



Nēnē at the Keanakakoi Crater - Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

### Nēnē Facts

- As of 2009, the statewide population was 1,888-1,938 individuals - 850-900 on Kaua'i, 416 on Maui, 457 on Hawai'i and 165 on Moloka'i.
- Pairs generally mate for life and can live 20 years or more.
- The breeding season varies due to weather, but is primarily from October to April.
- The female incubates up to 4 eggs for 30 days.
- Nēnē eat leaves, flowers, seeds and berries from a wide variety of native and non-native plants.

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Nēnē flying over a farm in the Volcanoes area of the Big Island.



Row crops are attractive to nēnē.

*Photos courtesy:*

*Kathleen Misajon - Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park  
 Gregory Koob - Natural Resources Conservation Service.*

**For more information on NRCS programs:**

<http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/index.html>

**For more information on nēnē:**

<http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/fauna/HIgoose.html>



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## Nēnē and Hawai'i's Farmers Living Together in Harmony



Nēnē with gosling

*Promoting the  
 balance between  
 sustainable  
 agriculture and  
 the conservation of  
 Hawai'i's endangered  
 species.*



Nēnē at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park.

## HAWAI‘I’S STATE BIRD

The nēnē or Hawaiian goose, found only in Hawai‘i and once common on all the main Hawaiian islands, was declared an endangered species in 1967. By 1952, only about 30 birds remained, all on the island of Hawai‘i. Thanks to recovery efforts, nēnē are now found on the islands of Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, Maui and Moloka‘i. Current threats to the nēnē include: predation by non-native mammals (especially cats, mongooses, rats, dogs and even pigs); habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation; nutritional deficiency due to habitat degradation; human-caused disturbance (including habituation to humans) and mortality (especially deaths due to road collisions).

## THE ISSUE

- Nēnē have been sighted on farms for many years but only recently have started to affect crop production.
- Nēnē have learned to use non-native plants including grasses in range lands and crops on farm lands as a food source. Though range land and nēnē are often compatible, on crop lands they will eat many types of fruits and vegetables ranging from seedlings and lettuce to tomatoes and potato shoots.
- As numbers of nēnē increase and climatic and volcanic pressures affect traditional areas, nēnē are showing up more often on crop lands, including those on on Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i and Maui.
- Nēnē are protected by Federal and State laws. Legal restrictions on how people can interact with nēnē may limit options on how to deal with crop damage caused by nēnē browsing or trampling plants. The challenge is to develop strategies to protect both crops and nēnē from harm.
- Close contact with farm chemicals, farm equipment, domestic animals and humans may harm the nēnē.



A recently planted seedling pulled from the ground by a nēnē (*top left*). Nēnē feeding causes damage to a young cabbage plant (*bottom left*). Nēnē loafing in the edge of an irrigation basin of a farm (*right*).

## SOLUTIONS

- Multiple agencies are actively working to develop solutions that help farmers and protect nēnē. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide technical assistance on how to proceed if nēnē cause crop damage. Please the contact the Fish and Wildlife Service’s nēnē recovery biologist at 808 792-9400.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service can cost-share through Farm Bill programs for some practices that will deter nēnē from damaging crops.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service can-cost share on restoring and improving nēnē habitat in the wild to reduce pressure on farms and developed areas.