

From: **Brent Carman** <[brent.a.carman@gmail.com](mailto:brent.a.carman@gmail.com)>

Date: Tue, Nov 7, 2023, 7:41 AM

Subject: Agenda Item F.3 Testimony

To: <[BLNR.TESTIMONY@hawaii.gov](mailto:BLNR.TESTIMONY@hawaii.gov)>

Aloha,

As a life long Big Island local, fisherman, surfer and more importantly former DAR Fisheries Tech IV with direct knowledge of the impacts of aquarium collecting on our reefs and reef fishes from 16 years of research on aquarium collecting, I strongly encourage the State of Hawaii to Ban this fishery now permanently!

I do not have to remind you of the countless research papers and data we at Kona DAR published. All pointing to the fact of the harm this fisheries causes to Hawaii's reefs. Of the countless enforcement actions we were directly involved in because of the vagrant rule breaking and the States inability to properly manage aquarium collecting.

I testified before while employed by DLNR/DAR in support of banning this method of resource removal and my testimony remains the same! This is not a compatible method of extraction for our reefs and people. Get rid of it permanently and let's focus on Subsistence and Sustenance fishing. Let's try to help our reefs and ocean become more resilient by taking the prudent action to get rid of AQ fishing once and for all.

Mahalo and with the greatest of sincerity,

Brent Carman

---

**From:** Manuel Mejia <mmejia@coral.org>  
**Date:** November 8, 2023 at 8:17:30 AM HST  
**To:** blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov, "Mike Nakachi (mike@moanaohana.com)" <mike@moanaohana.com>, Uilani Naipo <uilani.naipo@me.com>, Kevin Chang <kevin@kuahawaii.org>, DLNR.Aquatics@hawaii.gov  
**Subject: CORAL support of AQ ban**

Aloha BLNR,

On behalf of The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), please find attached my letter of support for the petition to ban aquarium fish collecting in Hawaii.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our concern about this unsustainable practice. It is akin to vacuuming up all

the birds in the forest and putting them in cages to die for short-term profit.

Mahalo for doing the pono thing for Hawaii and approve this petition.

E Ola ke kai, e ola kakou. (as the ocean thrives, so do we).

Best fishes,

Manuel

>< >< ><

--

Manuel Mejia

Regional Program Director, Main Hawaiian Islands

**Coral Reef Alliance**

Office: (510) 370-0508

1441 Kapiolani Blvd Ste 1114

PMB 29802

Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-4406 USA



November 8, 2023

Board of Land and Natural Resources  
1151 Punchbowl Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813-3088  
[BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV](mailto:BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV)

Aloha BLNR,

The Coral Reef Alliance strongly supports the petition by Kalanihale, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park, Moana 'Ohana, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and For the Fishes to prohibit the take of marine life for commercial aquarium purposes. Their petition is filed pursuant to Article IX section 8, Article XI, §§ 1, 6 and 9 and Article XII, § 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution; HRS §§ 91-6, 190-3, and 190-4; and HAR § 13-1-26.

The Coral Reef Alliance (coral.org) is a science-based organization that works to save coral reefs by reducing stressors to coral reefs so that they may adapt to climate change. The data is clear that Hawaii's coral reefs and fish populations can no longer support an aquarium trade that relies on the wholesale extraction of reef fish that are critical to maintaining the balance and overall health of our coastal ecosystems. If we continue to allow the aquarium trade to deplete reef fishes, our coral reefs will suffer and the result for Hawai'i will be less resilient coastlines and more vulnerable communities. Coral reefs feed our communities and protect our island homes from storm surges. The economic benefits from these ecosystem services alone, dwarf any benefit from the aquarium trade. In fact, the aquarium trade is a negative economic externality that degrades our environment and our overall quality of life in Hawai'i. It is inconsistent with Hawaiian values of caring for our islands and each other.

