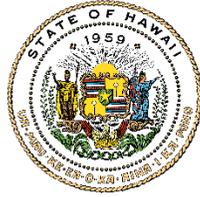


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Friday, March 24, 2023
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 140/SENATE RESOLUTION 215
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
INVESTIGATE THE CAUSES OF AND UPDATE KEY INFORMATION ON, INCLUDING
FACTS AND STATISTICS, THE DECLINE OF THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED PALILA
(LOXIOIDIES BAILLEUI) BIRD ON MAUNA KEA.**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 140/Senate Resolution 215 request the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to investigate causes of palila (*Loxioides bailleui*) decline, update facts and statistics on palila, and provide a report to the Legislature. **The Department supports these measures.**

The following is a summary of current and planned efforts the Department to monitor and manage palila. Annual palila population surveys are conducted by the Department and the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU), University of Hawai'i, and other partners. A recent report published by the Department, PCSU, and US Geological Survey showed that palila continue to decline on Mauna Kea, with population estimate of 1,432, 1,312, and 678 in 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively (Genz et al. 2022, <https://dspace.lib.hawaii.edu/handle/10790/6858>). The 2021 population estimate of 678 palila is the lowest estimate since annual surveys began in 1998. The Department began conducting quarterly palila population surveys in 2022 to more closely monitor the palila population and funding is being sought to analyze the resulting data collected in 2022 and 2023.

The Department has applied for funding from the United States (U.S.) Department of Defense to conduct a demographic study on palila to better understand causes of population decline and plan recovery actions for palila. If funded, this project will commence in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 and include monitoring of palila nests to determine whether invasive predators such as cats are implicated in the decline. Further funding to research sources of palila population decline is being sought from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
LAURA H.E. KAAKUA
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M. KALEO MANUEL
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

Three to four aerial shoots are conducted annually by Department to remove the remaining sheep within Palila Critical Habitat. Approximately 25 “Judas” sheep with radio-transmitters are used to locate and target the remaining sheep herds. In 2022, 267 sheep were removed via four aerial shoots. There are around 4000 acres of Department of Hawaiian Home Lands within the Palila Critical Habitat fence that the Department is unable to access to complete animal control.

There remains approximately 7.7 miles of Palila Critical Habitat fence to be replaced. Capitol Improvement Funds (CIP) awarded in 2020 and 2021 at \$500,000 apiece are currently being used to complete the remaining 5 miles of fence replacement along the Parker Ranch border, which is under contract. A CIP request for \$200,000 awarded in the FY 2023 supplemental budget which will be used to purchase materials to complete the 2.7 mile fence replacement on the Kukaiau Ranch border. The existing new and old fence continues to be maintained to address ongoing vandalism, damage from washouts and gates being left open allowing sheep and goat ingress.

The Mauna Kea Forest Restoration Project continues to carry out reforestation in key areas within Palila Critical Habitat, as well as predator control and invasive plant management to benefit palila. Since 2007, the project has planted approximately 230,000 trees to restore improve habitat conditions for palila. Plots are surveyed to monitor the forest recovery.

The Palila Hui is currently finalizing an action plan that outlines recovery actions for palila for the period 2023-2027.

Mitigating the risk of wildlife is another critical management action for palila. Fuel breaks and fire breaks continue to be maintained. The Department is in the planning process to expand these fuel breaks to minimize the risk of a major fire in the region. We are seeking funding from U.S. Department of Defense to increase this effort and to maintain water sources for firefighting.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of these measures.

SCR-140

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:43:17 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/24/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine A Villaflor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in agreement that as much information as possible regarding the **CRITICALLY** endangered Palila bird needs to be collected and studied by the DLNR as soon as possible. Any further construction or disruption on Mauna Kea could mean losing the Palila forever.

Mahalo,

Christine A. Villaflor

SCR-140

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 7:30:10 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/24/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Okamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support. It is much overdue that this evaluation be done. Mahalo!

SCR-140

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 5:54:11 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/24/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT with *considerations* of my comments this bill which requests THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE THE CAUSES OF AND UPDATE KEY INFORMATION ON, INCLUDING FACTS AND STATISTICS, THE DECLINE OF THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED PALILA (LOXIOIDIES BAILLEUI) BIRD ON MAUNA KEA.

