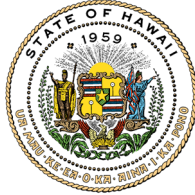


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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

April 2, 2026

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

**SUBJECT:** Endangered Species Recovery Committee Evaluation of the Association of Apartment Owners of Kalapaki Beach Club and Sonesta International Hotels Corporation at the Kaua'i Resort, which comprises Marriott's Kaua'i Beach Club and Royal Sonesta Kaua'i Resort (formerly Essex House Condominium Corporation dba Kaua'i Marriott Resort Līhu'e), Implementation of the Kaua'i Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan During 2025

Dear Committee Members,

The State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW), requests the Endangered Species Recovery Committee (ESRC) review the 2025 Kaua'i Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan (KSHCP) Annual Report prepared by Pacific Rim Conservation regarding the Association of Apartment Owners of Kalapaki Beach Club and Sonesta International Hotels Corporation ("Sonesta") at the Kaua'i Resort, which comprises Marriott's Kaua'i Beach Club and Royal Sonesta Kaua'i Resort (formerly Essex House Condominium Corporation dba Kaua'i Marriott Resort Līhu'e), an individual participant in the KSHCP. This request is in accordance with the requirements outlined in Section 195D-25, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. The 2025 KSHCP Annual Report compiles information from eight individual participants as part of the obligations of the KSHCP and State Incidental Take Licenses (ITL). This submittal summarizes the Sonesta portion of the 2025 KSHCP Annual Report and includes information provided to DOFAW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (collectively, "the Agencies") by the participant over the last year.

**BACKGROUND:**

ITL Licensee: ITL-24; Currently pending ITL transfer to the Association of Apartment Owners of Kalapaki Beach Club.

Project: Privately owned beachfront resort on 41 acres in Nāwiliwili, within the moku of Puna on Kaua'i.

**ITL Duration:** June 12, 2020-June 12, 2050. At the end of 2025, the participant is approximately 5.5 years (18%) into their permit term.

**Miscellaneous:** The Director of Security, who helped implement KSHCP requirements, left Sonesta in late September 2025 and a new Director of Security was hired in November 2025. In the interim, the Security Supervisor and Resort Manager assumed responsibility for nightly searches and downed wildlife reporting.

Sonesta continued to retain ABR, Inc. ("ABR") as environmental consultants to evaluate lighting, conduct seabird and honu awareness and responder training, manage data, prepare downed wildlife reports, and prepare the KSHCP Annual Report.

**Status of ITL:**

**Covered Species Under ITL-24:** 'A'o (Newell's shearwater), 'ua'u (Hawaiian petrel), and 'akē'akē (band-rumped storm petrel) fledglings.

**Observed take of Covered Species in 2025:**

- 'A'o fledglings: 0 lethal / 3 non-lethal
- 'Ua'u fledglings: 0 lethal / 1 non-lethal
- 'Akē'akē fledglings: 0 lethal / 0 non-lethal

**Calculated take of Covered Species in 2025:**

Using the 50% discovery rate stated in the Participant Inclusion Plan (PIP)

- 'A'o fledglings: 3 lethal / 3 non-lethal
- 'Ua'u fledglings: 1 lethal / 1 non-lethal
- 'Akē'akē fledglings: 0 lethal / 0 non-lethal

**Table 1.** Authorized take, cumulative calculated take, maximum 5-year rolling average, and actual 5-year rolling average of fledgling take for Covered Species.

Covered Species	Authorized fledgling take (lethal / non-lethal)	Cumulative calculated* fledgling take through 2025 (lethal / non-lethal)	Maximum 5-year rolling average of fledgling take	Actual 5-year rolling average of fledgling take (2021 - 2025)
'A'o (Newell's shearwater)	33 / 21	13 / 13	1.1 / 0.7	2.6 / 2.6

'Ua'u (Hawaiian petrel)	1 / 1	1 / 1	N/A	N/A
'Akē'akē (band-rumped storm petrel)	1 / 1	0 / 0	N/A	N/A

\*The PIP discovery rate of 50% was used for take calculations.

The participant's 5-year rolling average for lethal and non-lethal take of fledgling 'a'o indicates that if the current rate of take continues, Sonesta will exceed its authorized take before the end of the 30-year license term. Additional adaptive management measures should be considered to minimize 'a'o take.

The participant's calculated take of one lethal and one non-lethal 'ua'u is the maximum authorized take. Additional adaptive management measures should be considered to minimize 'ua'u take and the participant should submit a PIP amendment to request additional take of 'ua'u.

**Minimization Measures:**

Downed Seabird Searches: Sonesta security staff trained in seabird search and recovery conducted downed seabird searches during their security rounds, 3–4 hours after sunset and 1–2 hours before sunrise, throughout the entire seabird fledgling season (September 15–December 15). Searches were conducted in pairs, with each security officer searching half of the property. Sonesta staff also searched their work areas during work hours. All recovered downed seabirds were placed in the Sonesta Save Our Shearwaters (SOS) aid station for transfer to SOS, and a downed wildlife report was completed for each incident.

