

# News Release



Kaua‘i National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Post Office Box 1128  
Kīlauea, Hawai‘i 96754  
Phone: 808 828 1413 Fax: 808 828 6634  
[www.fws.gov/kilaueapoint](http://www.fws.gov/kilaueapoint)

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Contact: Jennifer Waipa, (808) 828-1413, [jennifer\\_waipa@fws.gov](mailto:jennifer_waipa@fws.gov)

## **Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge holds ground-breaking ceremony for Kaua‘i’s first predator-proof fence**

Kīlauea, Hawai‘i - A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Nihoku (also known as Crater Hill) this week within the Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge, prior to the construction of Kaua‘i’s first predator-proof fence.

Kumu hula, cultural practitioner, and teacher, Sabra Kauka, led the ceremony with a number of staff, partners, and supporters in attendance. “We are excited to have this blessing and begin work with our partners toward construction of the fence,” states Shannon Smith, Project Leader of the Kaua‘i National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Partners for the project include the American Bird Conservancy, the Kaua‘i Endangered Seabird Recovery Project (a Hawai‘i Division of Forestry and Wildlife/Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit project), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and several others.

The project will create a seven-acre refugium for native plant and animal communities and enhance existing seabird colonies on the refuge by using the latest technology in predator-proof fencing. This type of fencing has been used with great success in New Zealand and on the island of O‘ahu.

The construction of a predator-proof fence would keep mammalian predators, such as cats, dogs, rats, mice, and potentially mongooses, out of the fenced area so that native species such as the endangered nēnē (Hawaiian goose), the mōlī (Laysan albatross), and rare plants can flourish again. In addition, the absence of predators would make this restored site appropriate for future translocation of the threatened ‘a‘o (Newell’s shearwater) and the reintroduction of rare native plants.

The Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1985 to preserve and enhance seabird nesting colonies, and in 1988, the refuge was expanded to include Crater Hill (Nihoku) and Mōkōlea Point.

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