

Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)  
Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)  
**GAME MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING #17**  
Virtual Meeting -ZOOM  
July 22, 2021

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT:

Commission: Stanley Ruidas, Lanai (Chair); Nancy Timko, Oahu (Vice Chair); Jason Sanborn, East Hawaii; John Terry, Oahu; Robert Masuda, Representative of the Chair of DLNR; Nicolai Barca, Kauai; Nelson Rapanot, Molokai

DOFAW Staff: Jason Omick, John Medeiros, Shane DeMattos, Nick Vargas, Myrna Giraldo-Perez

**ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER – DLNR Zoom Call**

*(5:42)* Commissioner Ruidas called the meeting of the Game Management Advisory Commission to order. Introduction of members, staff, and visitors. Requests for move-ups.

**ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Action Required:** Approval of minutes from the February 18, 2021 #16 GMAC meeting.

*(10:44)* Commissioner Ruidas made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2021 GMAC meeting. Nancy Timko motioned to approved minutes, Nicolai Barca seconded the motion. No opposition. Motion approved for meeting minutes and quorum met.

**ITEM 3. KAUAI HUNTER DIRECTORY**

*(11:53)* Commissioner Ruidas introduced Nicolai Barca to address this agenda item. A local hunter on the island proposed the idea for a hunter directory in order to address the need for technical advice for landowners, as well as providing a list of hunters by town, so local hunters can connect with each other on the island. This directory will provide landowners a resource to deal with pigs on the island by partnering with local hunters. Mr. Barca is hosting this Google docs site himself personally.

Nancy Timko wanted to clarify if the hunters are currently “vetted.” Nicolai Barca responded they are not currently vetted, but can be removed from the list if this is needed based on specific circumstances.

Jason Omick suggested that all hunters on this list have current hunting licenses and to coordinate a way to ask or check for this.

**Action item: The Google docs link for the Kauai Hunter Directory needs to be sent by Nicolai Barca to Jason Omick to send out to all Commissioners.**

#### **ITEM 4. GAME MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION**

##### **MANAGEMENT PLANS, LEGISLATIVE BILLS, PROGRAM PROJECT UPDATES**

*(18:58)* Jason Omick provides update on Lanai Steering document. The final document was completed and will be referenced when going to the Board to start a new lease with private landowner. The document was written mainly to leverage a long-term lease with the private landowners on Lanai. Please let Jason Omick know if you want a copy of this document.

*(21:04)* Jason Omick provides the Kanaio project update. This is a hunter access project to allow hunters access to approximately 6,000-8,000 acres on the island of Maui. All compliance documents have been received. Currently an environmental assessment is being conducted so DOFAW can use federal funds to manage hunting in this area. The final AIS was received. All cultural sites have been identified and assigned site numbers. Leadership currently has the compliance documents in their hands and it is planned that this project will be completed by later this year.

*(22:06)* Mobile APP update given by Jason Omick. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the Mobile APP was launched. It was developed through an Outer Spatial platform. This Mobile APP was developed to allow hunters to check-in and check-out of hunting units as well as provide users with access to maps and information on all trail and hunting resources for the state of Hawaii. There were approximately 3,000 downloads in 15 days. The next step is to evaluate how the hunter check-in information is coming in, and to begin analyzing it. Please let Jason Omick know if you have any comments on the APP.

*(24:54)* Jason Omick reviews the online tags and permits application webpage, another DOFAW project. This online portal will allow hunters to be able to submit online applications and obtain tags or permits for hunting. This is located on the “GO HUNT” website. Sometime in November 2021, most likely mid-November, people will be able to go to this page and purchase all tags and permits for all islands. Within this portal, hunters will be able to login and view their hunting education records, all permits/tags purchased, classes, events and upcoming hunts.

*(27:22)* Jason Omick clarified for Nicolai Barca that hunters will be able to purchase tags online via credit cards and be able to print out the tags purchased at home or save them for access on

smartphones. Directions are provided on how the tags are to be secured to the animal on the webpage.

(28:22) Jason Omick clarified that on the Outer Spatial APP that hunters can check-in, check-out and record their harvest.

(28:49:) Jason Omick addresses how tags will be issued on the island of Lanai. This process is currently being worked out. Currently, the tags can be printed off, put in a plastic zip-lock bag and attached to the animal. On special hunts, tags might be mailed to attach to the animal. Right now, Jason is working with Shane DeMattos on the logistics for tags on Lanai hunts. There will be an option for manual purchase to obtain tags at the designated the check-station.

(31:06) Jason Omick answers question for Nicolai Barca regarding usage of the Outer Spatial APP for checking in for overnight camping & hunting in certain areas. Jason Omick clarifies that manual check-in's will still be required at stations for those areas, as that is how it is currently stated in the rules.