Please support this wise and pono petition to uphold DLNR's mandate to protect our natural and cultural resources for the public trust. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide written testimony in full support of the ban on aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Manuel Mejia  
Regional Program Director-Hawai'i  
Coral Reef Alliance (coral.org)  
Email: [mmejia@coral.org](mailto:mmejia@coral.org)

Cc: [DLNR.Aquatics@hawaii.gov](mailto:DLNR.Aquatics@hawaii.gov)

**From:** DendraJoy Best <lcadjb@icloud.com>  
**Date:** November 6, 2023 at 12:05:50 PM HST  
**To:** blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Jonnetta <jp@conservehi.org>, mike@moanaohana.com  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony

My name is Dendra Best and I live in Pahoehoe, Hawaii. I am a 2024 Board Member of the Conservation Council for Hawaii, a NWF State Affiliate.

I am ashamed to say I once had an aquarium but once we learned of the heinous methods of capturing these “pets” and the disastrous impact on already critically endangered reefs around the world we no longer kept one.

I fully support a rule ending commercial aquarium collection.

No reef fish is a pet.

Dendra Best

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Doug Perrine](#)  
**To:** [BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV](mailto:BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony  
**Date:** Saturday, November 4, 2023 6:50:22 PM

---

Aloha BLNR Members –

I am testifying as a resident of West Hawaii, a regular user of the resources in question, and the holder of bachelor's and master's degrees in marine biology with a specialty in fisheries management. I was first trained in identifying and surveying Hawaiian reef fish as a student at UH Hilo in the early 1970s. Since moving to Kona in 1997 I have been a regular diver on West Hawaii reefs, with thousands of dives for the purpose of fish photography over the last quarter century plus. This has given me ample opportunity to observe the effects of the tropical fish collection industry on West Hawaii reefs.

From the perspective of a naturalist and fish photographer, West Hawaii reefs have experienced a renaissance in availability of endemic Hawaiian fish since fish collecting was curtailed a few years ago. Species such as the flamboyant and colorful flame wrasse and longfin anthias, that previously could be found only in depths beyond the safe limits of recreational scuba diving, are now available for viewing and photography. The recovery of multiple species of endemic Hawaiian fish on West Hawaii reefs since fish collecting was stopped has been confirmed by surveys by the nonprofit REEF, as well as by the DAR's own survey data. This is important to me, as I seek to document rare and unique Hawaiian fish for my own profession, but should also be important to the State, as it seeks to encourage visitation by tourists with an interest in Hawaii's traditional culture and natural resources, rather than mass marketing to those that come only for margaritas on the beach with no respect for the host culture and environment.

Regardless of whether the rarest native species are included in proposals for collecting licenses (as they have been included in previous proposals), we can be certain that they will be targeted due to their high price on the market, deriving from their rarity. There has never been sufficient inspection to determine which species were actually being shipped out or to discourage collection of unpermitted species. The previous "White List" of species allowed for collection was really a "Whitewash List", as there was no enforcement.

As an analogous situation please imagine if China allowed collectors to raid its forests and capture all the pandas to be sold to private owners, so that pandas could no longer be seen either in the wild or in public zoos, but only by those who could afford to buy one & keep it on their own estate.

Apart from depleting the shallow reefs of the rare treasures that are just starting to return to public view, renewed collecting would again deplete populations of schooling herbivores that

are critical to reducing coverage of algae that smother the reefs and prevent settlement of new corals. The DAR has acknowledged that reduced herbivore populations have contributed to a critical condition where our reefs may now be at a tipping point beyond which they will be unable to recover from any bleaching events or other periodic stressors. The DAR is proposing a rule to limit the harvest of herbivores for consumption, but it may well find great difficulty in garnering public acceptance of such a restriction if it again opens up the herbivore populations to harvesting for export to aquarium trade operations around the world.

