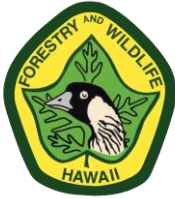
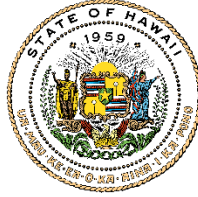


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 325  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY  
CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER  
AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

April 21, 2025

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

**SUBJECT:** Division of Forestry and Wildlife Evaluation of the State of Hawai'i  
Department of Transportation's 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 Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT), an individual participant and licensee of the KSHCP. This request follows 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-30). This submittal summarizes the HDOT portion of the 2024 KSHCP Annual Report and includes information provided to DOFAW by the licensee over the last year.

**BACKGROUND:**

ITL Licensee: Hawai'i Department of Transportation

Project: Three HDOT properties on Kaua'i – Nawiliwili Harbor, Port Allen Harbor, and Līhu'e Airport

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

Status of ITL: During 2024, the licensee reported the following direct, incidental, non-lethal take:

- Nawiliwili Harbor: One 'a'o (Newell's shearwater)
- Port Allen: No take
- Līhu'e Airport: One 'a'o and one 'ua'u (Hawaiian petrel)

General Updates: Jeremiah Aguilera replaced Robert Crowell as Harbors District Manager for Kaua'i

### **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.

<b>Covered Species Common Name</b>	<b>Maximum 5-Year Rolling Average Lethal / Non-Lethal</b>	<b>Actual 5-year Rolling Average Lethal / Non-Lethal</b>	<b>Authorized Take of Fledglings, Lethal</b>	<b>Cumulative Calculated Take of Fledglings, Lethal</b>	<b>Authorized Take of Fledglings, Non-lethal</b>	<b>Cumulative Calculated Take of Fledglings, Non-lethal</b>
'A'o (Newell's shearwater)	3.38 / 4.75	3.05 / 4.10	103	15.27	144	20.48
'Ua'u (Hawaiian petrel)	N/A	N/A	5	2.01	12	1.76
'Akē'akē (Band-rumped storm petrel)	N/A	N/A	1	0	2	0

Participant Inclusion Plan (PIP) Discovery rates: Nawiliwili Harbor: 90%, Port Allen: 50%, and Līhu'e Airport: 75%

The licensee's cumulative, calculated, lethal take of 'ua'u is currently 2.01, just over 40% of permitted take, though they are 15% through their permit term. If take continues at the current rate, HDOT will exceed the permitted lethal take during the 30-year license term. Adaptive Management is needed to reduce the annual take to avoid exceeding the 30-year take request.

### **Downed Seabird Searches:**

HDOT contracted H.T. Harvey & Associates to assist with downed seabird searching, recovery, and reporting.

Līhu'e Airport: Contracted field biologists conducted twice-nightly searches within three to four hours after sunset and one hour of sunrise throughout the fledgling season. The Aircraft Operations Areas (AOA) were searched twice nightly by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Service biologists while performing Wildlife Hazard Management. Beginning September 25, 2024, the number of searchers searching the public access area of the airport was increased from one to two.

Nawiliwili Harbor: A contracted field biologist performed nightly evening searches three to four hours after sunset. Trained harbor security officers conducted dedicated, daily searches within one hour of sunrise throughout the fledgling season. Security officers also remained vigilant for downed birds during their security rounds.

Port Allen: Three contracted field biologists conducted twice-nightly searches three to four hours after sunset and within one hour of sunrise throughout the fledgling season. In addition, trained HDOT staff and vessel crews are present on-site during normal daytime work hours.

### **Lighting:**

There were no lighting changes at covered HDOT properties in 2024.

### **Predator Control:**

Līhu'e Airport: Year-round predator control was conducted per USDA Wildlife Services. Predator trapping efforts increased before the start of the fledgling season. Systematic predator monitoring began five nights before the fledgling season and continued during twice-nightly downed seabird searches. Cats were seen on 78% of nights.

Routine cat feeding has been observed in public areas, including the taxi lot and public parking lot. Cats were also routinely seen near the FedEx, UPS, and Air Cargo buildings. Free-roaming cats are abundant in the lower sections of Ahukini Road, where one or more known colonies persist on County lands. In 2025, the licensee plans to work with USDA Wildlife Services to identify additional measures to effectively reduce the presence and persistence of cats at Līhu'e Airport.

Nawiliwili Harbor: Trapping was conducted on weekdays throughout the fledgling season. Systematic predator monitoring occurred during twice-nightly downed seabird searches, and cats were sighted on 43% of nights.

Port Allen: A wildlife control contractor was hired to trap and remove predators from the property. Previously, HDOT conducted trapping while the wildlife control contractor was utilized for removal. One trap remained active at Port Allen during the seabird fledgling season. Systematic predator monitoring occurred during twice-nightly seabird searches, and a single cat was identified. The cat was captured approximately a month later.

**Employee Training and Public Outreach:**

Līhu'e Airport: Annual Seabird Awareness and Response Training was provided by H. T. Harvey & Associates to 32 Līhu'e Airport Operations and Management employees. Fifty employees participated in the annual Wildlife Hazard Management Program training supplied by the USDA. Education regarding seabird light attraction, minimization, and seabird handling was provided to rental car companies. An Airport Notice was issued to educate all employees on seabird fallout and the downed seabird protocol, and to reinforce that no feeding of feral cats should occur on the property. Seabird fact sheets were distributed to airport staff, contractors, and tenants and posted in staff common areas and bulletin boards.

Nawiliwili and Port Allen Harbors: H.T. Harvey & Associates searchers and harbor security officers received seabird awareness, reporting, and search and recovery training. Seabird fact sheets were distributed to harbor tenants and posted in the main harbor office, worker common areas, and bulletin boards in break rooms. Signs prohibiting cat feeding were posted at Nawiliwili Harbor.

In 2024, H.T. Harvey & Associates conducted in-house decoy recovery trials to reinforce downed seabird searcher training and monitor searcher efficacy.

**2023 ESRC recommendations resulting in licensee actions in 2024:**

1. Increase predator control before fallout season to reduce predators on the landscape.
2. Add a take map to the annual report.

**DOFAW RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. DOFAW appreciates HDOT's ongoing seabird search, predator control, and outreach efforts. We also support using decoys to reinforce downed seabird searcher training and monitor searcher efficacy.
2. DOFAW recommends HDOT continue to work with the Agencies to identify and implement additional Adaptive Management measures, including further reducing lighting and increasing predator control, particularly at Līhu'e Airport, to lower the current rate of 'ua'u take.
3. Lastly, DOFAW recommends the licensee work with the Kaua'i Endangered Seabird Recovery Project to help implement robust decoy trials.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelli Yamaguchi, Habitat Conservation Planning Program Associate, at [kelli.yamaguchi.researcher@hawaii.gov](mailto:kelli.yamaguchi.researcher@hawaii.gov).

Respectfully submitted,



DAVID G. SMITH  
Administrator