(32:22) Jason Omick reports on the status of the Kauai Ungulate distribution research project. Multiple islands have been completed, Oahu, Maui, and now Kauai. This project has just been completed. In approximately two months, the report and analysis will be completed for the Ungulate distribution on these three islands. This information will be shared as soon as the report is received from the University of Hawaii.

(33:14) Jason Omick reports that Myrna a KUPU member is assisting him on collecting all game mammal and bird harvest data from all the islands. This project is 75% completed. The data covers from the 1980's to 2018, and on some animals further back than the 1980's. This data will identify hunting trends on the islands. Myrna shares various slides regarding this data.

(39:26) Jason Omick shares they are currently working on a rule package. They currently have the rules identified that they want to change, and have identified the changes that need to occur. Jason can share a link with Commissioners to access the rules, and the changes identified. Due to new legislation that has just passed, House Bill 1020, there will be some rules that can be changed by simply going to the Board of Natural Land & Resources. A team is reviewing which rules must be submitted and put through the regular legislative change process (per Chapter 91), versus the rules that can be simply submitted to the Board of Natural Land & Resources and opened for public comment. Certain adjustments of bag limits, seasons, and restrictions on equipment, can now be submitted to the Board for rule changes. This new bill that was passed can be accessed on the Capitol website, and Jason Omick will be providing this link to the Commissioners via an email regarding where to access this information.

(41:39) House Bill 663, relating to the Game Commission, and how the Game Commission members are selected, was also brought forth before the Legislature. This bill was vetoed. Applicants for the Game Management Commission will therefore, still be reviewed by the Governor's office.

(42:16) Update for the Lanai Hunt given by Jason Omick. The Lanai hunt did begin. DOFAW has statistics on the preliminary statistics for up to July 15<sup>th</sup>. If any Commission members wish to review the initial information, please notify Jason Omick with their request. The initial data does show people are attending this hunt and enjoying their hunts.

(43:09) Jason Omick reports on the method developed years prior to conduct game bird surveys. This survey methodology was converted into an application that can be used on Survey123 from a smartphone. Currently DOFAW is working with the different islands to develop transects so the game bird data can be collected and put into dashboards on this application. The game bird survey information is being collected from areas on each island where people hunt a lot, so information can be shared with others.

**Action Items: Jason Omick is to provide Commissioners the link to review legislative rule changes and the link for the Commissioners to review House Bill 1020.**

**Jason Omick is to share the final report with the Commissioners for the Kauai Ungulate Distribution research project, as soon as it becomes available.**

#### **ITEM 5. HUNTER SURVEYS**

(45:50) Commissioner Stanley Ruidas introduces the hunter survey topic that has been brought up at the past couple meetings.

(46:05) Jason Omick discusses that in the past years of 2016, 2017 & 2018, a hunter survey had been developed. Currently today, there is a mail list serve of approximately 7,000 hunters, a large increase from the 400 hunters participating when surveys were previously conducted. Jason, would like to revamp the survey currently in place. An example of the survey is included in the published report, Public Lands Information Survey Report that is shared by Jason Omick, and will be provided to each Commissioner along with links to access the information. Jason Omick, would like each Commissioner to provide feedback regarding which questions they would like to be included in the new survey, or any new questions they deem would be appropriate to include, so that feedback can be provided to the outside firm that will conduct the survey for DOFAW. The key is to use information from the survey participants that will be helpful to hunters moving forward

(49:58) Stanley asks that each Commissioner take into account the differences between islands and the animals that are hunted, when determining survey questions, as well as changes in technology that have occurred.

**Action Items: Jason Omick to provide links to all Commissioners to access prior survey information.**

**All Commissioners are to provide to Jason Omick survey questions they would like included in new surveys.**

## ITEM 6. GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN FEASIBILITY

(50:29) Commissioner Ruidas asks Jason Omick to discuss game management plan feasibility for individual islands versus as a statewide project.

(50:36) Jason Omick discusses that in the past they have looked at developing island specific game management plans, as well as determining if it is feasible to do this on a state level. This type of project requires a lot of staff time, but it can be done with an outside contractor.

Now that a new fiscal year is starting, the opportunity to proceed forward on these plans can be reviewed again. Jason Omick would like feedback from the Commissioners to determine if the place to start with new plans would be to evaluate certain areas in which a lot of game is currently being managed. A suggestion is made to develop game management plans for only these areas initially. Jason Omick reiterates the importance of having a plan and utilizing these as a steering document moving forward, such as the one created for Lanai that will influence how the land is managed there. Copies of previous plans can be provided for review, and Jason Omick requests that Commissioners feel free to email and brainstorm with him on this issue.