Finally, I would like to address DAR Administrator Brian J. Neilson's recommendation that the Board deny the rulemaking petition because a) rule proposals require review and approval by the AG's office within 30 days, and b) the AG's review takes longer than 30 days. This type of "Catch 22" is unacceptable in a participatory democracy, and makes a mockery of Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) §13-1-26, the intent of which is to empower citizens to petition for rulemaking. This sort of Orwellian excuse to deny a petition should be strongly condemned by the Board, which should judge the petition on its merits, and require the bureaucracy to amend its behaviors to comply with the law and with the spirit of Hawaii's Constitution.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Douglas L. Perrine  
76-223 Haoa St  
Kailua Kona HI 96740

**From:** [Jenny Davidson](#)  
**To:** [BLNR.TESTIMONY@hawaii.gov](mailto:BLNR.TESTIMONY@hawaii.gov)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 7, 2023 9:40:08 PM

---

Aloha,

I live in Maine now but spent 11 years on O'ahu, loving the ocean every day. I am writing out of concern for the reef fishes of Hawai'i. With the exception of protected areas such as Hanauma Bay, much of O'ahu reefs are fished-out or over-collected, leading to a 90% decline in yellow tang and other popular fish for the aquarium trade. Neighbor island populations of yellow tang, for example on West Hawai'i, have also declined as much as 80%. As such, I am respectfully urging you to enact rules to prohibit collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade and save these animals in their natural habitats.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Jenny Davidson  
Freeport ME

---

**From:** Joan Alworth <jalworth2@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony  
**Date:** November 7, 2023 at 4:41:10 PM PST  
**To:** " BLNR.TESTIMONY@hawaii.gov "  
<BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV>

As a former resident of Honolulu and a long-time (30 + years) visitor to Hawaii Island, I wish to make my views known regarding the collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

Becoming certified to scuba dive in Puget Sound 20 years ago, in December! I said “never again” and decided that Hawaii Island was the kind of diving I wanted to experience from now on. The experiences I have had under water has forever changed how I look at our world. I have been fortunate to dive in Palau and Tahiti as well.

Aquatic life in its natural habitat is what divers want to see. Healthy eco systems are what locals want to maintain.

To this day I cannot look at the tanks of reef fish in Thai restaurants or doctors offices without recognizing how those fish were acquired. I have seen the small boats out on the Kona side of Hawaii near Kealahou Bay in the early morning and at night and I know what they are doing.

The illegal aquarium trade’s disregard of our unique Hawaiian environment is short term thinking and I implore the Department of Land and Natural Resources - Division of Aquatic Resources to enact a rule to prohibit collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this petition to end commercial aquarium collection.

Joan Alworth  
Seattle, Washington



---

**From:** John Wright <hijohn@prodigy.net>  
**To:** blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov <blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 09:07:31 PM MDT  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony // CONTINUED BAN OF "HARVESTING" OF HAWAII REEF FISH

RE: HARVESTING OF HAWAII REEF FISH SHOULD REMAIN  
ILLEGAL

Dear Sirs / Madams,

I have been a resident of Hawaii since 1982. I have lived on Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island. I have noticed a horrible decline in the number of reef fish for 40 years, but not knowing why until recent years: the GROSS over "harvesting" of our colorful, native, Hawaiian reef fish, which cruel "dealers" sell these fish to the highest bidder, often over-seas, and the vast majority of sales are out-of-State. HAWAII's REEF FISH BELONG IN HAWAII's ocean waters. MOST of the fish taken out of the water will die ... for every 1 fish that survives, usually many more do not survive their transports to far-away destinations.

Just imagine if one were trying to catch and to sell our native Hawaiian birds: our beautiful I'iwi and Apapane birds would disappear, of course. Hawaii's reef fish are of course not as visible to everyone, but are just as awesome. We should "malama" (treasure) these creatures for all to see, for our children, and grandchildren, and for their descendants.

Hawaiian reef fish should not be available for sale !!  
PLEASE CONTINUE the  
banning of the horrible practice of "harvesting" (wanton taking of)

Hawaiian reef fish !! Because of your great efforts in recent years, I have noticed a slight return of our colorful, and wonderful reef fish. Please do not allow the horrible practices of the past to return. Please continue to preserve this natural blessing of our reef fish to be protected !!

