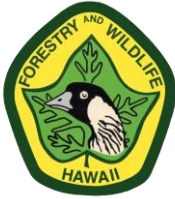
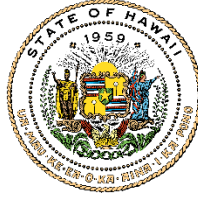


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April 21, 2025

Endangered Species Recovery Committee
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

SUBJECT: Division of Forestry and Wildlife Evaluation of the County of Kaua'i
Implementation of the Kaua'i Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan During
2024

Dear Committee Members,

The State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) is respectfully requesting the Endangered Species Recovery Committee (ESRC) review the 2024 Kaua'i Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan (KSHCP) Annual Report prepared by Pacific Rim Conservation, with regards to the County of Kaua'i ("County"), an individual participant and licensee of the KSHCP. This request is per the requirements outlined in Section 195D-25, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. The 2024 KSHCP Annual Report compiles information from eight individual licensees as part of the obligations of the KSHCP and State Incidental Take License (ITL; ITL-29). This submittal summarizes the County portion of the 2024 KSHCP Annual Report and includes information provided to DOFAW by the licensee over the last year.

BACKGROUND:

ITL Licensee: County of Kaua'i

Project: All County of Kaua'i facilities

ITL Duration: June 12, 2020 – June 12, 2050. At the conclusion of 2024, the licensee is approximately 4.5 years (15%) through their permit term.

Status of ITL: During 2024, the licensee reported no direct, incidental take of covered seabirds. However, one 'a'o (Newell's shearwater) was recovered alive by a third party from the unlit Kekaha Faye Park.

Take Review:

Table 1. Maximum 5-Year rolling average vs. actual 5-year rolling average of lethal and non-lethal take for each covered species, and the lethal and non-lethal, authorized take vs. cumulative calculated take for each species since ITL issuance through 2024, as provided in the 2024 KSHCP Annual Report.

Covered Species Common Name	Maximum 5-Year Rolling Average Lethal / Non-Lethal	Actual 5-year Rolling Average Lethal / Non-Lethal	Authorized Take of Fledglings, Lethal	Cumulative Calculated Take of Fledglings, Lethal	Authorized Take of Fledglings, Non-lethal	Cumulative Calculated Take of Fledglings, Non-lethal
‘A‘o (Newell’s shearwater)	9.18 / 7.22	0.67 / 0.53	276	3.36	217	2.64
‘Ua‘u (Hawaiian petrel)	N/A	N/A	17	0	4	0
‘Akē‘akē (Band-rumped storm petrel)	N/A	N/A	4	0	0	0

Participant Inclusion Plan (PIP) Discovery rate: 50%

In 2024, one ‘a‘o was recovered from Kekaha Faye Park by a third party (Save our Shearwaters, a permitted wildlife rehabber). In 2023, an ‘a‘o was also recovered at this park by a third party. The county states this park is unlit during seabird fledgling season; therefore, no downed seabird searches or predator monitoring occur here.

Per island-wide data of downed seabirds provided by Save Our Shearwaters, eight downed seabirds (five ‘a‘o and three ‘ua‘u kani) were recovered from County properties in 2024, and an additional 11 (five ‘a‘o, five ‘ua‘u kani, and one noio or black noddy) were found within ten meters of County properties. The county states that all parcels where seabirds were found were unlit, and therefore, no downed seabird searches or predator monitoring occurred at these locations.

Downed Seabird Searches:

The County reports searches occurred at all 18 lit facilities at approximately 6:30 am every morning. Searches were conducted by either trained employees or wildlife control contractors. A new online reporting system was implemented during the 2024 fledgling season to collect search data. Search data and maps of search routes were provided to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and DOFAW.

Honu Searches:

Honu searches are not currently being conducted at County beach parks. The licensee is aware of this deficiency and is considering training County lifeguards and park groundskeepers to perform honu searches at the beginning of their shifts to meet this KSHCP requirement.

Lighting:

There are 60 County facilities listed under the KSHCP that require monitoring due to their light classification – 37 Category 3: Limited External Lighting Facilities, 11 Category 4: Substantial Exterior Area and Court Lighting Facilities, and 12 Category 5: High-Intensity Stadium and Field Lighting Facilities.

