



KŌLEA

Volume 75, Issue 3, Winter 2024/2025

News from
Conservation
Council for
Hawai'i

Progress through Persistence

By Mashuri Waite, Ph.D



Flowers and unripe of fruit of a manono shrub.

Photo by author

In 2005, CCH took on the role to apply for a permit to remove invasive plants in an area of a remnant native forest along the Manoa Cliff Trail. Since then, volunteers have continued to remove alien weeds and trees, opening up space for the native plants that were still present, as well as new native seedlings.

The most challenging weeds are the ones we end up spending the most time controlling, such as cinnamon, palmgrass, Clidemia, Bischofia, fiddlewood, Hilo grass, and honohono grass. Although the cinnamon and Bischofia are not yet so wide spread in many parts of the island, cinnamon is the most critically dangerous weed at Manoa Cliff. It is so abundant at the site and produces a particularly dark shade that kills most other species under it. Thus, they need to be removed to allow in ample light for native species to grow. For many years it seemed that the work to remove the cinnamon trees was endless because there were so many seedlings growing that replaced the ones we removed. But finally, enough of the trees have now been removed that there are fewer new seedlings popping up. In some ways, all of the weeds are significant to control. If we concentrate on just one species, then other invasive species will grow into that space and still prevent the usually slower growing native species from becoming established.

Fortunately, we have had a lot of success with a number of species including 'ōhā wai (*Clermontia kakeana*), koa (*Acacia koa*), manono (*Kadua affinis*), koki'o ke'oke'o (*Hibiscus arnottianus*), hame (*Antidesma platyphylla*), and olonā (*Touchardia latifolia*).

After removal of the weeds, we hope that native plants that existed in the area repopulate in the newly available space. But a number of the native species need extra help because their seeds are not spread around by birds that currently frequent the site. We think these plants probably depended on the extinct 'ō'ū bird to spread their seeds. An example of this is the 'ōhā wai that are famous for having flowers shaped to fit the curve of Hawaiian honeycreepers like the 'i'iwi. When we started caring for the site in 2005, there were about 16 wild 'ōhā wai plants found in the currently fenced area and a couple others outside the fence. Unfortunately, there was hardly any natural population growth, as only about three of those 16 were young immature plants. We think this was because the seeds were not being dispersed. We could see the fruit ripen on the mature shrubs and then fall and rot on the ground. Nothing was eating the fruit and dispersing the seeds away from the mother plants. And unfortunately, almost no seedlings were germinating underneath the mother plants either, probably because it was too shady for them to germinate and grow. Fortunately, the mature plants very regularly produce fruit and each fruit contains 2,000 or more seeds.

'Ōhā wai was one species that Alvin Yoshinaga had worked on at the Lyon Arboretum, developed methods for germinating, and out-planted back into the forest with high success. So we did this as well, out-planting and grew some in greenhouses, and were able to slowly increase the number of plants at the site. Usually, within two or three years of out-planting, they began producing fruit. With so many fruits available, we tried spreading the seeds directly on bare soil and moss covered logs. 'Ōhā wai seedlings can emerge as

Mashuri - cont'd



View of Konahuanui from the top of the Manoa Cliff native forest restoration site. Photo by author

quickly as a few months afterwards, but more likely they sprout after a year or so. We now spread seeds on mossy logs because fewer weeds sprout and compete with them. However, we also out-plant nursery grown seedlings in areas of bare soil because of the limited number of mossy logs.

Another species to highlight is koa. There are quite a few wild koa trees in the area and many seedlings come up when invasive cinnamon trees are cleared. We were really pleased with how many koa trees grew up and started providing shade that helped to slow down the growth of invasive weeds, reaching 7 to 12 feet tall after several years. Unfortunately, by the time they reached this size, most of them died from the koa wilt fungus when they were 5 to 7 years old. We knew about koa wilt, but were still surprised by how thorough the disease was. We worked with koa researchers at the Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center to find naturally resistant koa trees around Manoa Valley. Seeds were collected from about 40 wild trees from along the Kalawahine, Manoa Cliff, and Kolowalu trails. These seeds were germinated and the seedlings were tested against high doses of the fungal spores to determine which parent trees produce more surviving seedlings. This showed us that 13 wild trees would be good trees to collect seeds from to out-plant within the site. It is now almost 15 years since we planted these seeds and

many of those seedlings are now 25 to 30 ft tall and we hope will soon produce seeds of their own.

