Darcy Oishi, Greg Takashima, and Raquel Wong

Department of Health: Matt Kurano

Department of Land & Natural Resources: Emma Yuen, Rob Hauff, Lizzy Monaghan, & Jesse Boord

Hawai'i Invasive Species Council: Chelsea Arnott and Jack Reef

University of Hawai'i: Dr. Mike Melzer

Website: [🌐 Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan](#)

