

GMAC Meeting Minutes – 10/01/2025

GMAC Member Attendance

Michael Johnson (Maui) -	Present
Richard Furst (Oahu) –	Present
Jason Sanborn (E. Hawai'i) –	Present (Online)
Nicolai Barca (Kauai) -	Present (Online)
Stanley Ruidas (Lanai) -	Present
Jason D. Omick (Ex Officio) -	Present
Open Seat (W. Hawai'i) -	Not Present
Open Seat (Moloka'i) -	Not Present

- ITEM 1. 00:20 – Item 1—Call to order, introductions of members, staff, and visitors; all commission members, DLNR-DOFAW Staff and visitors gave an introduction. Review of agenda items for today's meeting. GMAC Stanley Ruidas will chair today's meeting.
- ITEM 2. 04:12 – Item 2 - Review and approve meeting minutes from the June 05, 2025 meeting. No Comments from GMAC Commissioners. No comments from the public from Zoom or email accounts. Motion to approve meeting minutes made by Commissioner Richard Furst. Commissioner Michael Johnson seconded that motion. No discussion was requested by either GMAC or members of the public. No Opposition. Motion passes unanimously and quorum met. Documents to be posted onto the DLNR-DOFAW GMAC website.
- ITEM 3. 06:10 - Review and finalize the letter of support for the DOCARE recruit academy for additional funding. All GMAC Commissioners acknowledge reading the draft letter. No comments from either GMAC Commissioners, Zoom attendees, or from email responses.
- 07:43 – DLNR Nick Vargas expressed a comment if the support letter should be shortened. GMAC Commissioners explained that the letter how it stands is clear and concise. No further changes.
- 09:37 – Public Member – Klayton Kubo had suggested to the GMAC Commissioners take an active role during the Legislative Season.
- 11:45 – GMAC Furst makes a motion to approve the draft support letter. GMAC Johnson seconds the motion to support. Voting commences and is unanimous with all commissioners. Motion passes.

ITEM 4.

13:21 - Revitalizing the GO HUNT HAWAII Newsletter: discussion on projects, data, and selecting the next topic(s) to post.

14:07 – GMAC Furst believes that the Newsletter is an important communication strategy to get the hunting community engaged and updated with the hunting program and projects.

15:37 – GMAC Barca is in full support to see the GoHunt Newsletter to start up again.

15:56 – GMAC Johnson explains that the newsletter is important for public hunters to be educated on hunting related topics: safety, equipment, or other outdoor related topics.

16:25 – GMAC Ruidas asks if the newsletter is available online or printed. Wants to see if people can be automatically subscribed to the newsletter when they purchase a hunting license. GMAC Barca is also in support of the automatic opt-in subscription. GMAC Ruidas suggests a topic of how to use the OuterSpatial App. GMAC Furst suggests a topic that discusses the importance of hunter harvest data for game management planning. He also wanted to learn the general timeline of developing a newsletter. GMAC Omick advised that it generally takes around 2-weeks to develop a newsletter.

26:24 – GMAC Ruidas mentioned how DLNR-DOFAW used an electronic survey to ask public hunters questions about their hunting experience or what they would like to see changed. GMAC Omick stated that we can use the newsletters to develop what hunters would like to see in a survey.

ITEM 5.

30:00 – Presentation & discussion on science-based population objectives for game mammals on public lands (GMAC - Nicolai Barca). Nicolai discussed topics of carrying capacity and cascading habitat quality. Nicolai discussed two possible options of observations of animals across the landscape and habitat monitoring: Indicator species and Forage-based models.

57:12 - GMAC Omick suggested using a multi-indicator framework to observe habitat changes to fit in his model.

01:00:16 – GMAC Furst wanted to emphasize the importance in this type of data collection and wanted to tie this into the draft Hawai'i Game Management Plan framework. Wants to develop a data management system which can be readily available for public use. See the benefit for these types of models, even if they are not the major management tool being used, the data would still be useful to have on hand.