We have learned a lot during this process. The most important is that long term persistence is crucial because the weeds need to be controlled until the native seedlings are grown enough to use up a large part of the sunlight. We learned that regular maintenance of the site leads to long term success. For example, a tree can unexpectedly fall in a wind storm, create a gap in the canopy giving more light and allowing weeds to grow more quickly. If we are on-site, we can quickly remove the weeds when they are small and easy to remove, allowing native seedlings to grow, and eventually take up the available space. However, if regular maintenance is not kept up at the site, the weeds will take over creating more work. Hence, it is so much better to be there every week than to work at the site once or twice a year.

We still have a lot of weeds to remove from the 6 acre fenced site, but we have made enough progress that we can imagine continuing the work outside of the current fence. And we can think about working to find success with other species such as 'olapa (*Cheirodendron trigynum*), kolea (*Myrsine lessertiana*), halapepe (*Dracaena halapepe*), etc.

If you are interested in helping the effort, volunteers meet every Sunday at 9am at the beginning of the Kalawahine Trail.



Lehua `ahihi (*Metrosideros tremuloides*), endemic to the island of Oahu, is one of two ohia species found at Manoa Cliff native forest restoration site. Photo by Author

IMPORTANT!

CCH will be sending out two digital newsletters in 2025. Our first digital newsletter will be sent to your email in the month of May. Please contact us via email at info@conservehi.org with your preferred email address, or use the enclosed envelope to send us the information.

2024 Annual Membership and Awards Meeting Recap

by Leah Kocher



Bret Nainoa Mossman and Patrick Ching showcasing Hawai'i's Living Jewels



Wendy Kuntz, Christy Martin, and Colleen Heyer

On September 28, 2024, we gathered at the Patagonia Honolulu store for our annual Membership and Awards Meeting. We would like to extend our deepest mahalos to Patagonia Honolulu for welcoming us into their space for the event again. We also could not put on this event without the hard work and dedication of our amazing volunteers. You are truly appreciated. It was a wonderful evening full of delicious farm to table food by Ed Kenney's TOWN, beautiful music from Hanalē Bishop, and a lively exchange amongst our members and guests. We heard a riveting talk about the threats to our native flora and fauna by invasive species from Christy Martin. Christy was honored with the Koa Award for Excellence in Conservation, a much deserved distinction. Patrick Ching joined us to help unveil the artwork for our next CCH poster, entitled "Hawai'i's Living Jewels", showcasing the biodiversity of our native forest understory. Our members also voted in 3 new board members (see below for more about them).

Along with our country store items, our guests had the opportunity to bid on a variety of unique items in our silent auction. We would like to thank our auction

and country store donors, crew, and volunteers for their generosity:

Alexis Kocher	Ko'olau Distillery
ALOHA Collection	Laha'ole
Barbara Steinberg	Lexbreezy Hawai'i
Bishop Museum	Manaola Hawai'i
Bret Nainoa Mossman	Manoa Chocolate
Cariloha	Maita'i Catamaran
Caren Loebel-Fried	Maia Presley
Castle Resorts & Hotels	Merriman's
Chris, Debbie & Andrew Evans	National Wildlife Federation
David Shepard	Patagonia Honolulu
Donna Goodson	Patrick Chee & Caroline
Emily Martin	Kunitake
Francis Tong	Puanani Anderson-Fung
Hawaiian Rainforest Naturals	Rick Mills
Hanalē Bishop	Rock-a-Hula Hawai'i
Hotel Moloka'i	Steve L Montgomery & Anita
Ira Ono	Manning
Island Distillery	TOWN Food & Events (Ed
Jacob Barter	Kenney & Crew)
Jay & Soren Nelson	Tiki's Grill & Bar
Jerry Vasconcellos	CCH Staff & Board

Looking forward to celebrating our 75th Anniversary with you at our Annual Membership and Awards meeting on September 6th!

Welcome to the newly elected board members



Emily Sarasa grew up in Florida, attended science camps, studying critters, and trapping invasive Cuban lizards in Florida. She earned a B.S. in Business Administration, and served as a Legal Fellow with Repair the World in Brooklyn. As an environmental paralegal, Emily helped settle a multi-district settlement against Monsanto. She gained her Juris Doctor from the University of Hawai'i in 2024 and Certificates in Environmental and International Law. She is currently a Policy Field Fellow at the ACLU of Hawai'i.



