



# KŌLEA

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News from  
Conservation  
Council for  
Hawai'i

## Closing the Gaps -on invasive species

by Christy Martin

I had been working on public awareness and engagement for the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) for several years before I met Alan Holt, the founder of the CGAPS, a partnership of federal and state agencies and non-governmental organizations. At the time, Alan was the director of the Environment Program for the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, based in Minnesota. He told me of his time at The Nature Conservancy Hawai'i (TNCH) building their programs in the late 1980s, when he had what he said was "an 800-pound gorilla moment" regarding the need to address the influx, proliferation, and harm caused by "alien pest species", now referred to as "invasive species".

In 1992, through the support of private foundations, TNCH and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) analyzed federal and state laws and prevention, detection, and control programs. The 1992 report documented serious gaps in authorities and programs, but also concluded that many of the gaps could be

addressed through increased inter- and intra-agency communication and cooperation, and increased public awareness and participation. Following the 1992 report, TNCH, NRDC, and the University of Hawai'i used funding from the Governor's office to convene more than 80 participants to draft the Hawai'i Alien Species Action Plan (Hawai'i ASAP), signed by each major agency and organization and released on October 19, 1994. This plan also called for the formation of the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species, effective immediately. It is not coincidental that the CGAPS acronym is pronounced "C-GAPS." You can see that Alan has a flair with acronyms.

I first heard of CGAPS when I was an undergraduate in a class taught by Dr. Sheila Conant at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I took several courses from Dr. Conant and learned about endangered species, island ecosystems, and the devastating impacts of invasive species. One day she handed out "Silent Invasion" booklets from the first CGAPS public awareness campaign on invasive species. Its cover featured a red snake on a black background and was filled with striking pictures of pests and stories of how these pests impact different sectors, told by the people they impacted. Little did I know then that I would go on to work for CGAPS to focus on public awareness in 2001. In 1996, just 29% of Hawai'i residents had heard of the issue of alien pest species or invasive species. When measured in 2022, 97% of residents have heard of the issue, and 93% consider invasive species a serious problem.

Yet, as our founder pointed out so eloquently in his 2012 keynote address at the Hawai'i Conservation Conference, "We are in the process of getting our collective ecological—and potentially social—butts kicked..." by the effect of climate change. Alan was right once again. However, in addition to the specter of rising



Christy Martin holding a brown tree snake while visiting in Guam.

photo by Christy Martin



temperatures, acidic oceans, and more frequent and lasting droughts and severe storms, we are seeing research that shows the synergistic effects of climate change and invasive species.

*A few points summarized from published research:*

- Invasive pests are the greatest driver of native biodiversity loss on islands
- Pests, weeds, and diseases degrade the resilience of forests and natural areas
  - They weaken, smother, crowd out, sicken and/or kill native plants and animals
  - Some can change soil chemistry & cycling which favors more invasives
  - Some can change the fire-susceptibility of large areas
- Invasive species reduce the ability to store carbon, keep soil moist, accelerate water infiltration, hold topsoil, buffer severe weather, and more

Our Hawaiian forests and reefs are critically important natural infrastructure, yet they are open to destruction because they are not protected from invasive species. We must address invasive species in order to meet our climate adaptation goals. While CGAPS is a voluntary partnership, I am one of the five full-time, grant-funded staff employed through partnerships with the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i:

- William S. Richardson School of Law
  - Andrew Porter – Aquatic Legal Fellow
  - Stephanie Easley – Terrestrial Legal Fellow
- College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
  - Ambyr Miyake – Statewide Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) Outreach Coordinator
- College of Natural Sciences, Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit
  - Kailee Lefebvre – Planner
  - Christy Martin – Program Manager & PIO

We help CGAPS achieve its mission, “to coordinate and catalyze action among government and non-government partners to prevent and manage invasive species in Hawai'i, as well as communicate key issues to the public.” In revisiting our



