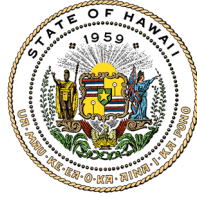


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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 27, 2026

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

SUBJECT: Division of Forestry and Wildlife Evaluation of the Nēnē Maui Nui Safe Harbor Agreements Implementation for Fiscal Year 2025 and Request for ESRC Review of Participant Annual Reports

Dear Committee Members,

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW), requests that the Endangered Species Recovery Committee (ESRC) review the annual reports for the Nēnē Maui Nui Safe Harbor Agreements (SHA) on Maui and Moloka'i. The reports were prepared by Colton Loque and John Medeiros (DOFAW Maui) on behalf of the Haleakalā Ranch Company (ITL-19) and Pu'u o Hōkū Ranch, Limited (Protected Wildlife Permit WLIT-01). This submittal provides a summary of these annual reports and includes comments from DOFAW.

I. HALEAKALĀ RANCH SAFE HARBOR AGREEMENT (MAUI)

Background

- Licensee: Haleakalā Ranch Company
- Project: Establish a nēnē population on Haleakalā Ranch
- ITL Term: May 22, 2012 – May 21, 2062 (SHA finalized August 2019)
- Take Authorization: Incidental take of nēnē on lands owned or controlled by the ranch

FY2025 Implementation

Management and Coordination

- Management of the release pen continues under Kaheawa Wind Power (KWP)/TetraTech, with contractor support.
- DOFAW conducts monthly monitoring, nesting surveys, and banding.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DOFAW, Haleakalā Ranch, and KWP I & II was executed in February 2025 to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Population Observations

- 43 banded and 11 unbanded adults were observed at the release pen.

Nesting and Productivity

- 11 nests documented (10 in the pen, 1 in the koa enclosure)
- 24 eggs hatched, 8 fledglings produced, 5 banded

Banding

- 11 birds banded (6 adults, 5 fledglings), including 3 adults re-banded

Pen Maintenance and Habitat Management

- Year-round maintenance by contractor (AES), including:
 - 30 mowing cycles
 - Fence and infrastructure upkeep
 - Facility improvements (shed repairs, gate hardware)
- Approximately 1 acre of invasive vegetation removed (lantana, strawberry guava, *Bocconia*, fireweed, bur)

Predator Control

- Active trapping program:
 - 10 live traps, 20 DOC200, 10 A24, and additional devices
- Removals:
 - 4 mongoose, 2 cats, 7 rats

Mortality

- 15 goslings were predated (likely by avian predators or a mongoose)
- 4 goslings died of natural causes

II. PU'U O HŌKŪ RANCH SAFE HARBOR AGREEMENT (MOLOKA'I)

Background

- Licensee: Pu'u o Hōkū Ranch, Limited
- Project: Reintroduction of nēnē to Moloka'i
- ITL Status: Active; SHA expired (2001–2008), continued under Right of Entry
- Take Authorization: Incidental take of nēnē on ranch lands

FY2025 Implementation

Program Status

- Increased predator control and site preparation continued through FY2024–FY2025, ahead of translocation.
- DOFAW maintains a cooperative relationship with the landowner; the ranch has elected not to enter into a new SHA but continues to support management activities.
- A new MOU (August 2025) formalizes the roles of DOFAW, Pu'u o Hōkū Ranch, and KWP I & II.

Translocation and Pen Reconstruction

- Release pen fully reconstructed with:
 - New posts, fencing, gates, skirting
 - 30' x 30' holding pen
 - Water and feeding infrastructure
- April 4, 2025, translocation:
 - 24 nēnē (8 adults, 16 fledglings) transported from Kaua'i
- Additional cohort scheduled for February 2026

Post-Release Monitoring and Movement

- Birds released in staged groups (April–May 2025)
- Wing clipping was insufficient to prevent dispersal in some adults
- Birds observed:
 - Across ranch lands
 - At Halawa River and Keawenui shrimp farm
 - One individual documented ~20 miles away and recaptured

Health Monitoring

- Health checks conducted (REV testing – all negative)
- Transmitters deployed; initial equipment issues required replacement

Population and Reproduction

- Pre-translocation sightings: 4 adults, 2 fledglings
- One nest documented, producing 3 goslings (1 mortality)

Banding and Tracking

- Remaining goslings banded (February 2025)
- All translocated birds were banded with Darvic identifiers
- Transmitters replaced after performance issues

Habitat Management

- 1-acre invasive removal within the pen
- 12 acres mowed inside pen
- An additional 12 acres were maintained outside the pen

Predator Control

- 14 live traps and 14 A24 traps deployed
- Removals:
 - 9 mongoose, 2 cats, 1 rat

Mortality

- One gosling mortality was documented within the pen

III. PROGRAMMATIC SHA – MOLOKA'I

- ITL Term: April 7, 2003 – April 6, 2053
- Status: No landowners currently enrolled

DOFAW continues outreach to increase participation. Recent translocations are expected to support future enrollment by demonstrating successful reintroduction and regulatory assurances.

IV. STATUS OF ESRC RECOMMENDATIONS

FY2024 Recommendation:

- Improve clarity and balance between SHA assurances and HCP mitigation responsibilities

Response:

- Protections clarified through ITLs, MOUs, and contracts defining roles and responsibilities among DOFAW, landowners, and KWP.

V. DOFAW EVALUATION

FY2025 implementation demonstrates:

- Continued active management and coordination across multiple partners
- Successful translocation and re-establishment efforts on Moloka'i
- Ongoing population support and productivity at Haleakalā Ranch

Key challenges include:

- Predation-related gosling mortality
- Dispersal of translocated adults
- Limited participation in the Programmatic SHA

Overall, implementation remains consistent with SHA objectives and ITL authorizations, with adaptive management occurring through formal agreements and coordinated operations.

VI. AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

DOFAW recommends:

1. Existing ITLs for the Maui Nui Safe Harbor Agreements remain in place.
2. DOFAW, KWP, and landowners continue coordinated management under established MOUs.
3. DOFAW continue outreach to expand participation in the Programmatic SHA on Moloka'i.

If you have any questions, please contact the Habitat Conservation Planning Program Associate, Jesse Adams, at jesse.w.adams.researcher@hawaii.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature:



Email: david.g.smith@hawaii.gov

DAVID G. SMITH
Administrator