



To whom it may concern,

This letter is to voice Hallux Ecosystem Restoration LLC's (HER) support for the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative's (KIUC) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). HER is a locally-owned business focused on the restoration of native ecosystems here on Kaua'i. HER has been contracted to implement the KIUC Short-Term HCP since 2019. Prior to 2019, some current HER staff members worked on the HCP between 2015 and 2019 while employed at the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii. Senior HER staff have a cumulative total of over 10 years' experience working on this HCP.

Specifically, HER has been involved in implementing the mitigation measures at 'a'o at 'ua'u colonies located on the north shore of Kaua'i by removing and monitoring invasive predators from the conservation sites to allow for successful seabird breeding. Through the course of the Short-Term HCP we have observed the success of these actions, both through on-the-ground observations and analyses of data collected at the sites. Results of data analyses clearly show that the mitigation actions have dramatically increased the breeding success of the seabirds at the managed colonies and that, more critically, without these actions these colonies would have been extirpated by predators in the near future (Raine et al 2020).

The recovery and growth of these seabird colonies is especially apparent to those working in the area since the implementation of predator control. It used to be commonplace to find multiple seabird carcasses on the trails on any given day, all which had been killed by feral cats, pigs, or barn owls. Nest failures from predation were common, with cats and rodents eating chicks or predated eggs. The skies at night were quiet and a single call of a seabird flying into the colony was cause for excitement. Today, it is rare to find depredated seabird carcasses, and burrow depredations are uncommon. Instead, new burrows are frequently found, excavated by seabirds returning to their natal sites. On nights when the moon is bright we witness seabirds streaming into the sites and circling the colony. During the prospecting and breeding season the night air is filled with a cacophony of seabird calls. The recovery of the birds at these colonies can be directly attributed to the actions of KIUC short-term HCP and laid out by the KIUC HCP which will continue to protect and foster the growth of these populations for the next 50 years.

Outside of the mitigation actions taken at north shore seabird colonies, the actions for monitoring and subsequently minimizing seabird strikes of the powerlines has demonstrated similar successes. The installation of diverters on the lines and reconfiguration of lines on the poles has seen a 90% reduction in seabird strikes. Again, the KIUC HCP enacts these successful minimization actions for a 50-year term.

Furthermore, the KIUC HCP includes a robust adaptive management strategy. The adaptive management strategy will not only ensure that the implemented actions follow best available science but will also allow room to alter strategies to adapt to changes in the ecosystem, climate, advances in technology, and future unforeseen challenges. Thank you for your time and consideration on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Pias', written in a cursive style.

Kyle Pias
Director of Operations & Co-Owner
Hallux Ecosystem Restoration LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Dutcher', written in a cursive style.

Alex Dutcher
Director of Science & Co-Owner
Hallux Ecosystem Restoration LLC