Little Fire Ant Photo credit: Hawaii Ant Lab

***“Adults lay their eggs and the larvae develop and pupate in decomposing plant material before they emerge as adults. CRB damage and can kill coconut palms, native Pritchardia palms, and can also damage banana, taro, hala and other plants. When we lose our cultural plants, we lose our culture, and the traditions that have been passed down for generations. It is truly a societal loss, not just an environmental loss..” says Christy Martin***



Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle caught in bird netting  
photo by Christy Martin

founding documents and talking with the CGAPS Steering Committee members, I can say that we are as relevant today as we were 30 years ago. We continue to bring people together, coordinate communications and collaborative work, identify gaps, and catalyze action to close them. We are grateful for our longstanding partnership with the Conservation Council for Hawai'i and we look forward to meeting the challenges ahead.

## ***Spend the evening with us at the 2024 Conservation Council for Hawai'i's Annual Awards and Membership Meeting***

***We are excited to announce our 2024 Conservation Council for Hawai'i Annual Awards and Membership Meeting on September 28, 2024 from 6pm to 9pm at the Patagonia store in Honolulu. We will be offering delectable farm to table dishes from Ed Kenney's Town Food and Events, hosted bar, and entertainment by Hānale Bishop. This year we are delighted to honor Christy Martin with the 2024 Koa Award of Excellence in Conservation for her work on invasive species management and eradication. Christy will also be our guest speaker for the evening. And don't forget our much anticipated silent auction and country store with wonderful items just waiting to go home with you. So, don't delay in securing your seat for our 74th annual meeting. See you there!***



# All Tern-ed Up

By Leah Kocher  
Photos by C. McDonough

What a day! On Saturday, April 27, 2024, we hosted the 9th annual Manu o Kū Festival on the coronation grounds of 'Iolani Palace. It was my first time attending this festival, and boy was I impressed. The crowd of approximately 350 was amazing – excited to participate in all of the day's activities, learn from the speakers, listen to music, and catch a sight of the 3 Manu o Kū chicks



Looking at chick at the scoping station

that were showing off on the tree branches right over our heads. I felt like a kid on Christmas morning, going into this festival with open eyes, ready to take it all in. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the amazing community of planning partners, participating organizations, and volunteers that came together to provide a day for our locals and visitors to celebrate the Manu o Kū, or white tern, the official bird of the City and County of Honolulu. This festival's success each year is directly dependent on those who show up to feature this spectacular bird.

We had some amazing firsts at the festival this year. Bruddah Bryan, a local radio personality, was our emcee for the day. I have heard him on the radio since the early 2000s, so this was a special treat! We also had a new opportunity for



Bruddah Bryan, Daisy Purdy and Dante, and Marina Ghin our festival guests. Patrick Ching, our local renowned nature artist, led 40 budding artists through instructional painting of their very own

Manu o Kū on canvas. Our guests of honor were 3 chicks with their parents, who were perched on trees over our heads and throughout the 'Iolani Palace grounds. Several spotting scope stations made viewing the birds a breeze, as they never cease to amaze with their fluffy cuteness.

I loved hearing from the visitors to the CCH booth. While they worked on their craft, I heard many echo such thoughts as: "we make sure to return to this festival each year; our kids love it", "we came last year and made sure we attended again this year", "the crowd is even bigger than last year", and "I wouldn't miss this event". The day flew by for me, from several informative speakers and listening to the beautiful ukulele



Leah Kocher & her daughter, Alexis

music by Corey Fujimoto and Kalei Gamiao, to getting to see my daughter's eyes light up when the 5 costume characters came out to greet the guests. I loved being able to connect with our CCH 'ohana and meet some of you that I have heard stories about and connected with via email since my start in December. Now that I have seen what this festival means to our community, I am excited to bring forth a spectacular event next year for our 10th annual festival... we are working on something big, and I hope to see you all there!



