



Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Planning Update Number 1, October 2009



Ae'o / Photo by Brian R. Barker

Help Us Plan for the Future!

At Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge and Kakahai'a National Wildlife Refuge

Over the next year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will be seeking input from the public, interested agencies, the Native Hawaiian community, and organizations regarding their interests, concerns, and viewpoints about important Refuge management issues. This information will be helpful as we develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge and Kakahai'a National Wildlife Refuge.

This is the first in a series of planning updates to keep you informed and invite your participation in the

planning process for these Refuges. The purposes of the Refuges, which stem from the 1973 Endangered Species Act, will remain the same as when the areas were set aside; to protect habitat for endangered wildlife. However, we have a chance to review each of our visitor programs, such as public access or environmental education; our placement of facilities such as trails, parking lots, or signs; and our management of habitats such as wetlands and coastal dunes. Your insights and observations are needed to provide a more complete and thoughtful process. Please share your ideas with us by attending

National Wildlife What?



Refuges are places where wildlife comes first. The National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) comprises the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for wildlife and provides important habitat for native plants and animals. The Refuge System is administered by the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service for the following mission:

"To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

upcoming public meetings (see page 5 for details) or by submitting written comments to the Refuge (see page 6 for contact information).

Public Open House Meetings

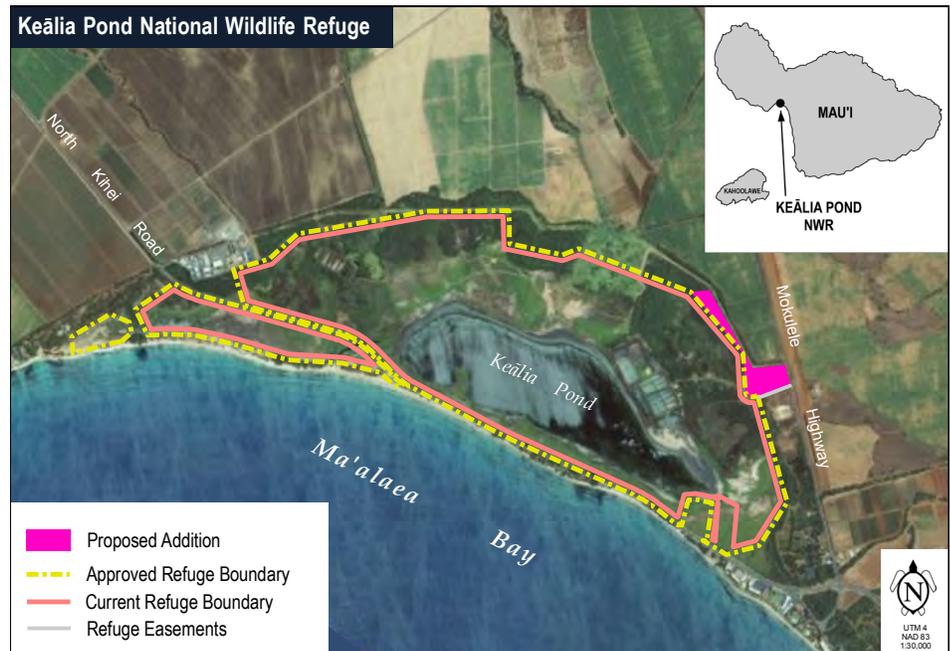
Public Open House Meetings will be held November 4, 2009 on Moloka'i and November 5, 2009 on Maui. See page 5 for details.

Your participation is critical to the success of this effort – we want to hear from you!

Refuge Complex Overview

Keālia Pond and Kakahai'a National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) are part of the Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Keālia Pond NWR, located along the south central coast of Maui, was established in 1992 for the purpose of providing habitat for some of Hawai'i's endangered waterbirds, specifically the ae'o (Hawaiian stilt) and the 'alae ke'oke'o (Hawaiian coot). The 691-acre Refuge consists primarily of wetland habitat that is managed to create mudflats, open water, and emergent marsh for endangered Hawaiian waterbirds and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

Keālia Pond NWR is an important breeding, feeding, and resting area for the ae'o and 'alae ke'oke'o. In addition, the Refuge also supports significant numbers of migrating and wintering shorebirds and waterfowl. Keālia Pond NWR provides a strategic landfall for migratory birds coming from Alaska, Siberia, and Asia and also supports other wetland birds such as koloa mapu (Northern pintail), koloa moha (Northern shoveler), lesser scaup, kolea (Pacific golden-plover), and 'akekeke (ruddy turnstone).



Although these migratory populations are small by continental standards, they represent some of the largest concentrations of these species in Hawai'i and the Pacific. A total of 110 species of birds have been documented on the Refuge.

The majority of the Refuge is closed to general public access, however, a boardwalk with overlooks, trails, and educational programs provide the public with opportunities to view and appreciate some of Maui's endangered and migratory wildlife.