01:04:38 – GMAC Barca wants to see if the State could direct resources to start developing research opportunities for habitat quality and carrying capacities. GMAC Omick suggested that Commissioners try to take the time to figure out areas where we can test these types of models. States that we can put this on the next Agenda for the follow-up meeting. GMAC Barca wants this be a tool for population objectives for various hunting units and not just native/protected areas. DOFAW Nick Vargas suggested that we should post this topic as an agenda item for the next meeting. It was also proposed that the GMAC Commissioners consider utilizing citizen science to gather preliminary data for population objectives.

ITEM 6.

01:15:26 - Overview Game Program Activities – Nicholas Vargas. Working on the 2025 Wildlife Revolving Fund Legislative Report. Developed a 2025 Game Management Advisory Commission Report that will be sent out to the commissioners for review. Has been working on the continued progress of the OuterSpatial app, ensuring that all hunting areas and features are current. Vargas has also been working on filling in the empty Hawai'i GMAC seats: Moloka'i, West Hawai'i, and Member-At-Large. The seat for Molokai has actually been filled just before this GMAC Meeting was being held. Working with all the islands with their Game Bird Rearing/Put-and-Take Projects. Oahu is finalizing the Makaha Board of Water Supply – Wildlife Control Program. DOFAW Admin will be assisting with the Hawai'i island annual game bird surveys. Vargas to plan a site visit to Lana'i to observe the seasonal hunts, check station manning, field operations, and attend public meetings. Delivered on securing funding for a grant for Hawai'i island to construct a fence along Highway 190 to prevent animal/vehicle collisions near Pu'u Wa'awa'a and Pu'u Anahulu areas. The Kanaio Project is developing an archaeological and preservation plan. An EIS was approved by SHPD. Two wildland fire have been attended to since the the last GMAC meeting.

ITEM 7.

01:27:24 - A short report by each commissioner summarizes their meetings with DOFAW staff on the island they represent. Commissioners are to provide a list of hunting and wildlife issues for each island, including priorities and changes each commissioner would like to see.

01:28:02 – GMAC Barca's report explained the following: Kalalau State Park executed a control hunt to deal with the pig and goat populations. The plan was a little complex, but we were able to take 10 pigs and 12 goats over the course of 2 days. The conversation of a shooting range on Kauai is in the preliminary planning stage. Kauai is definitely in need of a public shooting range. GMAC Omick explained that this project is a DOCARE initiative through the Hunter Education Program, with funding coming

from the Pittman-Robertson federal grant. Currently the project is going site selection phase still.

01:34:58 – GMAC Furst provided his report for the island of Oahu. He met with Jason Misaki, Oahu District Wildlife Manager. Explained about new protocols to increase methods of take to include air rifle and crossbow for certain locations. Effort to try increase hunter opportunity. Trapping opportunities on agricultural and golfing properties. Talked about the Oahu Feral Swine Control Pilot Project and the working relationship with organized hunting groups. The game bird propagation for Oahu may expect less than half of the normal bird order for this year's hunting season.

01:37:12 – GMAC Johnson provided his report for the island of Maui. Waiohuli was an opportunity that was open last year 2024, but still remains closed for control hunting of axis deer. Excited to hear that Kanaio is moving along for more public hunting opportunities. Polipoli cabin does not allow for weapons to be at the facility. Bird season is coming along and the state game bird rearing programs will be releasing chukar and pheasants. The Ahihi-Kina'u NAR had a great eradication program for wild goats which gave opportunity to hunter to have access to other areas, still remains closed. GMAC Johnson wants to do more research and see if he can facilitate that to be reopened. Wants to do more research on expanding the deer management assistance programs and getting the legislature involved to establish programs where public hunters can work with private landowners to control axis deer populations. GMAC Ruidas explains that some hunting groups like the Oahu Pig Hunters Association have their own liability insurance. This may be a tool that public hunters use to be able to get into private lands to be able to assist in control game populations. GMAC Furst explains that some ranches on Moloka'i allow for the public to perform control style hunts on their property but must sign a liability waiver.