Manu o Kū in flight  
photo by E. Vanderwerf



## CCH Brought the Sharks to DC

by Colleen Heyer

The 88th Annual Meeting of the National Wildlife Federation was held in June in Washington, DC. Representing CCH at the four-day conference were Executive Director Jonee Peters, and board members Mike Nakachi and myself as delegates. This year's theme was "Meeting the Moment," to which CEO Colin O'Mara spoke about climate change increasing while biodiversity is decreasing, all while our Congress is deadlocked and government agencies are less effective than they used to be. A challenging moment to meet, to be sure. But there is always strength in numbers, with all fifty states and two territories coming together, at this conference and year-round, to work for our wildlife. After all, "When we save wildlife, we save ourselves."



Angel Seery, Jonee Peters, Ranger Rick, Mike Nakachi, & Kaikea Nakachi  
photo by NWF

The conference had a diverse range of educational sessions to attend. CCH spearheaded a session titled, "The Cultural and Ecological Importance of Sharks in Hawai'i." Mike, his son Kaikea, and Jonee explained how manō, or sharks, are sacred 'aumākua (respected deities and protectors) to many native Hawaiian families, including their own. Manō are also part of the Kumulipo, or Hawaiian creation chant. Mike, Kaikea, and Jonee also told anecdotes about their personal interactions with manō. The receptive audience had a chance to experience sharks with something other than fear. Kaikea also presented his ongoing doctoral research on tiger sharks in coastal waters off Hawai'i Island. He has created a systematic protocol for identifying each shark based on their exterior skin patterns and other markings. He wowed the crowd with comparative photos of a number of sharks over many years as each shark went through changes such as pregnancy or injuries. Having the conference in DC afforded us the opportunity to visit with our elected officials on

Capitol Hill. CCH was able to meet personally with US Congresswoman Jill Tokuda and US Congressman Ed Case. We also met with senior staff person Leilani Doktor of Senator Brian Schatz's office. We advocated for passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), a bi-partisan bill which would allocate \$10 billion over ten years towards governmental conservation programs in all states. We also advocated for The Farm Bill, which would provide \$6 billion annually towards private conservation programs. And we made clear our disapproval of the SHARKED Act, a proposed bill which would fund a commission to research shark depredation. Shark depredation is the term used to describe when a shark "steals" the fish off your line when one is out sport fishing. The proposed bill would fund unnecessary, duplicate research which has the potential to further harm sharks and treats them as a "problem."

Among a number of keynote speakers at the conference, US Congresswoman Debbie Dingell of Michigan voiced her support for all of NWF's efforts. She especially made mention of her continuing work to get RAWA passed. She is also working to get PFAS chemicals permanently



Mike Nakachi, Angel Seery, Kaikea Nakachi, Jonee Peters, Senator Ed Case, Emily Martin, and Lindsay Wagner  
photo by Ed Case staff

banned in the United States. PFAS are a class of man-made chemicals used in the manufacturing of consumer products, food packaging, and much more. PFAS have now been found to be bio-accumulative and highly toxic to both humans and wildlife. These "forever chemicals" are now found pervasively throughout the environment and in 97% of the human population. Thus, Rep. Dingell considers PFAS a most urgent public health issue and environmental issue. Keep reading to learn about the resolution that CCH worked on along with the North Carolina Affiliate.



## A Win for the Sharks

by Emily Martin

Each year, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) hosts an annual meeting where affiliates from all 50 states (as well as affiliates from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) have the ability to put forward conservation policy resolutions on issues that matter to them. These resolutions are then voted on at the Annual Meeting, which, if passed by the majority, guide NWF's policy positions. Because NWF is composed of affiliates from across the country and political spectrum, we're able to effectively pass bipartisan conservation policies through Congress.

That's why we are thrilled to announce that at this year's Annual Meeting in Washington, DC on June 29th, Conservation Council for Hawai'i's resolution, Protecting Sharks to Safeguard our Oceans, passed unanimously! CCH's staff worked tirelessly for months to create a resolution that would gather support from across the Federation through a rigorous process that ensures all 52 affiliates are able to provide input and come to consensus.



