

GMAC Meeting Minutes – 06/05/2025

GMAC Member Attendance

Michael Johnson -	Present
Nancy Timko -	Present
Jason Sanborn -	Not Present
Nicolai Barca -	Present (Online)
Gonzalo Garcia -	Not Present
Stanley Ruidas -	Present
Jason D. Omick -	Present

ITEM 1. 00:00 – Item 1—Call to order, introductions of members, staff, and visitors; all commission members, DLNR-DOFAW Staff and visitors gave an introduction.

ITEM 2. 04:45 – Item 2 - Review and approve meeting minutes from February 27, 2024 meeting. No Comments from GMAC Commissioners. No comments from the the public from Zoom or email accounts. Motion to approve meeting minutes made by Jason D. Omick. Commissioner Nancy Timko seconded that motion. Discussion was issues by Commissioner Stanley Ruidas, asked to confirm the date listed on the document. Date was confirmed by Jason D. Omick. No Opposition. Motion passes unanimously and and quorum met. Documents to be posted onto the DLNR-DOFAW GMAC website.

ITEM 3. 07:13 - Selecting a GMAC Commission Chair. Nominations were made for Commission Chair. Member Stanley Ruidas nominates himself. Member Nancy Timko nominates Stanley for Chair. Commissioner Ruidas is elected GMAC Chair unanimously by all present Commissioners and quorum met.

ITEM 4. 09:20 - Discussion of the costs/planning of Wildlife Management Plans. GMAC Chair Stan Ruidas leads discussion. Wanted to know updated costs to have management plans for every district in the State of Hawaii. He requests that we look into figuring out how to get Hawaii Island's Game Management Plan completed and finalized.

10:25 - Jason Omick states that we can resurrect the Hawaii Island game management plan draft and go through sectional reviews to bring it up-to-date. Explains what it takes to formulate game management plans, what types of data that needs to be collected, and expectations that need to be realized due to department regulations. Currently the Pittman-Robertson Game Grant is viewed as a form of a Game Management Plan for the State.

19:07 - Richard Furst (Oahu public member) states for the Department to have documents or draft master plans readily available for public to acquire for their own review.

20:15 - Jason Omick explains that members of the public should work with their island GMAC members to be able start conversations about proposed plans or have topics for agenda items for future GMAC Meetings.

23:00 - Taysen Wong Chong requesting a draft copy of the Hawaii Island game management plan. Also wanting to see revised game management on hunting units on Mauna Loa to address feral game species populations. Wanting to see changes in seasons, means of take, and improvements of roads/access. Wants to avoid the need of forest clearing for fencing, public hunting land removal, eradication methods. Wants to promote hunter access and game management.

31:00 - GMAC Chair Stanley Ruidas wants to see if DOFAW staff can develop a shared drive so Commissioners can disseminate information to the public from a single source.

32:20 - Action Item - Briefing on how to access documents via the GMAC Website

ITEM 5.

32:49 - Update on DOCARE Officers designated per island and how the academy will have funding for the next ten years.

33:30 – DLNR Nicholas Vargas provided an update and responses to the following questions listed for discussion

40:05 – GMAC Chair Stanley Ruidas proposes that Commission formulate a letter of support for the DOCARE recruit academy for additional funding

40:15 – Action Item - Development of a letter of support for the DOCARE recruit academy for additional funding.

41:00 – Richard Furst (Oahu public member) requests information of the total officers' split between marine and terrestrial patrol units for each of the islands.

ITEM 6.

43:12 – Overview Game Program Activities - DOFAW Presentation from Nicholas Vargas

52:40 – GMAC Chair Stanley Ruidas asked Nicholas Vargas for more details about the Oahu DLNR and Board of Water Supply Wildlife Control Permit for Makaha Valley

ITEM 6.

54:02 - GMAC Chair Stanley Ruidas asked Nicholas Vargas for more details about Maui's Game Bird Rearing and Release Programs

54:57 – Klayton Kubo (Kauai public member) expresses support for the Unit F Adaptive management rule changes. Hopes to see that this rule is made permanent for the upcoming hunting rule changes for the State. Encourages all island hunters to reach out to DLNR-DOFAW with suggestions for Adaptive Management Rule Changes for their respective islands. Also wants the Department to find a better way for people to receive alerts or emails to be notified about these GMAC Meetings

1:02:27 – Richard Furst (Oahu public member) wants to be added to the mailing list to receive notifications about future GMAC Meetings. Have regularly scheduled meetings on assigned days with an advanced two-week notice. Suggests using other social media outlets to get information out to the public.

1:04:49 – Abraham Antonio (Hawaii public member) wants to be added to the mailing list to receive notifications about future GMAC Meetings. Wants to receive an updated Hawaii Island Game Management Plan.