Honu Searches: Beginning May 15, 2025, Sonesta security staff conducted honu searches every morning before sunrise. The searches involved walking the length of the Kalapaki Beach lawn to look for honu, tracks, or signs of nesting. No honu, tracks, or nests were observed in 2025.

In the 2026 honu nesting season, Sonesta will make an effort to conduct searches after sunrise to improve visibility, as recommended by the Agencies.

Lighting: ABR visited the property in June and September 2025 to evaluate lighting and follow up on new lighting minimization changes. Changes made prior to the 2025 fledgling season include:

- Tinting the Ha'upu Tower elevator landing windows
- Turning off all chandeliers and table lamps at the Ha'upu Tower elevator landings
- Turning off a bright motion-detection light over the Kahili Tower entrance
- Reducing lighting in the guest barbecue area

- Reducing lighting around the pool
- Reducing all 3,000-lumen lights to 1,500 lumens and 2700 K (warm white)

In December 2025, the Agencies visited Sonesta to conduct lighting evaluations in preparation for the 2026 fledgling season. Recommendations provided to Sonesta include:

- Match the Ha'upu parking lot lights to the main parking lot lights, which are warmer in color and lower in intensity.
- Consider using low-level pathway lighting instead of overhead lights in the Ka Mala Garden and along the pathway to Duke's restaurant.
- Reduce lighting over the conference room entrances
- Lower the lumens of the spotlight at the entrance to the Hōkūala elevator.

Predator Control: Sonesta continued to use a wildlife control contractor to trap predators on the property year-round. Three traps were deployed for 20 days each month from January through May, and five traps were deployed for 20 days each month from June through December. The total predator control effort was 1,000 trap-nights, resulting in the removal of 11 predators.

Predator monitoring occurred alongside downed seabird searches. Three predator observations were recorded. Wildlife control contractors were notified of these observations to support adaptive trapping.

Staff Training and Guest Outreach: ABR provided dedicated seabird-searcher training to all security staff and seabird and honu awareness training to all other Sonesta staff. In total, 293 staff members were trained.

During the 2025 fledgling season Sonesta initiated a preliminary seabird decoy program to practice decoy placement, seabird searches, and data collection. In 2026, Sonesta intends to refine the decoy program to reinforce searcher training and assess searcher efficacy.

As in previous years, Sonesta staff placed cards about Kaua'i's native seabirds in every guest room. The cards described the effects of light pollution on fledgling seabirds and how guests can help by turning off balcony lights and drawing their drapes each evening. Signs were also posted at each Ha'upu Tower elevator landing explaining the reason for reduced lighting.

### **Prior ESRC Recommendations**

Sonesta implemented the following ESRC recommendations from the April 10, and October 24, 2025, KSHCP meetings.

1. Continue pursuing additional adaptive management measures to reach the assigned discovery rate of 50%.
2. Complete hiring two additional searchers for the fledgling season.

3. Have a plan for staff turnover and ensure there are always enough staff members to conduct seabird and honu searches.
4. Include the sandy beach area in searches. *The sandy area of the beach is outside the Sonesta property.*
5. Implement staff and guest incentives for finding birds.
6. Increase the number of predator traps at the site.
7. Consider repeat searcher efficiency trials if the rate is below the rate assigned in the PIP.
8. Paint seabird decoys with matte finish.

### **Outstanding ESRC Recommendations**

1. Include the grassy area in the northeast section of the property during downed seabird searches.
2. Encourage the use of detector dogs to locate downed birds on a property of this size and complexity. *Under consideration.*
3. Pursue a PIP amendment to use searcher efficacy rates based on annual third-party searcher efficacy trials conducted before each fledgling season.

### **Concerns**

The rate of fledgling 'a'o take at Sonesta exceeds the maximum 5-year rolling average, indicating that, at the current rate, Sonesta will exceed its authorized take before the end of the 30-year license term.

Sonesta has also reached the maximum authorized lethal and non-lethal take of fledgling 'ua'u for its 30-year license term.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**


DOFAW appreciates Sonesta's ongoing minimization efforts, and the new measures implemented in 2025 including further reducing lighting and initiating a decoy program.

DOFAW Recommendations:

1. Address outstanding ESRC recommendations.
2. Implement Agency lighting recommendations from the December 2025 site visit.
3. Perform honu searches every morning after sunrise during the honu nesting season (May 15–December 15).
4. Identify and implement additional adaptive management measures to further minimize lighting and increase searcher efficacy to minimize 'a'o and 'ua'u take.
5. Pursue a PIP amendment to request additional take of fledgling 'ua'u and potentially 'a'o.

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