(54:01) Nicolai Barca states in the past he once evaluated the game management plans of other states and he feels that the manner in which DOFAW approached the Kanaio Plan, meaning prioritizing certain areas, is the manner in which these plans should be approached.

(54:36) John Medeiros questions what is the purpose of these game management plans? John, would like to know is the purpose to evaluate where more game is needed in certain areas for hunting, or is the purpose to mitigate conflicts between game mammals and other native species? He is wanting to define what is management and how to manage the game better.

(55:32) Jason Omick responds to John Medeiros questions and states that his questions are valid. The goal is to find a balance between protecting natural resources and providing hunting opportunities. The game management plans will address high priority areas versus low priority areas for improving hunting opportunities, while protecting resources. It will be easier to develop plans in areas that DOFAW manages like GMA's versus forest reserve areas.

(57:18) Nicolai Barca asks John Medeiros which areas on Oahu do not have enough game mammals for hunting and what game mammals are lacking. John states that the take limits for goats on the south and east sides of the island are not necessary, as goats have been basically eradicated in those areas.

(58:02) Commissioner Ruidas states, "Let the record show that Nelson Rappanot has just joined the meeting."

**Action Item: Commissioner Ruidas asks that all Commissioners prioritize which items are a priority in their areas to be addressed within a game management plan, and to get this list of information to Jason Omick**

## ITEM 7. COMMISSIONER ISLAND REPORTS

(58:57) Commissioner Ruidas asks each Commissioner to give a short report on their island.

7-I **OAHU.** (1:20:38) Commissioner Timko stated that she did not have time to meet with Nick Vargas this quarter and does not have a report. Nancy does provide an overview of the program “Becoming an Outdoors Woman.” This program is for women 18 years and over with interests in outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting and hiking, but don’t have access to any group to explore these interests. This is a three-day workshop, with 5-6 classes being offered per session. They can choose the classes they wish to participate in for each session. Registration will begin August 1<sup>st</sup> and the workshop is September 17-19<sup>th</sup>. The first program conducted last year was sold out, and they are looking forward to conducting this again.

(1:24:00) John Terry has been speaking with Nick Vargas a great deal. One idea being discussed is a hunter mentorship program in order to increase hunter retainment on Oahu. People seem to be getting their hunting license and having little to no success with hunting, therefore they discontinue hunting. Another item being discussed is implementing a similar situation as what is being done on Kauai with pigs and private landowners, and using this method to increase hunter retainment.

7-II **KAUAI** (1:15:23) Nicolai Barca stated that the application for deer rifle season is coming up, with a deadline of 8/6/21. Nicolai spoke with DOFAW for the need to be able to debone animals in some of the more remote areas, as hiking back to the hunter stations for the animal to be inspected, does not make any sense. He was told the rule cannot be adjusted in time for the hunting season this year, but definitely will be addressed for next year.

7-III **MOLOKAI** (59:05) Nelson Rapanot stated that the concerns on Molokai continue to be with DLNR- fencing and arial shooting. To date, DOFAW has had some meetings on the island to explain their actions, so the hunters can better understand what are DOFAW’s objectives or goals. Fencing is a big problem on Molokai. Mr. Rapanot feels the way in which DOFAW is doing their fencing and shooting is a problem, as they are blocking the animal’s paths to food. The hunters on Molokai are not satisfied with DOFAW’s explanations regarding their actions.

The hunters agree with arial shooting in steep areas where hunters cannot get to in order to retrieve animals, but they do not agree with the arial shooting that is now occurring on the south side of the island in areas where animals can be retrieved. Nelson has spoken with Shane regarding data of animals that are being seen by DOFAW and has been provided with this data. Nelson has not yet shared this information with the hunters, but based on the data he does not understand why arial shooting continues to occur.

A second item that is huge which needs to be addressed, is to assist the homesteaders with the abundance of deer that is beginning to occur. The land is becoming dry again which is causing the deer to show themselves. Nelson has spoken with Tony and John Medeiros regarding how can the landowners or lessees obtain nuisance permits or night hunting permits, to limit the deer until DLNR can begin assisting them to minimize the deer population.

A third issue is that hunters on Molokai still have concern regarding the illegal guide hunting occurring on the island. Nelson spoke to Scott Fritz a few years ago regarding the need for amendments to guide licensing and the need for enforcement to prevent this illegal conduct. Nelson feels that when guides obtain licenses, they need to have the landowner sign the letter authorizing the guide to operate on their land.

(1:05) Jason Omick responds that the licenses issued by DOFAW does state that the guide licenses are for private land only, not state land. Currently the Department does not require written land-owner's permission, and this is something that would have to change under the rules. Nelson feels legislatively an amendment to this application or rule needs to be made.

