

BERNARD P. CARVALHO, JR.
Mayor



GARY K. HEU
Managing Director

COUNTY OF KAUA'I

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

News Release

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LENNY RAPOZO, DIRECTOR
Tel (808) 241-4460
Fax (808) 241-5126

County submits updated application for Kaua'i Seabird HCP project

LĪHU'E – Earlier this week, the County of Kaua'i submitted an updated application to the state Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Kaua'i Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) project.

The county prepared a draft application last year and refined its plans after receiving feedback from DLNR and USFWS.

“We wish to thank federal and state agencies that have worked with us to create a plan that will protect endangered and threatened seabirds, while allowing us to continue to provide access to county facilities,” said Lenny Rapozo, director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. “We actually began implementing last season the mitigative measures that are contained in our HCP and I am happy to report that there were no takes at any county facility.”

In its revised application, the county provides a substantially more detailed plan on preventive and mitigative measures it will take to protect the endangered Newell's Shearwater, Hawaiian Petrel and Band-rumped Storm Petrel at all county facilities.

The county is also requesting an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and Incidental Take License (ITL) to take up to 15 birds a year based on its proposed minimization actions that

operationally, financially, and in the public's best interest would be done to the maximum extent practicable.

The plan categorizes all county facilities into the following classes based on the amount of lighting the facility uses:

- 1) Confirmed unlit facilities
- 2) Minimal building lighting
- 3) Limited external lighting
- 4) Exterior area and court lighting
- 5) Stadium and field lighting

The HCP also lists the county's completed or ongoing minimization and avoidance measures, such as:

1) Ensuring that facility designs are consistent with the recommendations of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America's RP-6-01 Recommended Practice for Sports and Recreational Area Lighting, established in 2001.

2) Continuance of the current county policy to install shielded lighting in all new facilities to minimize light pollution.

3) Implementing best management practices to manage vandalism and/or burglary of light timers.

In addition, the plan asserts that the following minimization and avoidance measures will be implemented by the county:

1) For facilities that emanate minimal or limited lighting, fixtures will be replaced with bird-friendly lighting apparatus over time.

2) For sports facilities with significant lighting, such as soccer and baseball fields and tennis and basketball courts, the county agrees not to illuminate playing fields and courts during fledgling season, between Sept. 15 and Dec. 14, until such time as those facility lights are fully shielded.

3) For stadium facilities, the HCP calls for the county to retrofit lighting using partially shielded fixtures, and to conduct a minimal number of night games with the shielded lights that is estimated to result in up to a 40 percent decrease in the number of birds currently impacted by the lights.

The HCP also states that the county will examine the feasibility of a county-wide or county facility-wide policy or ordinance that will stipulate the use of bird-friendly lighting for all new development on Kaua'i.

Through the HCP, the county has committed to continue to install bird-friendly lighting at all its facilities, provide education and training on bird-friendly practices for employees and contractors to minimize the impacts of its facilities by eliminating sources of light attraction during the fallout season, and to develop a formal monitoring and/or search and recovery program with respect to endangered seabirds.

The lighting retrofits at Vidinha and Hanapēpē stadiums are completed and the project is underway at three other county facilities including: Isenberg Park and Peter Rayno Park softball fields; and the Līhu'e County Park tennis court.

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