

News Release



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Tis the Season to Care for Our Feathered Friends

Wildlife Officials Encourage O'ahu Residents to "Malama" Our Shearwaters

During the holiday season our thoughts often focus on our family and loved ones, and those humans less fortunate than ourselves. Wildlife officials want to remind the residents of O'ahu that native birds also need your help! Officials have been reporting an increase in calls from O'ahu residents involving "downed" seabirds – especially wedge-tailed shearwaters also known as the 'Ua'u kani.

Wedge-tailed shearwaters (*Puffinus pacificus*) are the most commonly seen seabirds in Hawai'i. The species forms colonies and nest in underground burrows or natural crevices. The adults arrive in March and usually lay a single egg in June. Most birds arrive at the colony at dusk and leave the site before dawn.

Young or juvenile birds depart their colonies in late fall and are often stranded on land due to disorientation caused by artificial lights. Disoriented birds are commonly observed circling around exterior light sources until they fall to the ground or collide with structures, resulting in possible injury or death. Downed or stranded birds often are hit by cars or fall prey to cats and dogs.

Sea Life Park Hawai'i is the approved seabird rehabilitation facility on O'ahu and is located at 41-202 Kalaniana'ole Highway Suite #7, Waimanalo, HI 96795, Tel. (808) 259-7933. "Sea Life Park is available 24 hours per day all year to receive birds. Our bird drop is next to our Sea Bird Rehabilitation Center located in our lower parking lot. We have bird kennels available and a small questionnaire that we ask you to fill out regarding the bird," said Jeff Pawloski Curator for Sea Life Park.

"We encourage and applaud the efforts of concerned residents to not only report stranded seabirds, but also for taking that extra step to ensure their welfare by transporting them to Sea Life Park," said Ken Foote, Information and Education Specialist for the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "We are also grateful for the expertise and commitment provided by Sea Life Park Hawai'i and the Hawaiian Humane Society."

Wildlife Officials recommend that residents that encounter a stranded seabird adhere to the following guidelines:

- Gently pick up the stranded bird using a towel or cloth.
- Record basic information (e.g., date bird was found, location and general condition or

appearance of the bird).

- Place the bird in a dry, clean cardboard box. Make sure the box is properly ventilated. A towel or piece of cloth can be placed at the bottom of the box.
- Stranded seabirds may be injured or exhausted and **should not** be given food or water
- The seabird should then be transported to Sea Life Park in a timely manner to improve the bird's chances for survival.
- Sea Life Park
 - During business hours, the gate attendant will direct you to the place to drop off the bird.
 - After business hours, the public will find a shelter containing bird kennels at the rear of the parking lot on the right-hand side. Birds can be left in the kennels where a Sea Life Park staff member will pick them up in the morning.
- In the event that a concerned resident is unable to transport the bird, please leave the bird in a safe location at or near where you found it.

Due to budget constraints, during these hard economic times, federal and state wildlife agencies along with the Hawaiian Humane Society do not have the resources to pick up “downed” or stranded birds and transport them to an approved rehabilitation facility. Wildlife officials are currently seeking funding for retrieving stranded seabirds on O‘ahu.

Interesting Facts

- Research has shown that if young seabirds are released while underweight and/or dehydrated their likelihood of survival after release is reduced.
- Information collected by Sea Life Park, especially regarding where birds were found, assists those working to reduce the number of downed or stranded birds.
- Although Wedge-tailed shearwaters are a legally protected species, concerned residents are free to respond to (i.e., retrieve) a live bird that is in obvious danger (e.g., on the roadway, in a construction zone etc.) or appears to be injured or in poor health.
- Known nesting locations around O‘ahu include Diamond Head/Black Point, Malaekahana, Kahuku, and the offshore islands off the windward coastline

Mahalo to O‘ahu’s concerned residents for their assistance and Happy Holidays!

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