THANK YOU,

Sincerely,

John Paul Wright, MD, PO BOX 1089, Volcano,  
HI 96785 (808) 281-0419

---

**From:** Julia Fairchild <fairjulia1952@gmail.com>  
**Date:** November 6, 2023 at 4:04:29 PM HST  
**To:** blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov  
**Cc:** Calley O'Neill <calley@calleyoneill.com>, mike@moanaohana.com  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony

Honorable Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am Julia Fairchild from Waimea on the Big Island, writing to urge the Board of Land and Resources to **approve the petition to ban commercial aquarium fish collecting** and direct the DAR to **begin rulemaking to guide the process immediately.**

My friends and I have long been distressed by the lack of oversight and a ban against commercial aquarium fish collectors because of their blatant disregard for ocean and reef ecology and the balance therein. We are aware that they have depleted many species, disturbed and willfully damaged coral in their hunting pursuits, fished in areas they are not allowed, and disrespected and disallowed native Hawaiian cultural timeless sustainability practices and Traditional Ecological Wisdom in taking only what one needs, They have devastated the Yellow Tang population for fish tanks and personal gain. Please immediately and permanently ban commercial aquarium fish collecting and create rules, regulations, community education, and oversight.

Please inform me of your progress on Item F3, and thank you all so much for your essential ecological and cultural concern, regulation, and oversight.

It's TIME to pay attention to indigenous wisdom and give the Earth the respect she deserves.

With aloha,  
Julia Fairchild

**Board of Land and Natural Resources  
Department of Aquatic Resources  
1151 Punchbowl St., Room 330  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813**

**Date: November 7, 2023**

**Re: Agenda item F.3 testimony in support of enacting a rule to prohibit collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.**

My name is Kaikea Nakachi from Moku 'o Keawe and I fully support this petition to enact a rule to permanently end commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

I have personally witnessed the destruction and greed of the aquarium industry. In particular, I remember a sacred place with a name that included reference to a rare and endemic fish found there with a healthy population. I withheld its name and location in an attempt to protect it in the future from poachers and other potential threats. My family watched collectors anchor boats there for days to collect, we witnessed the broken coral left in their wake, and by 2005 noted there was not a single of the rare and endemic fish there any longer. We have fought against the industry at every opportunity to do our best to protect this and many other places. Even after a few small victories against the aquarium industry, this place continues to remain without the rare and endemic fish that gave the place its name. I do not wish for another place to be stripped of its identity, history, and unique life found nowhere else on the planet. Making a rule to end this destructive industry will be vital to preventing this from ever happening again.

The hierarchy of priorities policy for the DLNR regarding commercial activities in state waters ranks the conservation of the resource as the highest priority. If, and only if, the commercial activity can be done in a way that does not unduly damage the resource, should it be allowed. If so, then the next priority is for the use/activity of the general public. A commercial activity should only be considered if it does not impinge on the resource or use by the general public. Every fish that is removed from the reef by aquarium collectors is a fish that cannot contribute to conserve its own population, a fish that cannot fulfil its role in its ecosystem either as an herbivore or prey item, and is a fish that cannot be seen or fished for by Native Hawaiian subsistence fishers or any other member of the general public. Now multiply that impact by the hundreds of thousands and up to the millions of fish that are removed by aquarium fishers and it is evident that this commercial industry greatly impinges on the resource as well as the use by the general public. A rule to prohibit collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium industry will righteously restore the highest priority, which is to conserve the resource.

The precautionary principle policy is used to develop laws for a healthier and more just Hawai'i by looking at a wide variety of alternatives and the best available science to select the option that presents the least potential threat to the states's natural systems. The best available science shows several things. First it shows that palces with community-led management have higher fish biomass than even fully protected areas without community-led management (Friedlander et al.

2013; <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/files/2023/01/Friedlander-et-al.-2013-Customary-marine-resource-knowledge-and-use-in-contemporary-Hawai%E2%80%98i.pdf>).

