

# Photography and Wildlife Observation CD, Hanalei NWR

## Comments and Responses

1. **Comment:** I am in full support of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Draft Compatibility Determinations on all three uses at the Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge. For several years I have served as a commercial bird guide at both Kīlauea Point NWR and along the public road in Hanalei NWR. I have had ample opportunity to witness the positive public reaction to seeing our native birds in their natural habitat. Such visitors often leave inspired to donate to the protection of these birds. These are precisely the kinds of visitors we want to attract to Kaua‘i.

**Agency Response:** *The Service appreciates your support.*

2. **Comment:** I have seen areas where visitors have made choices that need correcting. In almost all cases, they are respectful when they learn the guidelines. To that end, I fully support signage that describes approved and appropriate behavior for photographers.

**Agency Response:** *The Refuge intends to provide appropriate education in contacts and interpretive signage.*

3. **Comment:** It is most-definitely not acceptable to turn Hanalei’s taro farmers into “monkeys in a cage” for the benefit of tourists wandering in the valley and lo‘i with their cameras and the trash they bring with them, under the guise of “wildlife observation and photography.”

**Agency Response:** *CD has been revised to limit expansion of photography and wildlife observation to the Viewpoint only. Photography may occur in conjunction with EE or Interpretive programs in the wetland management units. The Haraguchi Rice Mill is the only approved commercial venue in the valley that may include photography. Photography would be authorized in specific demonstration lo‘i to instill appreciation for the cultural heritage and support for continued farming activities in the refuge.*

4. **Comment:** The HHCA opposes the proposal for increased tourist activity in the valley for photo tours; this activity would create more traffic in the valley, negatively impact Ohiki Road, contribute to the overuse of the often-at-capacity ‘Ōkolehao Trail parking area, put on display the valley’s working taro farmers, and detract from the peace of the valley.

**Agency Response:** *In response to public comments, the CD has been revised to limit expansion of photography and wildlife observation to the Viewpoint only. Signage prohibiting parking outside the designated parking lots for the Ducks Unlimited ponds and ‘Ōkolehao trailhead will facilitate enforcement efforts to improve congestion.*

5. **Comment:** The determinations for Photography and Wildlife Observation are definitely NOT priority public uses.

**Agency Response:** *Wildlife Observation and Photography are among six wildlife-dependent recreational uses (the Big Six) defined by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. Hunting, fishing, environmental education and interpretation are also part of the Big Six. Where found compatible, the Big Six are the only priority public uses on national wildlife refuges.*