Les Welsh is a longtime colleague and collaborator with CCH. Previously, he was CCH's liaison to the National Wildlife Federation for over 12 years. He worked hand in hand with the staff and board of CCH, as well as many of the island's other conservation leaders, on a variety of conservation initiatives while also building a national voice in defense of Hawai'i's rare and endangered native wildlife and wild places.



Steven Lee Montgomery, Ph.D previously served on the Board of Directors for CCH for many years. He received his M.S. and Ph.D degrees from the University of Hawai'i and has worked extensively as a biological consultant and researcher throughout Hawai'i and the Pacific. He has authored numerous scientific papers, publications, and reports. Steve is skilled at locating rare species and has discovered 30 new species. He is also an active beekeeper and works extensively with honey, wax, and propolis production. He looks forward to returning to the CCH Board to help protect our native ecosystems.

For more information about our full board, please visit our website at conservehawaii.org

Message from the Executive Director

By Jonnetta "Jonee" Peters

Aloha mai kākou.

I'm grateful for your generosity during our end of the year campaign. We could not do the work with your support.

I recently made a trip to Santa Fe, NM to meet with other Affiliate Executive Directors of the National Wildlife Federation sharing our projects, learning about governance issues, and other exciting topics. We got to learn about the culture of the different tribes that come from the Santa Fe area and visited a tribal run mesa and surrounding lands.

Your support will help us to create and distribute our 2025 conservation poster titled "Hawai'i's Living Jewels" painted by Patrick Ching, and will include a teacher's guide on the back. The poster depicts Hawai'i's native biodiversity, featuring many interesting insects and the inter-relationships they have within their ecosystems. The original painting is available for purchase at patrickching.com/product-page/hawaiis-living-jewels



Hawai'i's Living Jewels by Patrick Ching

Speaking of bio-diversity, CCH has spoken out against placing the Department of Agriculture and the new deputy of biosecurity in charge of the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council and other biosecurity programs outside the Department of Agriculture's current purview, to keep the current HISC intact preventing the spreading of the DOA too thin and re-creating years of work already done. We advocated for more funds directed to the HISC.

We spoke in favor of the North Shore Community Land Trust to be granted funds to purchase and maintain a piece of property on the North Shore. This property contains many endemic and indigenous species and anchialine ponds. We are advocating to hold the Navy accountable to comply with the National

Poster Partnership

If you would like to make a donation to help us produce, print, and distribute our 2025 "Hawai'i's Living Jewels" poster to the schools and libraries, please contact us at info@conservehi.org by April 30th.

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in regards to a proposed expansion of training and testing activities off the shores of California and Hawai'i, including active sonar use and explosives testing.

We also testified for funds to strengthen the enforcement of illegal fishing activities. Additionally, our work to protect seabirds from excessive lighting and other obstacles remains ongoing.

