



Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge
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Visit the Refuge's Web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/hakalauforest/>

Draft Vision Statements for Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge

Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge

On the windward slope of majestic Mauna Kea, midway between summit and sea lies Hakalau Forest Refuge, a place where people come together to laulima “many hands working together,” to share their knowledge, to share their skills, and to share their energy protecting, enhancing, restoring, and respecting Hawaiian wildlife. Known to Hawaiians as the “place of many perches,” verdant rainforest supports the largest populations of endangered Hawaiian forest birds. Crimson, orange, yellow and green-hued birds, the jewels of Hakalau, flitting through the mist and sipping nectar from ‘ohia lehua blossoms, inspire joy and wonder for present and future generations.

Kona Forest Unit

On leeward Mauna Loa, where the clouds kiss the slopes with cool gray fog, lies the Kona Forest. ‘Alalā and other Hawaiian forest birds forage for fruit, nectar, and insects among the lichen-draped branches and canopy of the old-growth koa/‘ohia forest, while the ‘io soars overhead. In the damp darkness of ancient lava tubes and cave systems, rare plants, archeological resources, and the bones of extinct birds are sheltered. Conservation partners collaborate to restore habitat for native and endangered species across the landscape.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update 2, October 2009



The ‘Io is the largest endangered forest bird in Hawai‘i / © Jack Jeffrey

Thank You for Participating!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Hakalau Forest and Kona Forest Units of the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).

The CCP will guide Refuge management for a period of 15 years. As part of the CCP planning process we requested public input on management issues, concerns, and opportunities.

In February 2009, we mailed approximately 150 copies of Planning Update 1 to interested individuals; local conservation and interest groups; research organizations; local, State, and Federal government agencies; and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Planning Update 1 was available at two public open house meetings we held in Hilo and Captain Cook, Hawai‘i, in March 2009. It was also posted on the Refuge’s Web site.

In Planning Update 1, we described the CCP planning process; Refuge purposes; draft wildlife, habitat, and public use goals; and preliminary issues to be considered in the CCP.

In this planning update we summarized the comments we received and listed primary

management issues we will use to draft alternatives and refine draft goals and objectives. We also included draft vision statements for both units, see page 4.

We would like to thank everyone who provided comments and we invite you to continue sharing your concerns, ideas, and suggestions with us. Your participation continues to be critical to the success of this planning effort.

Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager

Planning Schedule
 Planning Update 3...November 2009
 Draft CCP.....Spring 2010
 Final CCP.....Fall 2010

What Are Your Concerns for the Refuge?

The public scoping period for the Refuge's CCP opened February 25, 2009, and ended March 27, 2009. Two public meetings were held, in Hilo and Captain Cook, Hawai'i, on March 3, 2009, and March 4, 2009, respectively. At the meetings, Refuge staff explained the CCP planning process; the Refuge purposes, vision, and management; and preliminary management issues, concerns, and opportunities. Refuge staff also answered questions from attendees and received written comments.

Twelve private citizens and representatives from various organizations attended the meetings and commented on the issues and opportunities we presented. Six written responses were received from individuals or organizations during scoping. The comments we received addressed broad or long-range issues and very specific or detailed strategies that could be used to achieve biological or public use objectives. Summaries of the issues we have identified to date follow.

How can we best protect endangered forest birds and the nēnē? The primary purpose of the Refuge is protection of endangered species. We manage Refuge resources to ensure high-quality habitat is available for endangered species, especially forest birds. Drawing on 20 years of Refuge management experience at the Hakalau Forest Unit, we will include objectives and strategies in the Draft CCP/EA for maintaining and enhancing native habitat communities to provide the lifecycle needs of Hakalau Forest's endangered species.

How can we best protect montane wet koa/ōhia forest, montane dry koa/ōhia/māmāne forest, lava tubes, and lavatube skylights? These habitat types are key to the survival of endangered species. Refuge management objectives and strategies will be designed to protect these habitat types, and where appropriate, restore areas to high-quality habitat. We will describe alternatives for managing these important resources in the Draft CCP/EA.

What opportunities exist for expanding environmental education through outreach and on-site programs?

Refuge staff have worked with 'Imi Pono no ka 'Āina on environmental education opportunities on-site and off-site in local schools. Through the CCP planning process, we will identify additional partnerships or opportunities to expand upon the work that is already in place (e.g., through the Friends of Hakalau Refuge).



