

Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Prepared by:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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P.O Box 1042
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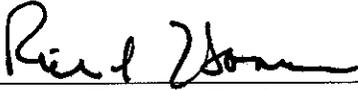
and

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pacific Islands Planning Team
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5-231
Honolulu, HI 96850

September 2011

Approved: _____

Acting


Regional Director, Region 1
Portland, Oregon

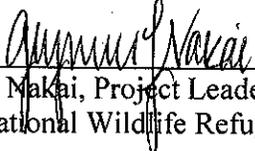
9/28/11

Date

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge
Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Approval Submission**

In accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The purpose of this CCP is to specify a management direction for the Refuge for the next 15 years. The goals, objectives, and strategies for improving Refuge conditions – including the types of habitat we will provide, partnership opportunities, and management actions needed to achieve desired future conditions – are described in the CCP. The Service’s preferred alternative for managing the Refuge is described in this CCP and the effects on the human environment were described in the Draft CCP and Environmental Assessment.

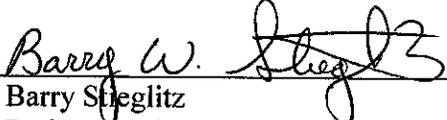
This CCP is submitted for the Regional Director’s approval by:



Glynnis Makai, Project Leader
Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex

09-20-11

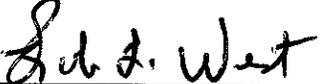
Date

Concur: 

Barry Stieglitz
Project Leader, Hawaiian and Pacific Islands NWRC

9/22/11

Date

Concur: 

Robin West
Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System

9/20/11

Date

**Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Maui County, Hawai‘i**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The CCP will guide management of the Refuge for 15 years. The CCP/EA describes our proposals for managing the Refuge and their effects on the human environment under three alternatives, including the no action alternative.

Decision

Based on our comprehensive review and analysis in the CCP/EA, we selected Alternative C for implementation, because it will guide management of the Refuge in a manner that:

- Achieves the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the purposes, vision, and goals of the Refuge.
- Maintains and restores the ecological integrity of the Refuge habitats and populations.
- Addresses the important issues identified during the CCP scoping process.
- Addresses the legal mandates of the Service and the Refuge.
- Is consistent with the scientific principles of sound wildlife management and endangered species recovery.
- Facilitates priority public uses appropriate and compatible with the Refuge purpose and the Refuge System mission.

Summary of the Actions to be Implemented

Implementing the selected alternative will have no significant impacts on the environmental resources identified in the CCP/EA. Refuge management under the selected alternative will protect, maintain, and enhance habitat for endangered species and resources of concern, and improve the Refuge’s capability to provide food for migrating and wintering waterbirds, including shorebirds and waterfowl. Improving the Refuge’s coastal and wetland habitats will increase the value of these lands and waters for a variety of native plants and wildlife.

The availability and quality of wildlife-dependent recreation on the Refuge will improve under the selected alternative, but within a regional context, the cumulative change would be small. A summary of the CCP actions we will implement follows.

Under Alternative C, restoration efforts and increased water management capabilities are intended to achieve the maximum potential for enhancing and maintaining biological requirements for endangered waterbirds, and indirectly benefit wintering migratory waterbirds. The Refuge will plan and implement the physical alterations needed to maximize our ability to control water in the Main Pond and adjacent vegetated mudflats, significantly remove the most aggressive pest plants, and control larger areas of pickleweed on the flats. Physical restoration includes: construction of a water control structure at the N. Kīhei Rd. culvert, additional groundwater sources (wells) to maintain water on the flats, and reconfiguration of topography to hold water longer.

Molokini, after establishment as an overlay refuge, will be managed as a seabird colony with periodic visits to monitor the population and continue the long-term banding. In addition, we will initiate a native plant restoration plan, particularly the rare 'ihi (*Portulaca molokiniensis*) and a few other species found only on that islet, with a minimum of 2 additional visits per year. These visits will also be used to monitor tree tobacco for endangered 'ōka'i 'aiea (Blackburn's Sphinx Moth). The potential for their presence on Molokini is high given that they are found on Maui and Kaho'olawe. Volunteers will assist with propagating plants in the Refuge's greenhouse and outplanting will be conducted by Federal and State biologists under a cooperative agreement with DLNR.

Climate change analyses for Keālia Pond NWR will be evaluated for applicability to management strategies. Refuge staff will participate in development of climate change assessment protocols. Visitor services will be expanded with the Refuge open on weekends and additional efforts made to provide vegetated barriers and/or blinds to provide better viewing opportunities and increase areas for wildlife viewing. Visitor services staff will provide educational programs and materials.

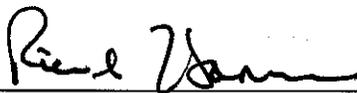
Public Involvement and Changes Made to the Selected Alternative Based on Comments

We incorporated a variety of public involvement techniques in developing and reviewing the CCP/EA. This included three planning updates, several meetings with partners, and public review and comment on the Draft CCP/EA. The Service responses to public comments are provided in the CCP, in Appendix K.

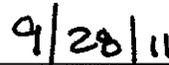
Based on the public comments we received and considered, Alternative C as described in the Draft CCP/EA has been slightly modified to clarify our management strategies to retain the use of methoprene as a secondary tool to control spotted-wing midges, if needed.

Conclusions

Based on review and evaluation of the information contained in the supporting references, I have determined that implementing Alternative C as the CCP for Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, we are not required to prepare an environmental impact statement.



Acting Regional Director



Date

Supporting References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. August 2011. Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge, Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. September 2011. Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Note: This Finding of No Significant Impact and supporting references are available for public review at Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Milepost 6 Mokulele Highway, Kīhei, HI, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hawaiian and Pacific Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5-231, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96850. These documents can also be found on the Internet at <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning/>. Interested and affected parties are being notified of our decision.