Jonee Peters, CCH delegate for the 2024 NWF Annual Meeting  
photo by C. Heyer

To bolster support for the resolution, CCH board member Mike Nakachi, his son Kaikea and Jonee Peters gave a powerful presentation at the Annual Meeting before the vote that highlighted the cultural and ecological importance of sharks in Hawai'i. It was incredibly eye opening, especially for our landlocked affiliates who don't regularly engage on marine issues and our sportfishing affiliates who are heavily involved in marine issues, but have traditionally had membership bases that view sharks as more of a nuisance than as a critical component of the ocean's ecological health. NWF is grateful that CCH traveled so far to share their perspective that is often overlooked in DC.

We look forward to utilizing this resolution to advance policies that protect sharks or to fight policies that would harm them.

CCH's shark resolution was one of four resolutions that were passed at this year's Annual Meeting.

## My Summer Interning with CCH

By Kelsi Saunders



Leah Kocher, Emily Martin, Kelsi Saunders, Colleen Heyer, and Jonee Peters at the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

photo by E. Martin

Through the Cutler Scholar Program at Ohio University, I completed a summer internship with Conservation Council for Hawai'i. I immersed myself in the rich culture and history of the native Hawaiian people through conservation efforts. The experience has been great, as I was welcomed into the community and granted the honor of learning about Hawai'i's traditions, kuleana (responsibility), and species that are so special and need protection. I was fortunate enough to see Hawaiian monk seals and Laysan albatross chicks during a visit to Kaihalulu Beach and Hanaka'ilio Beach in Kahuku, deepening my understanding of environmental conservation specific to Hawai'i. I assisted CCH at Ocean Day in Waimea Valley, allowing me to engage with the public about ocean conservation. We also visited Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park on Hawai'i Island, where I further learned about the delicate ecosystems that CCH helps to protect and gained valuable insights into the organization's strategic planning and decision-making processes. My duties also included assisting with website updates, editing and formatting documents, creating various digital projects, and helping with other administrative tasks. Overall, my time at CCH has been precious, combining cultural immersion with hands-on experience in environmental conservation and nonprofit management. I am thankful to have this opportunity, and to continue to advocate for the people and lands of Hawai'i and elsewhere. Mahalo nui loa.



At the Shark Learning Session in DC

Colleen Heyer, Rachel Sprague, Lindsay Wagner, Stevie Parsons, Koalani Kaulukukui, Mike Nakachi, Jonee Peters, Kaikea Nakachi, Diana Pataki, Angel Seery. Photo by E. Martin



## Mana'ō from the Executive Director!

By Jonnetta "Jonee" Kaina Peters

Aloha Mai Kakou! Mahalo nui to all of our members, friends, and conservation 'ohana (family) for supporting CCH throughout the years. Your commitment helps us fight another day in order to protect and save more native Hawaiian species, plants, and ecosystems. Please see page 7 to learn more about leaving a legacy to CCH or contact us for further information regarding donations and memberships.

During the month of June, I was invited to several engagements relating to FestPac (Festival of the Pacific), which was a gathering of 30 different Pacific Island nations, that was held in Honolulu for two weeks. These invitations were in relation to my work with the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition. FestPac usually assembles every four years, but was cancelled due to the pandemic. One of the dinner meetings included individuals from different Pacific Island communities coming together to share about the different issues that surround their ocean and learn about the effects of deep sea mining in the Pacific. It was great to sit and come together with cousins from around moananuiākea (Pacific Ocean) to talk about issues of our culture, environment, and ocean. Huge topics included deep sea mining, over fishing, climate change, loss of habitat due to sea rise, and indigenous knowledge.

CCH will focus on Deep Sea Mining in the Pacific and how it will affect Hawai'i and other Pacific Island nations, and we are grateful for our colleague Sol Kaho'ohalahala who is an expert on the issue.



Jonee Peters with expert weaver (name unknown) at FestPac.  
photo by K. Saunders

Pacific Remote Islands expansion and protection is still on the horizon. Setbacks are due to changes in the EIS reports and upcoming elections. However, CCH will still be a voice in protecting oceanic creatures and their environments. Talks are ongoing for the re-naming of the area using an English name to represent the many indigenous peoples of the Pacific. There is something in the works to honor the men of Hui Panala'au. Stay tuned for updates in future newsletters.