Kakahai'a NWR is located on the southeastern coast of Moloka'i. The Refuge was established in 1976 to protect and provide habitat for endangered species. An inland Hawaiian fishpond is located on the Refuge. Habitats found within this Refuge include open water, freshwater marsh, mudflat, grassland, and shrubland. The Refuge provides important breeding, feeding, and resting areas for endangered waterbirds, a variety of migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and other wetland birds. Some of the more common migrants are northern pintail and Pacific golden-plover. Although Kakahai'a NWR is closed to the general public, partners are occasionally permitted to conduct wetland education programs.



Preliminary Draft Goals

Goals are broad statements intended to provide direction for the future management of the refuge. They are based on the purposes of the Refuges, the mission and policies of the Refuge System, input received through this planning process, and the key issues identified as most significant to these refuges. The planning team has developed draft goals for both refuges and would like your input.



Blackburn's sphinx moth
Photo by Ellen VanGelder

Goal 1: Protect and manage seasonal and semi-permanent wetland habitats to meet the needs of endangered waterbirds, as well as to meet the needs of other migratory birds.

Goal 2: Protect and manage water quantity and quality at Keālia Pond and provide a buffer zone from disturbances within the West Maui watershed. Provide habitat for the endangered Blackburn's sphinx moth.

Goal 3: Protect, restore, and manage coastal dune and beach strand habitat for the benefit of nesting sea turtles, seabirds, and the integrity of the fragile ecosystem.

Goal 4: Provide quality wildlife-dependent recreation, interpretation, and outreach opportunities to enhance public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of fish, wildlife, and habitats of the Keālia Pond and Kakahai'a NWRs.

Goal 5: Provide a quality environmental education program at Keālia Pond with specific learning objectives and diverse hands-on learning opportunities that meet the needs of individual teachers or group leaders, based on current State of Hawai'i standards. All programs include a stewardship component focused on wetland restoration for the benefit of waterbirds.

Preliminary Issues to be Considered

In preparing the CCP, a range of possible alternative management approaches will be explored and evaluated, including current management practices. The effects of the various alternatives on the biological resources and local communities will be evaluated in an Environmental Assessment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The planning team has identified some potential issues to be considered during CCP development. We would like to hear your comments on these issues, and any other topics of concern, at our public meetings (see page 5). If you aren't able to attend one of our public meetings, please submit your comments in writing to the Refuge (see page 6 for contact information).

Facilities Maintenance

Keālia Pond NWR facilities include a leased office trailer; metal shipping containers for maintenance supplies and office storage; fences; ditches, dikes, and impoundments; wells, water control structures, and water distribution lines; vehicles and heavy equipment (farm tractor, bobcat). In the absence of a maintenance shop, all vehicles are stored outdoors, exposing them harsh marine environmental conditions, theft, and vandal activity. Due to the environmental conditions (e.g., constant wind containing salt spray and precipitation, warm temperatures, high humidity) associated with this coastal marine environment, degradation of equipment and facilities is accelerated and

often exceeds normally acceptable mainland standards for maintenance costs and schedules. In addition, the distance needed to transport supplies and equipment often substantially adds to the cost of conducting Refuge management activities in Hawai'i. The Maui Complex office at Keālia Pond NWR was destroyed by fire in 2006. Since that time, all Refuge administrative functions and visitor contacts have taken place from a temporary, portable office trailer. The design and construction of a new energy efficient visitor center and refuge complex office has been included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The planning, design and completion of

this project is a separate process given the specific guidelines and scheduling required under the Recovery Act. The design includes administrative offices and visitor center with exhibits and will be located off Mokulele Highway.

Maintenance and storage facilities at Kakahai'a NWR consists of one metal storage container and a shed. A small selection of hand tools and shop supplies are stored there. There are no office or visitor facilities. While adequate to meet current management needs, facilities at Kakahai'a NWR are not sufficient to support any increase in management activity.

Wildlife and Habitat Resources

The Service is concerned with threats posed to native habitats and wildlife at Keālia Pond and Kakahai'a NWRs from the introduction and spread of invasive plants like California grass and animals such as introduced rats, Indian mongooses, and feral cats.

Endangered Hawaiian waterbirds are the primary management focus for both Refuges. As such, much of the existing Refuge acreage is excluded from visitor use opportunities to protect endangered species during their nesting and brood rearing period. Keālia Pond NWR management includes wetland restoration and water manipulation to increase recruitment of endangered waterbirds. Refuge management also considers migratory shorebirds, waterfowl, seabirds, the endemic pueo, native plant species, threatened honu or green turtles, and endangered honu 'ea or hawksbill turtles.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act requires the Service to monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants on each Refuge in the Refuge System. Baseline surveys of water quality, invertebrates, fish, and associated vegetation have been collected but due to limited staffing, funding, and water capabilities, the Refuge's ability to respond effectively to resource impacts and apply adaptive management techniques is limited. The CCP will specify these inventory, monitoring and research needs and associated funding and staffing needs for monitoring wildlife and habitat on Refuge lands.

Environmental conditions within Keālia Pond often times lead to increased emergence of native and nonnative midges (non biting mosquito-like insects) and fish die-offs. The occurrence of these events is perceived as a nuisance from local

communities. These concerns will be addressed during the planning process.

