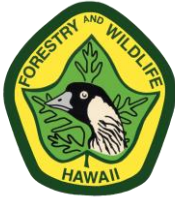
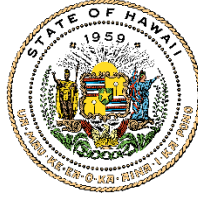


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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
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March 20, 2025

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

SUBJECT: Division of Forestry and Wildlife Evaluation of Sheraton 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 Sheraton Kaua'i, an individual participant and licensee of the KSHCP. This request is in accordance with 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-26). This submittal is a summary the Sheraton Kaua'i portion of the 2024 KSHCP Annual Report and includes information provided to DOFAW by the licensee over the last year.

BACKGROUND:

ITL Licensee: Kaua'i Blue, Inc. dba Sheraton Kaua'i

Project: Oceanside and garden side property located on 20.1 acres in Koloa, Kaua'i

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

Status of ITL: During 2024, direct, incidental, non-lethal take of two 'a'o (Newell's Shearwater) occurred.

General Updates: None

Take Review:

Table 1. Maximum 5-Year rolling average vs. actual 5-year rolling average of lethal and non-lethal take for each 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.

| 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) | 2.69 / 2.11 | 3.94 / 2.46 | 81 | 19.68 | 64 | 12.32 |
| ‘Ua‘u (Hawaiian petrel) | N/A | N/A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ‘Akē‘akē (Band-rumped storm petrel) | N/A | N/A | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Participant Inclusion Plan (PIP) Discovery rate: 50%

The licensee’s 5-year rolling average for both lethal and non-lethal take of ‘a‘o indicates if take continues at the current rate, Sheraton Kaua‘i will exceed the permitted take during the 30-year license term. Adaptive Management is needed to increase minimization and reduce annual take to avoid exceeding the 30-year take request.

Downed Seabird Searches:

Dedicated searchers from Sheraton’s security staff continued to conduct two downed seabird searches every evening (3-4 hours after sunset and 1 hour before sunrise) September 15, through December 15, 2024.

During the 2024 fledgling season, Sheraton continued with its in-house seabird decoy searches, which yielded a 45.4% discovery rate.

Sheraton also continues to run an incentive program to reward eligible associates, contractors, or guests who locate a downed seabird or seabird decoy with \$250.

Honu Searches:

Honu searches were conducted every morning May 15, through December 15. Searches were conducted by a security officer walking the beach lawn and making visual observations of Po'ipū Beach. No honu or honu nests were observed during 2024.

Lighting:

A lighting review was performed by ABR, Inc. seabird biologist Dr. Adrian Gall in June 2024. Following the lighting review, the following lighting changes were implemented:

- Increased Bluetooth-enabled motion-sensor lights to 26 units, 23 of which were turned off completely during the fledgling season.
- Spotlights atop Lava's Restaurant, located by the ocean-side pool at Po'ipū Beach, were turned off
- Lights in the oceanside parking lot were turned off.
- Wall sconce lights along room corridors were turned off and only the lights above room doors were kept on.

To follow-up on lighting changes implemented following the June lighting review, a second lighting review was completed by Dr. Gall in September 2024.

Sheraton Kaua'i plans to conduct a lighting review and implement further lighting reductions prior to the 2025 fledgling season. The licensee will also specifically re-examine lighting in the parking lots where the two downed 'a'o were found in 2024.

Predator Control:

Trapping efforts were inconsistent in 2023 due to staffing issues. This was corrected in October 2023. In 2024, Sheraton hired a new contractor who began pre-season trapping in March 2024 and continued through December 17, (DOFAW is currently pending receipt of trapping data). Moving forward, Sheraton intends to trap for predators on the property year-round. The licensee reports a neighboring property has also begun to trap for predators.

2023 ESRC recommendations resulting in licensee actions in 2024:

1. Increase predator control effort.
2. Further reduce lighting through lighting minimization and modification.

2023 ESRC recommendations not addressed in 2024:

1. Consider ways to increase searcher efficiency/additional minimization measures including canine searching to reduce the proportion of lethal take.

The licensee states it is currently not considering using canines to assist in downed wildlife searches, however, is open to other recommendations.

DOFAW ISSUES & CONCERNS:

The current rate of 'a'o take exceeds the 5-year rolling average, indicating NCL will exceed their permitted take prior to the 30-year license term.

DOFAW RECOMMENDATIONS:

DOFAW appreciates the new measures implemented prior to the 2024 fledgling season including further reducing property lighting and increasing predator control. DOFAW also appreciates the outreach and education regarding seabirds and honu provided to local high school students.

DOFAW recommends Sheraton Kaua'i continue to work with both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and DOFAW to identify and implement additional Adaptive Management measures including further reducing lighting, increasing searcher efficiency, and increasing guest outreach and education to lower the current rate of 'a'o take.

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