

Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Pacific Regional Office  
911 NE 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181  
Phone: 503/231-6121  
Fax: 503/231-2122  
<http://pacific.fws.gov>

# News Release



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**Contact:** Clifford Inn, DLNR Education and Outreach Coordinator, (808) 587-0407  
Amy Gaskill, USFWS External Affairs Specialist, (503) 231.6874  
Or Barbara Maxfield or Ken Foote, USFWS Pacific Islands External Affairs, (808) 792.9530

## **Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources' Wildlife Action Plan Receives U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Approval to Conserve Wildlife, Natural Areas**

The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has received federal approval of its Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS), a plan to conserve, for future generations, the state's wildlife and the places they live. The plan is the result of three years of work by a broad coalition with multiple agencies, partners, non-profit organizations, resource-users, and interested citizens.

"The scope and scale of this planning effort is unprecedented in the State of Hawaii," said Peter Young, DLNR Chairperson.

"This plan will not only benefit wildlife but the people of this state as well. The Plan is a cost-effective investment to protect and enhance native habitats and vital natural areas throughout the state for future generations."

"Hawaii's CWCS is a result of dedicated staff, committed individuals, sound science, and strong collaboration with the community," said Young.

In March 2002, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally announced the implementation of a new State Wildlife Grant Program (SWG) to fund conservation activities for a wide array of wildlife species and their habitats through an \$80 million federal apportionment.

One of the primary purposes of this program is its focus on conservation actions to benefit species of greatest conservation need.

"Hawaii's officials have put an impressive amount of effort into creating their Wildlife Action Plan," said Regional Director Allen. "My staff and I are very pleased with the high quality and thoroughness of this

document and we are committed to working with our Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources partners to implement their strategies.”

Regional Director Allen said the plan will guide conservation in the State of Hawaii for decades to come. “We look forward to working with all the partners involved in this historic conservation effort,” he added.

Experts estimate that the Hawaiian Islands may be home to more species of plants and animals than any other state – many of which are found no where else in the world.

Due to its extreme isolation and climatic conditions, Hawai‘i has over 10,000 species found no where else on earth. Hawaii’s native wildlife and habitats play significant roles in Native Hawaiian culture and traditions as well as in its economy and way of life.

“Much of our native wildlife and habitats are threatened or at risk. As a result, Hawai‘i presents both an opportunity and challenge for conservation.”

“As an integrated action plan for the protection and recovery of Hawaii’s biodiversity, Hawaii’s CWCS recognizes both challenges and opportunities,” Young said.

By identifying important species and habitats, key threats, and objectives and strategies for their conservation and by creating a framework to measure the effectiveness of these strategies, Hawaii’s CWCS lays the foundation for conservation of native wildlife and their habitats.

Given Hawaii’s biological uniqueness on a global scale, the action plan recognizes the importance of protecting all native terrestrial animals, all endemic aquatic wildlife, other aquatic species threatened with decline, and a broad range of native flora.

On the ecological level, the plan takes a habitat management approach, adopting a landscape view that takes into account the complex inter-relationships between species and their habitats and the need for change and adaptability.

The plan builds on and synthesizes information gathered from existing conservation partnerships and cooperative efforts.

Additionally, the plan highlights these partnerships and their efforts in Hawai‘i with a goal to enhance and expand existing and to create new partnerships, ultimately increasing support for implementing Hawaii’s CWCS.

To receive federal funds through the SWG program, each state and territory is required by Congress to develop a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Also known as wildlife action plans, these proactive plans will help conserve wildlife and vital natural areas before they become too rare and costly to protect.

The Hawaii Wildlife Action Plan is on line at: <http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw/cwcs/>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and

restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.