Ho'okipa's chick is ready to fledge.  
photographer unknown

Good news on the Marconi Point controversy! If you remember, a Laysan albatross named Ho'okipa was killed while she was incubating an egg in her nest. Wildlife experts swapped the egg with another nesting pair that had an infertile egg. We're glad to let you know that her chick has survived and has fledged. A recent victory, a piece of property was donated by one of the defendants in this case, through the approval of the State of Hawai'i, Board of Land and Natural Resources, and was given to the North Shore Community Land Trust in lieu of their fines. We are still awaiting the other defendants' contested case to be heard.

Meanwhile next door, Turtle Bay Resort is looking to expand their room capacity by building luxury condos along their golf course and seaside areas. CCH along with the Center for Biological Diversity are calling for a supplemental EIS statement to update the research of native species and plants in the area. The EIS statement needs to address the sea turtles, Hawaiian monk seals, Laysan and other albatross, native Hawaiian coots and moorhen, stilt, and the endemic, critically endangered yellow faced bees and native plants in the area that weren't included in the original EIS report. We also need to make sure that wildlife signage and monitoring are in place. We are still making strides in our on-going lawsuit against Grand Wailea Hotel on Maui for lighting issues during the fledging season to protect the endangered 'ua'u (Hawaiian Petrel) bird. We are also in talks with HECO on Maui for lines along the ridges that also harm 'ua'u during fledging season. We'll keep you updated on these issues! CCH sent a letter to Hawai'i's Governor Josh Green to pass through a bill that would help the fight against the invasive species issue, which he later vetoed. We have joined forces with Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity to let him know of our disappointment with his decision. We plan to keep in touch with Governor Green on this and other environmental issues.





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Kōlea



by Kim Starr

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Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 2923 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96802

Phone/Fax: (224) 338-6511

Email: [info@conservehi.org](mailto:info@conservehi.org)

Website: [www.conservehawaii.org](http://www.conservehawaii.org)

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## Leaving a Legacy

Leave a Legacy and Keep Them Singing! When planning your will, please consider making a bequest to the Conservation Council for Hawai'i, and leave a legacy to protect our native species for future generations.

Your bequest can be as simple as the following statement in your will or trust: "I bequeath \$\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_ percent of my estate) to the Conservation Council for Hawai'i."

Support our efforts to recover critically endangered Hawaiian plants and animals. Help protect our natural resources and perpetuate the Native Hawaiian culture. Help prevent invasive species from taking over our islands. Help us make sure government agencies and elected officials consider future generations in their decision-making.

Your gift does all this and more! Consult your attorney and contact Jonee Peters at 224 338-6511 or [jp@conservehi.org](mailto:jp@conservehi.org) for more information.



Please visit  
[www.conservehawaii.threadless.com](http://www.conservehawaii.threadless.com) to  
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**Hawai'i's Voice for Wildlife**  
**Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu**



Hawai'i's Voice for Wildlife

Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu



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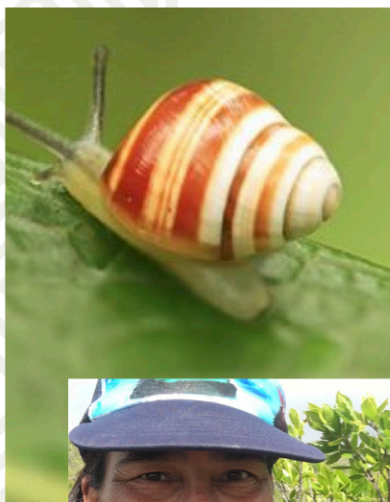


photo by Christy Martin

## 2024 CCH ANNUAL AWARDS AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Patagonia Store  
535 Ward Ave  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
6-9 pm



**Saturday, September 28th**



photos by the late Nate Yuen

**Please join us for a night of celebration, good food,  
exciting award and guest speaker, and much more!**  
**Tickets available at [conservehawaii.org](https://conservehawaii.org).**