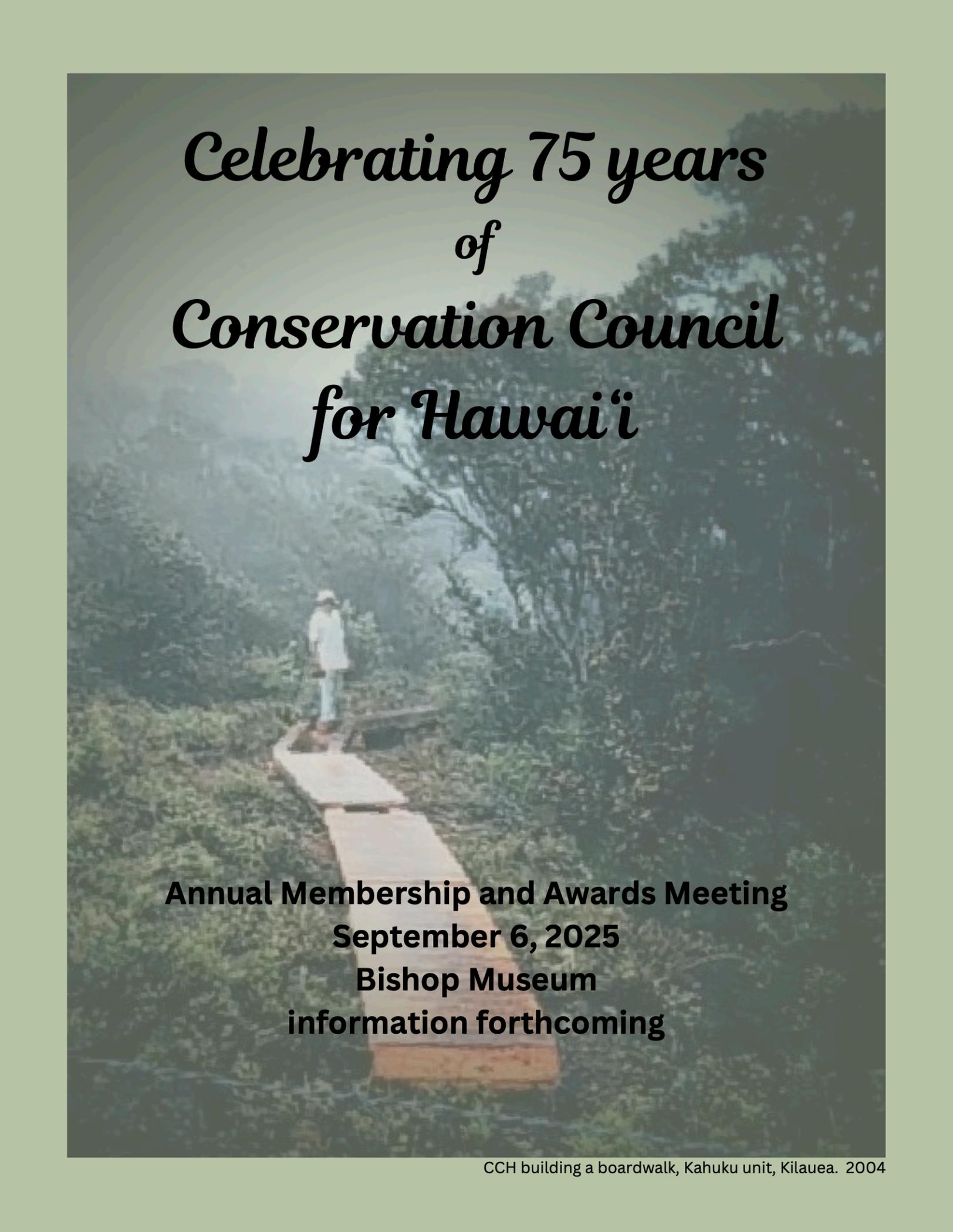
Protection of Papahānaumokuākea, and the newly named Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument (PIHMNM, formerly Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument) continues. Recently, the Hui Panala'au was recognized by the Biden Administration for the group's involvement in securing jurisdiction over the PIHMNM through the hardships and sacrifice of 130 young Hawaiian men, who occupied these barren islands from 1935-1942.

CCH is also proud to co-sponsor the Hawai'i airing of the 10 episode series "The Americas" on the NBC affiliate. We created a 30 second commercial to air during the length of the series, have a promo spot, and will have 2 live in studio appearances. The show is narrated by Tom Hanks and explores the extraordinary creatures and ecosystems of North and South America.



Hawai'i promo ad for The Americas

Lastly, I'm proud of the accomplishments of CCH. This year, we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary of protecting native species and wildlife. In February 1949, the 7th Pacific Science Congress held in Auckland, New Zealand called for a conservation or nature-protection body to be formed in Hawai'i. On August 9, 1950 Conservation Council for Hawai'i was formed under the initiative of the staff of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum and others for the purpose of "furthering conservation in its various aspects in the Hawaiian Islands to the end of betterment of human welfare therein". We will be having our Annual Membership and Awards meeting and celebration on September 6, 2025 where it all began, on the grounds of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.

A photograph of a person standing on a wooden boardwalk in a forest. The boardwalk is made of wooden planks and leads through a dense forest of trees and bushes. The person is wearing a white shirt and light-colored pants. The background is slightly hazy, suggesting a misty or overcast day.

*Celebrating 75 years
of
Conservation Council
for Hawai'i*

**Annual Membership and Awards Meeting
September 6, 2025
Bishop Museum
information forthcoming**

Strengthening Relationships – 55 Years and Counting

News from National Wildlife Federation by Emily Martin



ACE attendees during sunset at the Santa Ana Pueblo photo furnished by NWF

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) has 52 affiliates - one in each state as well as in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Affiliates are autonomous, non-profit organizations that take the lead in state and local conservation efforts and collaborate with NWF to conduct grassroots activities on national issues. NWF is proud to have CCH as an affiliate for the past 55 years.

