



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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32 ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTED UNDER SWEEPING SAFE HARBOR AGREEMENT

Pact Between State of Hawai'i, US Fish & Wildlife Service & Kamehameha Schools

(Honolulu) The State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Kamehameha Schools (KS) signed a historic agreement today to promote the recovery of 32 federally-endangered species and one threatened species on the Island of Hawai'i.

"This Safe Harbor Agreement encourages landowners to improve their habitat and restore their forests for endangered species to flourish. It establishes a baseline for existing levels of endangered species, allowing landowners to adopt more environmentally friendly land management practices without penalizing them if endangered species move into the area. I thank Kamehameha Schools for leading the way for Hawai'i landowners to restore native landscapes," said Gov. David Ige.

This agreement, along with the associated Enhancement of Survival Permit and Incidental Take License is the largest of its kind with a single landowner in the nation. It covers 32,207 acres of land owned by Kamehameha Schools across Keauhou and Kīlauea forest lands on the southeastern slopes of Mauna Loa.

"This strengthens Kamehameha Schools' ability to steward these lands in a manner that fosters healthy habitats for species fighting to survive," said Jack Wong, CEO of Kamehameha Schools. "As we work toward a thriving lāhui, the cultural connection to 'āina that is healthy and vibrant becomes much more important for Native Hawaiians and all the people of our state." Wong said

"Partnerships like this are the foundation of conservation. This agreement will promote habitat improvement across the whole landscape in a way that not only benefits the protected and endangered species that live there, but also improves the entire watershed," said Mary Abrams, Field Supervisor for the Pacific Islands Fish & Wildlife Office.

This agreement will likely result in significant and long-lasting changes to the entire landscape, including federally endangered Hawai'i Creeper (*Oreomystis mana*), Hawai'i 'Ākepa (*Loxops coccineus coccineus*), 'Akiapōlā'au (*Hemignathus munroi*), 'Io (or Hawaiian hawk, *Buteo solitarius*), Nēnē (or Hawaiian Goose, *Branta sandvicensis*), 'Alalā (or Hawaiian crow, *Corvus*

hawaiiensis), 'Ōpe'ape'a (or Hawaiian hoary bat, *Lasiurus cinereus semotus*), the threatened 'I'iwi (*Vestiaria coccinea*), and 25 endangered plant species.

Kamehameha Schools Ecologist Nāmaka Whitehead said that Hawaiians are Hawaiians because of the 'āina. "Healthy, functioning native ecosystems are the foundation of Hawaiian cultural identity and well-being. Stewarding our 'āina to be more resilient ensures that future generations will continue to have a relationship with the native species and ecological processes that make us who we are. I Hawai'i no nā Hawai'i i ka 'āina. Our 'āina, Hawai'i, is what makes us Hawaiian."

Suzanne Case, DLNR Chair remarked, "This pact allows Kamehameha Schools to make landscape changes that improve the current ranges of the species, increase their populations, and reestablish wild populations. Just as important, the agreement will reduce habitat fragmentation and connect a network of protected and managed state, federal, and private lands within the south-central region of Hawai'i Island."

"We are excited about finalization of this important Safe Harbor Agreement," said Colleen Cole, coordinator of the Three Mountain Alliance. "Three Mountain Alliance Members, including Kamehameha Schools, have worked together for decades to protect and manage the native ecosystems of this area which encompasses tens of thousands of acres all managed for conservation of our natural resources. This agreement ensures the hard work of the partnership will continue long into the future," said Cole.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The mission of the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources "Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors."

Kamehameha Schools is a private charitable education trust that manages 363,600 acres of land across the Hawaiian Islands and serves 60,000 learners every year.

The Three Mountain Alliance is the largest watershed partnership in Hawai'i, covering over one million acres and including 10 partners.

RESOURCES

HD aerial video of Keauhou-Kīlauea forest lands: (Courtesy: DLNR)
<https://vimeo.com/276355468>

Aerial Photographs of Keauhou-Kīlauea forest lands: (Courtesy: DLNR/Richard Drake)
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9d2lyto2hcwew71/AAAr5EE62WRXxQkDSVmgAJS0a?dl=0>

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