As in previous years, all Category 4 and 5 facilities kept their lights off during the fledgling season. In 2024, 19 Category 3 facilities went dark during the fledgling season to minimize lighting, and 18 Category 3 facilities remained lit. A list of these lit facilities was provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and DOFAW (the Agencies).

In 2024, a new motion sensor light was installed at Lydgate Beach Park to reduce lighting on the beach and minimize honu take; however, the light was vandalized within a week.

Predator Control:

In 2024, the County hired a wildlife control contractor to control predators. Predator trapping occurred across nine facilities before the fledgling season. Trapping efforts were focused on the 18 lit Category 3 facilities during the fledgling season. The County is not currently conducting systematic predator monitoring.

Lydgate Beach Park continues to have a high number of feral cats. In 2024, the County temporarily closed Lydgate Beach Park to clean up the area and trap feral cats. A third party removed 35 cats to a private cat sanctuary.

The County has an online predator reporting form available for public use and has sent out rangers in response to reports of cat feeding on County properties.

Employee Training and Public Outreach:

Over 296 County employees were trained via online resources, videos, and printed materials.

Outreach measures implemented in 2024:

- "Do Not Feed or Abandon Cats on County Property" signs were installed at Anini Beach Park and Campground.
- QR codes were created and displayed on signs to assist with community outreach and predator reporting involvement.

- A new informational flyer was sent to community members who create a new account to reserve camping sites at Anini, Anahola, Salt Pond, and Lydgate Beach Parks. The flyer addresses the threats feral cats pose to endangered species, provides additional resources for more information, and gives instructions on how community members can support the County's efforts to protect Kauai's delicate ecosystem.

Planned outreach measures to be implemented in 2025:

- Additional "Do Not Feed or Abandon Cats on County Property" signs will be installed at other County parks.
- Honu awareness signs have been designed and will be installed at Lydgate Beach Park.
- Beginning in August 2025, Weekly Public Service Announcements regarding the KSHCP and endangered seabirds will be scheduled by the Mayor's office.

2023 ESRC recommendations resulting in licensee actions in 2024:

1. Provide the agencies with a list of facilities with lights off during the seabird season.
2. Implement effective systematic seabird searching at all lit facilities and provide seabird search reports and search route maps for all lit facilities.
3. Confirm implementation of a reporting system for seabird search and downed bird reporting before the 2024 fallout season.
4. Provide documentation of a predator control contract, including a scope of work compliant with KSHCP and ITL terms and conditions.
5. Perform predator control at all lit facilities with effective predator reduction, as documented by August 15.

2023 ESRC recommendations not addressed in 2024:

1. Coordinate an annual lighting site visit with the Agencies and/or the Kaua'i Endangered Seabird Recovery Project (KESRP) before the seabird fledgling season.
2. Coordinate training for seabird searching, handling, and recovery with KESRP.
3. Implement systematic predator monitoring and provide data to the Agencies.
4. Enforce the cat feeding ban on County properties.
5. Repeat decoy testing at lit facilities.

6. Identify what future adaptive management measures are planned to meet HCP obligations.
7. If needed, amend the permit to a downed seabird discovery rate that more accurately reflects what the County can implement.

DOFAW RECOMMENDATIONS:

DOFAW appreciates the actions implemented by the County of Kaua'i during 2024 including implementing predator control and downed seabird searches at all 18 lit properties, creating an online reporting system to submit seabird search reports, the addition of 19 Category 3 facilities which will remain unlit through fledgling seasons, efforts to reduce feral cats at Lydgate Park, and ongoing public outreach and education efforts.

In addition to the ESRC recommendations made to the licensee in 2023, DOFAW recommends the County:

1. Implement daily honu searches and data reporting at County beach parks. Honu searches can be done either by trained volunteers or County employees.
2. Look into seabird fallout at Kekaha Faye Park and consider including this property in future downed seabird searches and predator control efforts.
3. Look into seabird fallout occurring at unlit County properties.
4. Continue to increase outreach to the public to raise awareness regarding downed seabirds and nesting honu and prevent feeding of feral cats on County properties.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelli Yamaguchi, Habitat Conservation Planning Program Associate, at kelli.yamaguchi.researcher@hawaii.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



DAVID G. SMITH
Administrator