(1:07:50) It is also clarified that the survey data provided to Nelson was for land only owned, and managed, by the state of Hawaii- the forest reserves. The areas in which arial shooting is being conducted, have nothing to do with the surveys sent to Nelson. Only forest reserves were surveyed. Please be careful with data sent and how this is utilized. It is also stated the guide license issue will need to occur through a statute change process, not a rule change.

(1:09:53) Jason said this issue can be resolved. Jason Omick will meet with Administration regarding this issue, and will proceed forward implementing the process needed to adopt the change to the guide application process.

(1:10:22) It is clarified the annual hunting guide report simply asks: 1.) who you took hunting, 2.) date, 3) hunters name, 4.) license number. 5.) where hunter is from.

(1:11) Stan is wanting to clarify who is conducting the arial eradication on Molokai. Shane does clarify it is through DOFAW but provided through the NARS program through cooperation with TNC. It is being conducted on TNC land. Nelson clarifies the mammals are being shot and left at the spot where they are shot. Stan asks Robert to assist Nelson on Molokai with this situation.

7-IV **LANAI.** (1:23:34) Commissioner **Ruidas** stated that they have been seeing a lot of youth hunters and girls coming out with their moms and dads to hunt. (1:25:31) Comissioner Ruidas states that they have been having combined Mouflon & Axis deer hunts. A lot of nice bucks are coming out and the youth hunters are enjoying this. This season is looking similar to what occurred last year.

Next month there will be a fall hunter survey and this survey will determine how many deer got eradicated and what will be used to determine a bag limit next year. The land is becoming dry again so deer are out looking for food and water. (1:27:11) Jason Sandborn comments that

he took part in the Lanai state hunt this year. He interfaced with a great number of people during this event. He feels that the Lanai season this year was wonderful and the game was plentiful. Hunters have shared they felt the Lanai program this year has been a huge success.

- 7-V **EAST HAWAII (1:17:32)** Jason Sandborn speaks on behalf of East Hawaii. Jason states he does not have anything to report at this time. Currently they are dealing with a big fire on the island. Kaohe Management Area is being impacted.

*(1:19)* Robert Masuda shares that each Hawaii representative should work with the wildlife biologists assigned to their specific area in order to obtain information. He states that Jason should be working with Ian Cole and that the West Hawaii person working with the biologist designated for that area. He asks Jason Omick to put out a memo to all wildlife staff to coordinate this cooperation with each Commissioner.

**Action Item: Jason Omick to provide a list of Wildlife Biologists designated to each area assigned a GMAC Commissioner.**

#### **ITEM 8. FUTURE MEETING DATES & AGENDA ITEMS**

*(1:30:00)* Commissioner Ruidas asks Jason Omick to address this item. Jason asks if the Commissioners would like to determine a future meeting date. Jason states he will not be available August 8-14<sup>th</sup>. He would like to see the future availability of Robert Masuda. R. Masuda would like them to set two meeting dates at a time. Commissioner Ruidas would like Jason Omick to send out via email, two future meeting dates. Do not make meeting dates on Mondays or Fridays, preferably Thursdays. Please plan September and October meeting dates. Jason responds possibly September 17<sup>th</sup> and then another meeting in November. One meeting every other month is suggested. West Hawaii and Maui still need members appointed to the Commission.

**Action Item: Jason Omick is to set two future GMAC meeting dates based on Commissioner feedback and email the upcoming schedule.**

#### **ITEM 9. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*(1:34:21)* Jason Omick states that there is ethics training and Sunshine law training available on the state of Hawaii website. He will forward all this information to each new Commissioner for them to review in order to be prepared for meetings.



(1:34:58) Jason Omick states he did develop an email address for Nancy Timko regarding the upcoming workshop with a “.gov” address. That can be utilized for all correspondence in relation to the upcoming workshop. He will provide this information to N. Timko so she can incorporate this email address into all marketing material.

(1:36:00) Jason Omick states that DOFAW did get all the FY2022 game grants submitted to the Fish & Wildlife Service. Projects are beginning to be awarded. Currently they have not yet been awarded the Game Grant for FY2022 but should be seeing that shortly. The non-game grant was awarded a few days ago.

(1:36:47) Robert Masuda shares a big thank you to Stanley Ruidas and Jason Omick for the big turn around in the Commission and feels they are starting to see the types of things that are expected out of this Game Management Commission. Addressing items such as promoting hunting and wildlife management is being focused upon and results are being seen.

**Action Item: Jason Omick to email all new Commissioners web-link for ethics and Sunshine law training.**

#### **ITEM 10. ADJOURNMENT**

(1:37:36) Commissioner Ruidas adjourns the meeting.