'Akiapōlā'au / © Jack Jeffrey



Hakalau Forest Refuge / USFWS

How can we best prepare for, manage, and prevent the spread of wildfires? There is concern, especially from adjacent landowners, that a wildfire could be ignited on the Refuge then spread onto private land. The Refuge currently coordinates with the County of Hawai'i to provide wildland fire fighting capabilities. We are also concerned about the potential for wildfire as habitat restoration efforts are implemented. Within the past year, a fire adjacent to the Hakalau Unit came close to spreading onto Refuge lands. Close coordination with the County, other agencies, and adjacent landowners is essential to ensure an efficient response to fire threats. As part of the Draft CCP/EA Refuge staff will review options for creating firebreaks and obtaining the equipment and personnel required to meet fire fighting needs at both units.

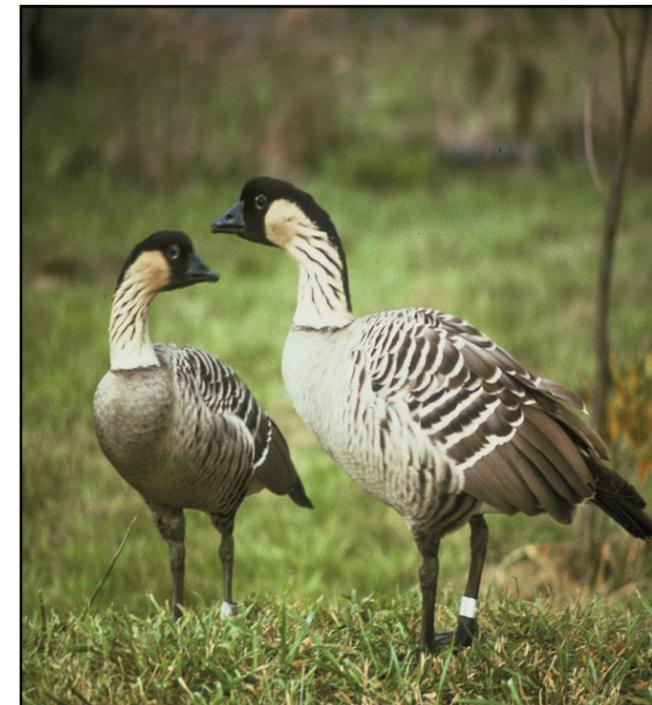
How can we keep refuge visitors and others (contractors, Service staff) from trespassing on adjacent lands? The Kona Forest Unit is currently closed to the public. At both units, a number of contractors and Refuge personnel use the easements for accessing the Refuge. We continue to impress upon all individuals who access the areas the importance of using only the authorized and in some cases court-ordered easements. Where appropriate, trespass incidents will be referred to Service law enforcement.

Is acquiring additional easements for accessing the Kona Forest Unit feasible? The existing easement includes difficult access from the Mamalahoa Highway, steep slopes, and multiple gates. During the CCP planning process, we will explore additional options.

What Native Hawaiian gathering activities occur on the Refuge? To date, there have been very few access requests for gathering activities. As part of the CCP, Refuge staff plan to review the process for granting Special Use Permits for gathering activities.

How can we best maintain public access to the historic Kaunene Trail? Access to the historic Trail will be reviewed as part of the Draft CCP/EA. The Refuge will explore options for maintaining the integrity of the Trail while considering access, safety, and resource management needs.

Do the Refuge units meet the minimum requirements for a wilderness designation nomination? A wilderness review, as required by Service policy, will be conducted as part of the CCP planning process. The review and conclusions will be part of the Draft CCP/EA.



Hawaiian goose or nēnē / © Jack Jeffrey

Is there the potential to protect habitat for endangered forest birds through additional land acquisition or conservation easements? At each unit we will consider opportunities for Refuge boundary expansion on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with Service policy. Currently, one tract of land with high-quality habitat within the Hakalau Forest Unit's approved acquisition boundary has not been acquired and is being managed by an agency partner. All of the land within the acquisition boundary for the Kona Forest Unit has been acquired. We encourage landowners with high-quality habitat for forest birds to manage their lands for conservation.

How can we better manage the Kona Forest Unit's ungulate populations? Refuge staff are in the process of administering a contract to build a perimeter fence around the unit, and two interior fences that would create three ungulate-free management areas within the unit. Options and opportunities for ungulate management, including removal, will be analyzed as part of the Draft CCP/EA.

How will climate change impact the Refuge? The Refuge's two units are unique in the Hawaiian Islands because of the range of elevations that occur on Refuge lands. Through the CCP planning process we will evaluate the effectiveness, impacts, and benefits of providing wildlife habitats at a variety of elevations, temperatures, and rainfall regimes, that wildlife can move between as conditions are altered through climate change processes.

These and other issues will be considered in the Draft CCP/EA. We are currently considering your comments as we develop preliminary management alternatives and refine draft goals and objectives. Your comments will also be helpful as we develop strategies to meet the Refuge's biological and visitor services goals and objectives.

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