01:43:09 – GMAC Furst wants to have a discussion on the Axis Deer Bounty program. Wants to see if that program can be reorganized so that funds can go to assist the public hunters to continue to control the axis deer issue.

01:44:38 – Public Jonah Vierra wants to see if Mahi Pono and Ahihi-Kina'u NAR could open up access for hunters using a waiver or liability form to circumvent the legal issues landowners worry about.

01:46:38 – GMAC Ruidas provided his report for the island of

Lana‘i. Coordinated with Shane DeMattos to discuss if there were any results from aerial surveys conducted. Shane is still working on compiling the data. Mouflon hunting season has been open for its eighth weekend. The reports back from hunters have been around half and half: those who have been shooting animals and those who have not seen anything. An annual meeting with Lana‘i public hunters and DOFAW staff is scheduled for some time in October. GMAC Barca was wondering what the reason would be for some hunting groups to see animals and others do not. GMAC Ruidas explained that it could be a result of several environmental factors or even hunter experience.

01:49:48 - GMAC Sanborn provided his report for the island of West Hawai‘i. Hunters wanted to know why hunting dogs were being limited or restricted on Mauna Kea. GMAC Sanborn was also wondering if there was any update about the sheep drive/trapping along the DK1 Highway, the shared boundary between the State and the Hawaiian Homelands. DOFAW Vargas provided an update on the sheep drive, stating that the Department is still interested in the program but is waiting for a larger sheep herd to return to the area to capture more. GMAC Furst explained that on the DOFAW website, a new adaptive management rule change is in effect, stating that no hunting with dogs is allowed on Mauna Kea. DOFAW Vargas was going to look into this because it does not seem correct, and the source could not be sent to staff. Further research must be conducted.

01:55:57 – Public Member Abraham Antonio provided insight to the issue about dogs on Mauna Kea. He explained that hunting dogs would be restricted in the month of October in order to assist with the game bird program. The put-and-take system allows the newly released birds to be conditioned to their new environment.

01:58:01 – GMAC Sanborn requested that DOFAW Vargas provide an email response to the questions he had about hunting dogs on Mauna Kea.

ITEM 8.

01:58:12 - Set future meeting schedules, locations, and potential Agenda items. Commissioners and DOFAW staff agreed to set an assigned day for all future GMAC meetings, which would be the first Wednesday of every other month. The Next Meeting will be on December 3rd, 2025, on Hilo, Hawai‘i island. GMAC Ruidas suggested that commissioners try their best to come to an on-site meeting and provide agenda topics. After the Hilo meeting in December, the plan would be for February 2026 to meet on Maui.

ITEM 9.

02:01:02 – Announcements. DOFAW Vargas wanted to share the action item from the previous meeting and demonstrate the GMAC SharePoint Folder. This will be made available to all GMAC Commissioners. GMAC Ruidas made a suggestion to see if all the agenda header related to the GMAC, if they can have the commissioners and the islands they represent so that the public may know who to contact. DOFAW Vargas provided an update of the upcoming game bird season for each of the islands. Kauai will have around 500 ringed-neck pheasants, 200 Chukars, and additional 200 volunteer raised pheasants. Kea‘au High school has 190 chukars. East Hawai‘i DOFAW will have 350 pheasants, 150 chukars, and 50 California quails. Maui has 307 pheasants, 195 chukars. Oahu has a volunteer program with Waipahu high school and they have about 30 chukars along with DOFAW raised birds of 62 pheasants and 15 chukars. Oahu’s hunter volunteer pens will have around 48 chukars, 60 pheasant hens and 30 pheasant roosters.

02:08:26 – GMAC Ruidas has tasks the commissioners to meet with each respective hunting communities and ask them questions on what they would like to see on the GMAC or concerns they would like to bring up for the December 2025 meeting.

ITEM 10.

2:09:12 - Adjournment – Motion was passed unanimously at 07:22 P