PLEASE NOTE To write this SCR with the wording stated in the status purposely ignores looking at all factors which might be causing the demise of the Palila from Mauna Kea. We should not be narrow in the focus. This investigation should look at years past but also future possibilities of disturbing the Palila and it's habitat. It should also examine how the removal of the mamane tree from various places on the Mauna has affected the population of the Palila. Is it true that goats and sheep and other feral animals have been an influence on the Palila, yes. However, refusing to look at other factors including the noise and impact of construction trucks traveling up the Mauna for constructing and deconstructing telescopes (for example) should also be considered. Palila mainly live as stated in this SCR at elevations of 6,000 to 10,000 feet, it would be naive and neglectful for a study to ignore the impacts of what happens above and below that point or at other points on Mauna Kea. I would like to add that I support the accountability aspect of this SCR on the DLNR but to date have no confidence in the legislature holding them to that. Lastly, I do support this SCR in the hopes that we will make honest effort to protect and preserve the Palila. Mauna Kea, conservation district has been continually disrespected and the rules established to protect it and its' habitants ignored or twisted to meet the needs of human greed. I attach this link: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/mk/files/2017/03/B.02ab-Ch13-5-old.pdf> for a reminder of the administrative rules of a conservation district. Protecting the Palila should not be a "we are taking care of the Mauna" grandstand effort, we don't have time for band aids on an issue that affects this endangered species. Our Mauna, the Palila, the Mamane are a priority and protecting them should be a policy of the State.



HAWAI'I FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

P. O. Box 66 ❖ 'O'ōkala, HI
96774 Phone: 808-933-9411
Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org
Website:
www.hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 03/23/23

TO: WTL Chair Inouye, WTL Vice Chair Elefante and WTL Committee Members

FROM: Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support for HCR LRB Relating to the Decline of Palila

Dear Chair Inouye and Committee Members

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), I request that you support SCR140 Relating to the Decline of Palila.

The Palila issue is complex and efforts to protect the endangered species have not been successful. Over the years it's been understood that the Palila eat māmane seeds exclusively, and the overpopulated, unmanaged sheep and goats on the mountain weren't healthy for the māmane forests' survival because they were consuming and destroying the tree. From this thought, it was concluded erroneously that the sheep and goats were the cause of the Palila's demise. The reality is that sheep and goats have been killed, and there is more māmane on the mountain now than at earlier times, but not more Palila. Why? Now we know that thin egg shells, rats, cats, toxoplasmosis and some māmane leaves that aren't palatable to the birds are also to be considered as causes.

Hawai'i hunters and residents want an accounting of what's happened and paths forward guided by science. The management of Mauna Kea's slopes, which māmane and Palila call home, need a fresh approach. It may well be that a certain number of grazing sheep can be compatible with improving māmane conditions and that the ecosystem services of lowering the flashy fuel load and providing protein for local families may not add to the burden of the Palila's recovery.

HFIA advocates for Hawai'i's forests and their resources, working toward healthy and productive forests. This requires standing for real management advantaged by rigorous science. For these reasons, we believe that the decline of Palila needs to be investigated and possible new paths forward explored. We cannot take the same roads we've previously traveled and expect to arrive at a new destination. Please support SCR140.

Mahalo,

Guy Cellier

Guy Cellier, Acting President
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

Established in 1989, HFIA's is a nonprofit organization founded by people committed to sustainable forest management. HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: Acting President/Vice-President Guy Cellier, Secretary Peter D. Simmons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Thomas Calhoun, Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nickolas Koch, Tai Lake, Michael Sowards, Irene Sprecher, Michael Tam, Jorma Winkler, Ron Wolfe, Aileen Yeh

SCR-140

Submitted on: 3/24/2023 8:39:20 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/24/2023 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nani pogline	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislative members, it's been way too long, 40 years plus, that sheep have been eradicated to save palila, and to no avail. Instead, ungrazed fire fuel has built up, only further endangering palila and habitat. This unsuccessful and costly agenda to save palila needs to be revisited. Mahalo, Nani