Part of this is due to the prohibiting of aquarium collection by communities in their managed areas. Our best available science also shows the various and dangerous declines in the entire ecosystems and in species targeted and in areas open to aquarium collection (The large majority of West Hawai‘i was open to aquarium collection and found to have the lowest total fish biomass, lowest herbivore biomass, least amount of juvenile lau‘īpala, lowest coral cover, and highest algal cover in West Hawai‘i in 2003, 2017, and most years in between – Gove et al. 2019: <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/19771>; 93% depletion of lau‘īpala in areas open to aquarium collection on O‘ahu – Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/bnbxjpi617a1gnx/Aquarium%20Fish%20Paper%20Grabowsky%20and%20Thornhill.pdf?dl=0>). Finally, the best available science is also developing methods for captive breeding. This method could provide more jobs than a mere handful of collectors while also preventing wild fish from being removed from our reefs. According to the precautionary principle policy, the state should be focused on expanding captive breeding and prohibiting collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium industry, since it is the alternative with the least potential threat to the state’s natural systems.

Our reef wildlife face unprecedented impacts that are only getting worse.

Increased storms and associated damage due to climate change, coral bleaching, pollution, sea level rise, ocean acidification, nutrient loading, habitat destruction, and trophic cascades all threaten our reef wildlife in Hawai‘i. Over harvest is one of the few impacts we can directly control. The state of Hawai‘i understands the need to protect wildlife and has even proposed protections to protect herbivorous fish with the intent to prevent over harvest and maintain their ecosystem services. Enacting a rule to prohibit the collection of reef wildlife accomplishes this intent and is a prime example for us to control the most direct human-induced negative impact on our marine life in Hawai‘i.

I have heard many attempts to define the aquarium collection industry as “sustainable” over the years, most of them voiced by foreign-born collectors. Here in Hawai‘i we have a unique and incredible definition of sustainable that is just as much of a lifestyle as it is a benefit to every animal in Hawai‘i, including us humans. This definition of sustainable is the cultural practice of lovingly taking care of your home and its resources to achieve ‘āina momona, where the environment is able to produce so much abundance that our human needs can be met from the generated excess. The definition of sustainable as the maximum amount of fish that can be killed or removed and still sustain a population is unacceptable and just as dangerous to our culture and way of life as it is to the resources that feed it. Not only does this false idea of sustainability ensure that ‘āina momona can never be achieved and all of the cultural practices associated with it impossible to do, but it also directly takes away from the health and wellbeing of subsistence Native Hawaiian fishermen while simultaneously increasing the burden on them to lovingly take care of the resources being so heavily impacted by others. Enacting a rule to prohibit the collection of reef wildlife in Hawai‘i empowers Native Hawaiian resource stewards and gives us a fair chance to foster ‘āina momona and utilize our traditions to benefit all marine life in Hawai‘i, including humans.

Me and my family made time to be interviewed for the Cultural Impact Statement (CIS) for the Hawai'i Island Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the pet trade. My grandfather was still alive then and spoke passionately on the need to protect our marine resources due to the declines he had witnessed since his birth in 1932. He, like me and my family as well as many others, stated that the removal of fish from the ocean by aquarium collectors goes against cultural practices and has no place in Hawai'i. While my grandfather is no longer alive, his legacy is continued by me and my family, and through our cultural practices he lives on in the ocean in different forms. The burden of kuleana falls to me to uphold his values that were ignored and left out of the summarization of the CIS by the pet trade in their EIS. It is why I will continue to fight to defend the unique, beautiful, and life-giving marine life of Hawai'i because it includes my grandfather and numerous other ancestors. It is why I support enacting a rule to prohibit the collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium industry in Hawai'i.

The mission of DLNR is to “enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawai'i's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawai'i nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors.” As I have described in my testimony I wholeheartedly agree on how unique and limited our natural, cultural and historic resources are. For the many reasons I have given I believe enacting a rule to prohibit the collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium industry in Hawai'i is the best solution to enhancing, protecting, conserving, and managing these resources of Hawai'i. I support this petition with every molecule of my being, every memory of my ancestors, and I humbly and desperately urge the board to support this pono cause as well.