Each year, the Executive Directors from all 52 affiliates gather in-person twice - once for the Affiliate Chief Executives (ACE) meeting and again for the NWF Annual Meeting. The ACE meeting is more intimate with only the Executive Directors and their NWF support staff in attendance. The Annual Meeting is a larger gathering for all of NWF's staff, affiliate Executive Directors, and partner organizations.

This year, our ACE meeting was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico during the second week of January. Executive Directors from across the country met to discuss how we can continue to build a strong conservation movement given our new political landscape.

Roundtables were held on issues like renewable siting, state wildlife action plans, and public lands. Additionally, there were panels on fundraising, organizational development, and board development. Attendees also had the opportunity to visit the Santa Ana Pueblo to learn more about New Mexico's wildlife

and the critical role the tribe plays in its protection.

The ACE meeting was a success with affiliates building deeper relationships which, in turn, strengthens our federation and enables us to more effectively communicate to pass bold, equitable, and science-based conservation policy on a state and federal level.

This June, the Annual Meeting will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. During Annual Meetings, each affiliate sends two delegates who vote on resolutions that shape NWF's federal policy. CCH has successfully passed resolutions at previous Annual Meetings, including last year's resolution that recognizes the ecological and cultural significance of sharks and calls on our government to protect them.

CCH will have the opportunity to introduce a resolution and to review resolutions put forward by fellow affiliates during resolution committee meetings. These committee meetings serve as an opportunity for affiliates to strengthen or modify proposed resolutions before they are voted on during the final day of the Annual Meeting. Resolutions that are passed are then used to guide NWF's National Advocacy Center in what federal policies they prioritize passing or fighting against.

NWF and CCH look forward to working together once again to continue passing resolutions that protect our shared oceans.

Celebrating connections at the 2024 Hawai'i Island Festival of Birds

by Leah Kocher

We gathered again at the Grand Naniloa Hotel in Hilo for the 2nd annual Hawai'i Island Festival of Birds. The rain didn't keep our over 700 friends away from the fun, as we focused on celebrating our connections with our community, our colleagues, our members, and our love of Hawai'i's birds. Festival visitors enjoyed a beautiful hula performance and enchanting sound-scapes of what native forests used to sound like when filled with birds. It was an ear-opening experience. Attendees also enjoyed listening to a variety of informative speakers in between checking out the various bird fair vendors, where you could find all sorts of unique bird merchandise and engage with organizers at educational booths! We look forward to this event each year, partnering with the Hawai'i Wildlife Center, and hope to keep growing the festival for years to come. Mahalo to everyone who made this year's festival a success!



CCH, Hawai'i Wildlife Center, and National Wildlife Federation at the 2024 HIFB photo by HWC



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Hawai'i



Kōlea

by Kim Starr

News from the Conservation Council for Hawai'i is published by the Conservation Council for Hawai'i, a 501(c)(3), nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to protecting native Hawaiian plants, animals, and ecosystems for future generations.

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Editors: Jonnetta "Jonee" Kaina Peters and Leah Kocher
Layout & Design: Jonnetta "Jonee" Kaina Peters and Leah Kocher
Photography by: Chris McDonough for cjmacc photography
contributing photographers as noted
Printing: Aloha Graphics

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 2923 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96802
Phone/Fax: (224) 338-6511
Email: info@conservehi.org
Website: www.conservehawaii.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Conservation.Council.for.Hawaii>

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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 for more information.



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Hawai'i's Voice for Wildlife
Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu

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Save the Dates

10th Annual Manu O Kū Festival, May 3rd, 10 AM - 2 PM

‘Iolani Palace grounds, open and free to the public

**for further information: [conservehawaii.org/events/manu-o-ku-festival/
2025-manu-o-ku-festival/](https://conservehawaii.org/events/manu-o-ku-festival/2025-manu-o-ku-festival/)**

CCH 75th Anniversary and Annual Meeting, September 6th

Atherton Hālau and Hālau Wa‘a, Bishop Museum

(details forthcoming)

3rd Annual Hawai'i Island Festival of Birds, October 4th

Grand Naniloa Hotel Hilo

(details forthcoming)