

12 July 2021

The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele
1205 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Kahele,

The Hawai'i Chapter of The Wildlife Society is writing to **request your cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 2773)**, introduced in April by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE). This legislation would provide state and tribal wildlife agencies with a vital source of funding needed to proactively and cost-effectively conserve America's at-risk wildlife populations.

Founded in 1937, The Wildlife Society and its 15,000 professional and associated members work to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife biologists and managers to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation. The Wildlife Society Hawai'i Chapter dedicates itself to the conservation and preservation of flora and fauna endemic to the Hawaiian Islands. The Hawai'i Chapter is part of the Western Section of The Wildlife Society. Its membership is drawn from City & County of Honolulu, and Counties of Kaua'i, Mau'i, and Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resource (DLNR) has identified 5,496 animal species and 756 plant species of greatest conservation need in its congressionally mandated conservation action blueprint, known as the Hawai'i State Wildlife Action Plan. These include:

- Hawai'i's iconic bird the 'I'iwi, a Hawaiian honeycreeper that was recently listed as threatened due primarily to avian malaria that is transmitted by non-native mosquitoes. The 'I'iwi was once widespread across all the main Hawaiian islands but is now restricted to upper elevation forest where mosquitoes are gradually encroaching;
- Hawaiian yellow-faced bees, the very first bees listed as federally endangered under the US Endangered Species Act, which are at great risk of extinction due to habitat alteration, introduction of invasive predators, competitors and pathogens, and which a multitude of plant species depend on their pollination services for their own survival;
- *Kanaloa kahoowawensis*, a unique plant species from on Kaho'olawe that is the only representative of its genus. *Kanaloa kahoowawensis* was unknown to science until 1992. Now extinct in the wild, there are currently only 20 individuals in cultivation.

Nationally, conservation efforts for these at-risk species are critically underfunded, only receiving about \$60 million annually through the existing [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program. Hawai'i DLNR receives only around \$600,000 per year under the current State Wildlife Grant formula. This is not nearly enough for Hawai'i to plan for multi-year conservation and recovery projects or prevent costly measures, such as Endangered Species Act listings, from occurring. Hawai'i is well-known as the extinction capital of the world, due to massive losses of unique species in recent history, and has many more species currently on the brink of extinction.

Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would match an appropriate solution to the scale of this crisis. By dedicating \$1.3 billion annually for the adequate implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, and \$97.5 million annually for tribal agencies to plan long-term conservation projects, wildlife professionals will have the resources needed to hold the nation's wildlife in the public trust for generations to come. **This would result in approximately \$59 million provided towards conservation efforts across Hawai'i annually.**

Thank you for considering this important legislation. If you have any questions regarding the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Hawai'i Chapter of The Wildlife Society's support for this legislation, please feel free to reach us at twshawaii@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Hawai'i Chapter of the Wildlife Society