

# News Release

## *National Wildlife Refuge System*



Big Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
60 Nowelo Street, Suite 100, Hilo, Hawaii 96720

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Contact: Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager, 808 443-2300

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## **Management Planning for Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge Begins**

### *Public Invited to Help Guide the Future*

A long-term plan that will guide management of the two units of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge on the Island of Hawai'i is now under development by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Two open houses to involve the public in the planning process are scheduled next week.

"These two National Wildlife Refuge units provide vital habitat for numerous species of Hawai'i's endangered forestbirds and plants, including what was the last occupied habitat of the 'alala," said refuge manager Jim Kraus. "The Hakalau Forest Unit on the slopes of Mauna Kea and the Kona Forest Unit near Captain Cook provide a glimpse of the real Hawai'i. Now is the time to help us plan for their future!"

The first open house is scheduled on Tuesday, March 3, at the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge office at 60 Nowelo Street, Suite 100 in Hilo. The second gathering is scheduled on Wednesday, March 4, at Yano Hall, 82-6156 Mamalahoa Highway in Captain Cook. Both open houses are scheduled from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The meetings will include a presentation explaining the National Wildlife Refuge System's comprehensive conservation planning process and providing information about current refuge management. The primary purpose of the meeting is to gather public input on the management issues that should be addressed during the planning process. Participants will be invited to visit refuge staff and discuss their specific issues, particularly related to wildlife and habitat management, visitor services, and cultural and historic resources.

"Over the coming year, we will be developing a draft comprehensive conservation plan for these refuges," Kraus said. "Of course we will be seeking public comment on the draft plan when it is released, but this is really the opportunity for folks to get in on the ground floor of the planning process."

The Hakalau Forest Unit was established in 1985 to protect endangered forestbirds and their rain forest habitat. Located on the eastern or windward slope of Mauna Kea, its 32,733 acres of land support a diversity of native birds and plants. The Kona Forest Unit was established in 1997 to protect native forest birds and the endangered Hawaiian crow ('alala). Located on the southwestern or leeward slope of Mauna Loa, the 5,300-acre unit supports diverse native bird and plant species as well as the rare habitats found in lava tubes and lava tube skylights.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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