Me ka ha'aha'a (humbly) and with great aloha,  
Kaikea Nakachi

**Ka Pa'akai Consulting**  
1722 Kaiao St., Hilo, HI 96720  
(808) 384-6363  
kapaakaiconsulting@gmail.com

'Olekūkahi, Ikuwa - 4th, Nowemapa 2023

ATTN: Ms. Dawn Chang, Chairperson  
Board of Land and Natural Resources  
DLNR Main Office Kalanimoku Building  
1151 Punchbowl St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Submitted via Email at blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

SUBJECT: **Letter of Support** for Agenda Item F.3 Testimony in support of Kalanihale's, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park's, Moana 'Ohana's, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club's, and For the Fishes' Petition for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes (With Exemptions) at the BLNR Board Meeting, Thursday, November 9, 2023.

Aloha e Chair Chang, BLNR Members,

My name is Kēhau Springer, I am kanaka maoli residing in Kea'au, Moku o Keawe and I am writing this letter in **STRONG SUPPORT** for the Board of Land and Natural Resources to support Kalanihale's, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park's, Moana 'Ohana's, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club's, and For the Fishes' Petition for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes (With Exemptions) founded based on the following:

- Ensure protection of public trust resources for kanaka maoli for their traditional and customary practices and subsistence lifestyle.
- Protect the livelihoods and cultural gathering of Hawai'i residents that depend on coral reefs and fisheries for economic, structural, protective, educational, social, recreational, cultural, spiritual, physical, biological, and ecological benefits.
- End the destructive commercial take of marine life for AQ purposes due to its negative environmental impacts and conflicts with cultural and local values. AQ collection violates core principles to mālama 'āina and pono fishing.
- The petitioners have demonstrated their commitment to the health and well-being of the health of our coral reefs and fisheries. They are comprised of community organizations that have strong generational and lineal ties to the

'āina as well as organizations that stand for the betterment of Hawai'i's natural resources.

- If 99% of the aquarium commercial catch is sending marine life out of Hawai'i, how is this supporting the protection of Hawai'i's reefs FOR the people of Hawai'i. It is only benefiting the very few aquarium collectors and traders.

In closure, I **FULLY SUPPORT** and urge you to approve their petition to allow rulemaking to prohibit the take of marine life for commercial aquarium purposes (with exemptions). The future health of our natural resources depends on the PONO decisions we make today. Mahalo for your consideration.

Na'u

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shauna Kēhaunani Springer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with some overlapping letters.

na Shauna Kēhaunani Springer  
Founder & Executive Director  
Ka Pa'akai Consulting  
Kea'au, Moku o Keawe, Hawai'i



*"Solutions not Complaints"*

*Date: November 7, 2023*

*Memo to: Board of Land and Natural Resources*

*From: Damien Kenison/ President/Kauhakō Ohana Association*

*Re: Ban of Aquarium Fish Collecting*

*Aloha no Kakou,*

*On behalf of the families who reside in the ahupua'a of Kauhakō, Ho'okena and Kealia, South Kona, Hawaii Island I would like to submit this testimony in support of a ban on aquarium fish collecting. This devastating harvest of millions of reef fish from our fragile West Hawaii coastline throughout the years has negatively impacted our cultural practices and the procuring of mea'ai for our family gatherings and celebrations.*

*Our fragile reef system is a narrow shelf which can only support a limited number of fish. The extraction of hundreds of thousands of reef fish annually is unsustainable and has depleted the population of one of our favorite food fish, pāku'iku'I. It has been banned from being harvested in West Hawaii for two years. For two years it is illegal to honor our departed ohana with a celebration of their life featuring this ono mea'ai.*

*For the past ten years our lawai'a have traveled farther and fish longer to net or spear enough fish for their family. Along with climate change and pollution from coastal development, aquarium fish collecting has compounded the decline of our reef fish and removes marine life that are part of a cycle which sustains the biological health of a coral reef system.*