1:06:40 – Taysen Wong Chong (Hawaii public member) wants to be added to the emailing list for future GMAC announcements. Received a copy of the updated Hawaii Island Game Management Plan

1:08:14 – Teresa Nakama (public member) wants to be added to the emailing list for future GMAC announcements. Want to know where she can receive the meeting minutes for GMAC Meeting # 22 or when it will be posted onto the GMAC webpage. Wanting to know why the chatbox was disabled for this zoom meeting. Provided her email for DOFAW Staff:
teresanakama51@gmail.com

1:10:48 – Richard Furst (Oahu public member) wants to know how he can get involved in the Oahu Game Bird Rearing / Release Project for volunteering work.

1:12:23 – Jason Omick (DLNR-DOFAW) suggests providing a list of the District Biologists contact information for Richard Furst.

1:12:45 – Public Relations Molokai Hunting Club would like to be included on the notification list on all DLNR-GMAC Meetings.

ITEM 7.

1:13:02 – Chyloe Marie K Skizewski (DLNR – Office of the Chair) suggests using the email list of 20,000+ hunters to broadcast messages encouraging hunters to sign up for the GMAC notification email newsletter.

1:13:50 – Short Report by each commissioner summarizing their meeting with DOFAW staff on the island they represent. Lanai Commissioner Chair Stanley Ruidas provides his report first. Reported 17 weeks of successful deer hunting for the island of Lanai. Game numbers have been reported to be very low this season. The Lanai Mouflon lottery results were posted very quickly online for public dissemination. Nancy Timko (Oahu GMAC member at large reports in November 2024, was able to host a First Hunt Foundation - Ladies First Pheasant hunt for first-time hunters. Facilitated private land and public land pheasant hunt opportunities for this group of women. Would like to see this same program for first-time youth hunters to get exposed to upland bird hunting. Michael Johnson (Maui GMAC member) reports that in Waiohuli, currently closed, when open for hunting had a harvest of 788 axis deer was harvested there. Maui DOFAW is working on reopening it. The status of Kanaio is still unknown at this time. Ahihi-Kina'u NAR Wildlife Control Permit hunt is a rewarding hunt for both deer and goat. Available for public hunters to apply for right now. Poli-poli Cabin does not allow any hunters with weapons in the facility due to previous issues. Lanai Hunt had reported for the youth hunt: 51 deer and 13 ewes. Suggested to Maui DOFAW to allow for additional tag issuance for youth hunts to make it more exciting/rewarding. Game Bird Season has reported that Maui DOFAW will be releasing chukar and pheasants this season. Nicolai Barca (Kauai GMAC member) reported that the Forestry Department is starting up a hydromulching project for highly eroded areas to see if that would initiate vegetation recovery. Drafted a letter to encourage the Hawai'i GMAC to take a leadership role in promoting clear, science-based population objectives for game animals on public lands.

1:29:06 – Lanai Commissioner GMAC Chair Stanley Ruidas requested information about Statewide youth hunts. Wanted to see if it could be an option to provide more opportunities for youth, disabled hunters, and potential rule changes. Wants to instill legacy mentalities between parents and new hunters.

1:31:22 – Klayton Kubo (Kauai public member) reported issues about eradication issues on Lanai due to low hunter success. Doesn't think that the hydro-mulching project will be successful and would be just money wasted. Requesting that DOFAW coordinate with Hunter-Gatherers when they propose these types of projects.

ITEM 7. 1:38:23 – Shane DeMattos (Maui – DOFAW) reporting that the population of deer is low on Lanai. However, hunter success rates are higher and should be compared to previous years and to numbers on the mainland to show the success of the hunts. Explains that there are no eradication efforts or aerial shooting on Lanai. They are taking efforts to reduce the numbers of the deer and sheep populations on just the Game Management Area on Lanai.

1:40:34 – Nicolai Barca (Kauai GMAC member) wanted to discuss aerial survey results from Spring 2023, which showed that potentially there were about 80 deer per square mile or 1 deer per 8 acres. Between the Spring and the Fall, numbers decreased substantially due to a major drought, leaving about 11 deer per square mile. To summarize, Nicolai states that we should be looking into these numbers to figure out the carrying capacity of hunting areas like Lanai so that we can avoid major die-offs of game animals due to degraded habitat caused by large population numbers.

1:44:12 – Richard Furst (Oahu public member) proposed that the GMAC look into observing the factors that lead to lower game animal numbers on the islands. Look into management steps for higher-than-normal drought conditions. Look into longer-term planning to ensure hunting for future generations. Proposed promoting increased access in private land hunts and researching more options to get public hunters into zones with higher animal activity. Maui's Axis Deer Land Owner Incentive Program is something to look into because it deals with deer populations and potentially increased access/opportunities for public hunters.

ITEM 8. 1:50:44 – Set Future meeting schedules, locations and potential agenda items. Commissioners and DOFAW staff agreed upon setting an assigned day for all future GMAC Meetings; that being the first Wednesday of every two months.

The Next Meeting will be on August 6th, 2025, on Oahu. The following meeting locations will be on Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kauai.

ITEM 9. 1:56:55 – Jason Omick (DLNR-Staff) states that the announcements will be skipped for this meeting due to time shortage.

ITEM 10. 1:57:13 - Adjournment – Motion was passed unanimously at 07:03 PM.