Development along coastal Maui is bringing with it a host of issues and problems (e.g., road killed endangered species, trash) that have the potential to negatively affect Refuge resources. The Service will work with other agency partners to provide management recommendations that minimize harmful effects from these development-related or increase in human population issues.



'ulae ke'oke'o / Photo by Laura Beauregard

Visitor Activities

When and where appropriate, the Administration Act mandates safe and compatible wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. These uses are defined by law and policy as wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, interpretation, and environmental education. Other public uses may occur on Refuges if they have been determined to be appropriate and compatible with the purposes of the Refuge.

Keālia Pond and Kakahai'a NWRs are closed to most public uses to protect endangered species from human disturbance and to protect sensitive habitats from destruction. However, Keālia Pond NWR provides opportunities for environmental education and interpretation, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography. The Service is concerned about balancing visitor use and wildlife protection and will ensure public use is managed to keep visitors in areas where visitor facilities can be constructed to prevent disturbance to wildlife and habitat.

There are no current opportunities for fishing on Refuge property due to limited or no access and facilities,

limited or no fishery resource, and concerns for disturbance to endangered waterbirds.



Keālia Boardwalk / Photo by Dave Komatsu, global-hawaii.com

Issues Outside Plan Scope

CCPs only cover Refuge lands, and the following issues occur off-Refuge:

- Resort and housing development proposals in the vicinity of the Refuge
- Wind power generation
- Fishing activities adjacent to the Refuges



Ma'alaea Bay / Photo by Dave Komatsu, global-hawaii.com

Planning Step Target Date:

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|--|---------------|
| Planning Update 1 Issued | October 2009 |
| Public Meetings | November 2009 |
| Planning Update 2 Issued | Winter 2009 |
| Planning Update 3 Issued | Spring 2010 |
| Public Review/Comment on Draft CCP/EIS | Fall 2010 |
| Final CCP | Winter 2010 |

Tentative Planning Schedule

Schedule dates are tentative and subject to change as the planning process progresses.

You're Invited...

First Open House and Public Scoping Meetings

The first public scoping meetings are opportunities for you to help us identify the issues to be addressed in the CCP and to have your questions answered about Keālia Pond and Kakahai'a National Wildlife Refuges and the planning process. Open-house style public meetings are scheduled on both Maui and Moloka'i for your convenience.

Moloka'i

Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009
 Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm
 Location: Mitchel Pauole Center
 Conference Room
 90 Ainoa Street
 Kaunakakai, HI 96748

Maui

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2009
 Time: 6:30pm - 8:30pm
 Location: Kihei Community Center
 Main Hall
 303 E. Lipoa Street
 Kihei, HI 96753

Kakahai'a ae'o / Photo by Brigid Mulloy





Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex
P.O. Box 1042
Kīhei, Hawaii 96753

In This Issue

Your comments on the Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge and Kakahai‘a National Wildlife Refuge are requested. What natural resource issues are important to you?

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How Do I Contact the Service or Provide Comments?

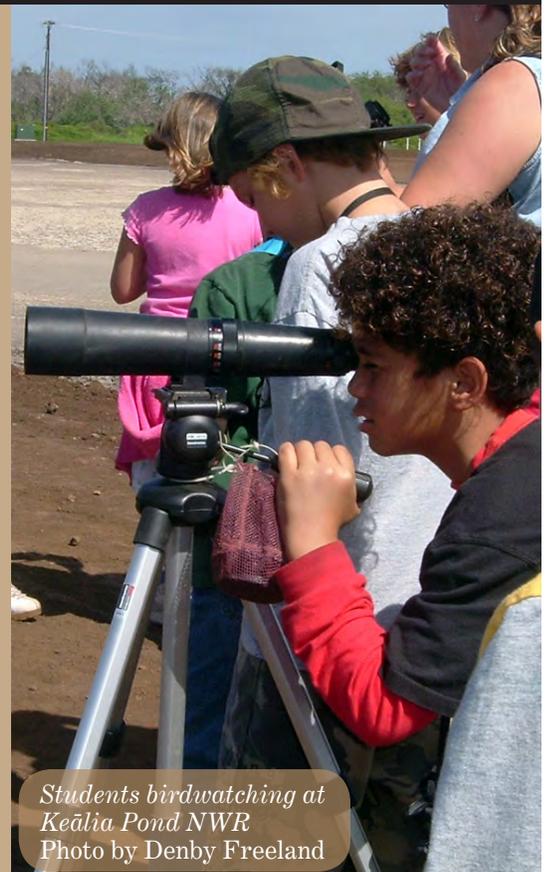
For Information About Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex:

Glynnis Nakai, Project Leader
Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex
P.O. Box 1042, Kīhei, Hawai‘i 96753
Phone: 808/875-1582
Fax: 808/875-2945
E-Mail: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov
Please include "Maui NWRC CCP" in the subject line.

Find Us On the Web:

<http://www.fws.gov/kealiapond>
<http://www.fws.gov/kakahaia>
<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning>

We look forward to hearing from you!



*Students birdwatching at
Keālia Pond NWR
Photo by Denby Freeland*