*DAR's determination of a healthy fish population does not take into account all of the factors that are necessary for a vigorous habitat for our fish. Herbivores and predators have their role in this system that is ecologically balanced and when you disrupt that stability the environment is negatively impacted. Often times those effects go unnoticed until it is too late to reverse the damage.*

*With the threats mentioned above the introduction of invasive species has also resulted in the decline of fish that were once plentiful. The kūmū and the āholehole, a favored food of many here, have become scarce and the population decrease of these fish can be attributed to any one of these threats. However, a ban on AQ collecting is a less complicated and direct remedy as this is an unnecessary and destructive practice that benefits very few to the detriment of many.*

*Appropriate tourism is an economic driver that supports our government and the people whom it serves. The DLNR would not be able to operate efficiently without the funding it receives from this financially lucrative industry and their ability to manage and protect of our natural resources would become greatly reduced. Hawaii is promoted as a tourist destination for its natural beauty, which includes the abundance of reef fish that people from all over the world come here to see. They would not enjoy looking at a reef which is inhabited by hundreds of humuhumu but their experience would be more memorable if a myriad of multi-colored reef fish were there for their enjoyment. This enhanced encounter would prompt them to revisit Hawaii providing our State with a consistent financial benefit.*

*As a result of conflicts between AQ collectors and South Kona communities Fish Replenishment Areas were established that bans the AQ collecting. However, because of the highly profitable nature of this business collectors consistently poached in the closed areas and the lack of enforcement due to understaffing and the vastness of the coastline, allowed many of them to go undetected. Even with increased staffing the AQ collectors are determined and have harvested fish illegally at night, a difficult situation for DOCARE officers. Our families depend on the ocean for mea'ai and the continued practice of customary fishing and gathering pursuits. We abide by the teachings of our kupuna and practice "Lawai'a Pono". We do not waste, we do not take more than we need, and we share our I'a with ohana and neighbors.*

*Ho'okena/Kauhakō is the last Hawaiian village to fish with outrigger canoes and as we teach our keiki how to holoholo, the wa'a become an extension of the kupuna who have passed on their mana'o to us. The wa'a is a connection to ka 'aina I ke kai and honors our kupuna through continued use as we harvest I'a for mea'ai and for the perpetuation of our cultural practices.*

*The loss of our food fish is something that is hard to comprehend and its impact on our identity as the ho'a'aina of this place is a concern that will cause emotional and spiritual harm if it is not addressed by the present day konohiki – DAR and the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Please ban this destructive industry for the betterment of Hawaiians and all people of Hawaii Nei.*

*Ke Aloha Nunui,*

*Damien Kenison*

*Damien Kenison – President*

*Kauhakō Ohana Association*

*Website - <http://namamo9.wixsite.com/kauhakooohana>*

**From:** [Keith Neal](#)  
**To:** [BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV](mailto:BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony  
**Date:** Saturday, November 4, 2023 9:07:19 AM

---

Re: November 9, 2023: Agenda Item F.3 Testimony

I support Hawai'i's Board of Land and Natural Resources to enact a rule to prohibit collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

This is vanity practice of collecting wild Hawaiian reef creatures for the aquarium pet trade must stop. Hawaiian reef ecosystems are challenged significantly and aquarium trade collectors compound those challenges. Why do we allow this exploitation so some dentist on the mainland can have reef fishes live out their lives in a glass box (of those that make it)!? Furthermore, the trade inherently conflicts with local culture and native Hawaiian values, including pono fishing practices to only take what is needed.

The collection of wild Hawaiian reef creatures for the aquarium pet trade is an ugly vanity trade as is shark fining.

See: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2811>

Ban aquarium pet trade collecting in Hawaiian waters.

Keith Neal  
Waimea, 96743

**From:** [Martha Lane](#)  
**To:** [BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV](mailto:BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item F.3 Testimony  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 8, 2023 1:03:04 AM

---

Aloha Members of the Hawaii Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Martha Lane and I live in Volcano on Hawaii Island.

