

STATE OF HAWAII  
*KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAII*

DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
*KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA*

NOTICE OF ANIMAL CONTROL ACTIVITIES AND TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF  
MAUNA KEA FOREST RESERVE, MAUNA KEA ICE AGE NATURAL AREA RESERVE,  
PALILA MITIGATION LANDS, AND KA'OHE GAME MANAGEMENT AREA

Legal Notice DOFAW

HILO -- The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) will conduct animal control operations targeting feral goats, feral sheep, and mouflon/feral sheep hybrids on the island of Hawai'i. This will involve ground-based and aerial control methods within Palila critical habitat areas, including:

- Mauna Kea Forest Reserve (Unit A)
- Mauna Kea Ice Age Natural Area Reserve (Unit K)
- Palila Mitigation Lands (Pu'u Mali & Ka'ohe Restoration Areas)
- Ka'ohe Game Management Area (Unit G)

Aerial shooting is required to comply with the federal court order mandating the removal of sheep and goats from critical habitat for the Palila, a bird endemic to Hawaii with a dwindling wild population. The portion of Mauna Kea Unit A south of the Gilbert Kahele Recreation Area (bordering Pōhakuloa Training Area) will remain open for mammal hunting.

Control is scheduled for February 24-25 and April 21-22, 2026. Public access to Mauna Kea Forest Reserve, Mauna Kea Ice Age Natural Area Reserve, Palila Mitigation Lands, the Ka'ohe Game Management Area, and Mauna Kea Hunter Access Road will be restricted and allowed BY PERMIT ONLY for animal salvage purposes on the following dates:

07:00 a.m. February 24 and April 21, 2026

06:00 a.m. February 25 and April 22, 2026

Public Access & Salvage Permits

These actions are pursuant to HAR§ 13-130-19 and § 13-104-23(a) (3). The Mauna Kea Observatory Road will remain open. The temporary closure is necessary to minimize the risks associated with incompatible uses in the forest area and to ensure the safe conduct of animal control activities. To implement the closure, the Hale Pohaku, Kilohana, and Pu'u Ko'ohi gated entrances to Unit A and G, and the gate behind Gilbert Kahele State Recreation Area, will be locked/reopened as follows:

Locked 8 p.m. February 23, 2026, and reopened 7 p.m. February 25, 2026.

Locked 8 p.m. April 20, 2026, and reopened 7 p.m. April 22, 2026

Copies of the map illustrating the area subject to aerial shooting on these dates are available for inspection at the Division of Forestry and Wildlife Office.

Due to high public participation, telephone call-ins to the DOFAW Hilo Office at (808) 974-4221 for receiving salvage permits will be conducted from 9:00 a.m. on February 17, 2026, to 10:00 a.m. on February 23, 2026. Telephone call-ins for the April control program will be conducted from 9 a.m. April 14, 2026 to 10 a.m. April 20, 2026. One permit will be issued per caller for one vehicle per day. Applicants can have their names added to a stand-by list for additional days, should other applicants not fill all slots. No standby permits will be issued on the days of the operation, and no one without a permit will be allowed access to the area. The driver, occupants, vehicle license plate number, and make/model of the vehicle are required when calling in. A maximum of 15 permitted vehicles will be allowed at the Pu'u Ahumoa location and 15 permitted vehicles at the Pu'u Mali location. Permittees must arrive promptly at the designated meeting spot. No late entries will be allowed. Permittees must be prepared to remain at the salvage site for up to eight hours, equipped with appropriate gear/supplies (e.g., water, coolers with ice). There will be no exit from the salvage site until the day's operation is completed or in the event of an emergency. Each permittee must also participate in digging the hole where entrails are to be discarded. Failure to adhere to the above conditions may preclude the permittee's participation in future salvage operations.

Carcasses taken during the shoot will be available to the permitted public for salvage at the following locations (a four-wheel drive vehicle is required, and access permits will be issued). However, there is no guarantee that animals will be able to be salvaged.

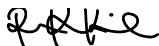
Salvage locations are subject to change:

- ☐ On February 24 and April 21, 2026, at Puu Ahumoa. Permittees must meet at Kilohana check-in station at 7 a.m. sharp.
- ☐ On February 25 and April 22, 2026, at Puu Mali. Permittees must meet across from the Waimea Veterinary office on Mana Road at 6 a.m. sharp.

Contact the Division of Forestry and Wildlife in Hilo at (808) 974-4221 for more information about meat salvage or access permits.

Done at Honolulu this \_\_th day of January, 2026.

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**Ryan K.P. Kanaka'ole, Acting Chairperson  
Department of Land and Natural Resources**

**Signature:**



**Email:** david.g.smith@hawaii.gov