I have been a resident of the State of Hawaii for most of my 72 years.

I hike the forest and swim in the ocean; I birdwatch and snorkel.

I know our place in the Pacific is one of the most wondrous on earth.

But I am saddened by the loss of so many native plants and animals.

And that loss is mainly attributable to human activity.

Knowing this, it is our—mine and your—kuleana to protect the State's indigenous and endemic wildlife.

And I believe that kuleana includes banning the collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

We should no more allow the collection of Hawaii's native fish than we would the native birds.

The aquarium pet trade is exploitive, cruel, and deadly.

It is time to stop this assault on Hawaii's sealife.

I ask that the Board approve the petition and direct the Department of Aquatic Resources to begin rulemaking.

Respectfully,

Martha Lane  
Volcano, Hawaii

---

**From:** ronelenbaas2@icloud.com  
**Subject:** Lets Save Ourselves...  
**Date:** November 6, 2023 at 8:02:49 AM HST  
**To:** "BLNR.TESTIMONY@hawaii.gov"  
<BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV>

Aloha and Good Morning, I am Ron Elenbaas, Hawaii resident and living on Hawaii Island, in Kailua-Kona. Like virtually everyone else, lucky enough to live here, the natural beauty, both on the land and in the ocean is a constant source of pleasure, peace and contentment for my family, friends and myself. I am active in the water, swimming, snorkeling and other activities at least 3 days a week. I see the damage first hand, with my own eyes. 3 years ago, the shallow waters were almost absent of any fish. It was startling to see such beautiful and pristine water devoid of life!

Over the last 3 years, however, the comeback of fish and animals has begun and it is small but noticeable, nature sometimes heals but it takes a long time. I used to live in the Florida Keys and witnessed human activity destroy a once beautiful and productive marine environment. We must not do the same in our beautiful Hawaii. We can and should save ourselves. The idea that some small private enterprise, aquarium fishing, has the "right" to destroy this (our) fragile eco-system so someone in New York or Tokyo can watch a beautiful yellow tang swim in endless, small circles, trapped in some indoor aquarium is disgusting, not to mention deeply immoral. It is so selfish, unnecessary and harmful, to the fish, animals and us. Only we can save it and let it actually flourish. A healthy marine environment is a gift we give ourselves, the animals and the future generations. Please do the right thing and permanently ban these aquarium fishing activities. Only you can do it. Thank-you for your efforts on our behalf.

Ron Elenbaas

72-1057 Kekahawaiole  
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

---

**From:** stevearnett@hawaiiantel.net  
**Date:** November 6, 2023 at 9:17:47 AM HST  
**To:** blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Aquarium fishing

Aloha BLNR board members,

I am a resident of Kealahou. I spend many hours in and on the ocean. I have lived here most of my adult life.

I hate what is happening to our reefs with aquarium fishermen taking all of the reef fish for their own profit. We have seen the rape of our reefs for years and those of us who fish for food and sustainability despise the aquarium fishermen. I have several friends who are aquarium fishermen and I hate their occupation. I tell them directly how harmful their rape and pillage of the reefs are. But, they choose to ignore me.

Most of Hawaii's economy is based on tourism, and the fewer the fish for tourists to see the less their ocean enjoyment.

I strongly encourage the BLNR board to vote to abolish aquarium fisherman from the continued rape of our reefs forever.

Stephen Arnett  
Waterman  
Kealahou, HI

---

**From:** Yasmin Vatter <yasminvatter@gmail.com>

**Date:** November 7, 2023 at 10:38:17 AM HST

**To:** blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

**Subject: STOP Aquarium take now!**

Aloha,

I have watched the depletion of schools of fish that once dominated at He'eia Bay in Kailua Kona now reduced to near nothing by the aquarium trade.

Please stop this mindless destruction of our coral reefs and ocean habitats and end this practice immediately.

Mahalo,

Yasmin Vatter  
Kailua Kona, HI