

HFC Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 3:11 PM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: FW: Testimony of American Bird Conservancy In Support of Feral Animal Management
Attachments: American Bird Conservancy letter of support for feral animal management.pdf

From: Grant Sizemore <GSizemore@abcbirds.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 12:04 PM
To: Riki Hokama <Riki.Hokama@mauicounty.us>; Yukilei Sugimura <Yukilei.Sugimura@mauicounty.us>; Tasha A. Kama <Tasha.Kama@mauicounty.us>; Kelly King <Kelly.King@mauicounty.us>; Mike J. Molina <Mike.Molina@mauicounty.us>; Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Keani N. Rawlins <Keani.Rawlins@mauicounty.us>; Alice L. Lee <Alice.Lee@mauicounty.us>; Shane M. Sinenci <Shane.Sinenci@mauicounty.us>
Cc: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>; Lesley J. Milner <Lesley.Milner@mauicounty.us>; Makalea.Ane@co.maui.hi.us
Subject: Testimony of American Bird Conservancy In Support of Feral Animal Management

Aloha,

Please accept the attached testimony on behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members regarding considerations of feral animal management for tomorrow's meeting of the Healthy Families and Communities Committee.

Mahalo,

Grant

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Bringing back the birds

5/20/2020

The Honorable Riki Hokama
Chair, Healthy Families and Communities Committee
Maui County Council
Kalana O Maui Building, 8th Floor
200 S. High St.
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Chair Hokama and Councilmembers:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members, we are writing **in support** of an ordinance to improve feral animal management in Maui County. In addition to prohibiting the feeding of feral animals in public areas, the County should include language in county code to treat cats like dogs are treated. Responsible pet ownership is critical to prevent animals from initially becoming feral.

Scientific research has shown that feeding feral cats concentrates these animals and supplements their impact in the environment, including by increasing cat fecundity ([Schmidt et al. 2007](#)). Unfortunately, feeding cats does not eliminate nuisance behaviors, killing of wildlife, or the transmission of diseases. In fact, feeding feral cats increases the likelihood of disease transmission by increasing cat interactions.

Responsible pet ownership is also essential to protect pets, reduce strain on animal shelter resources, and prevent animals from becoming feral. Microchips, for example, have been observed to increase stray cat returns to owners by approximately 2000% ([Lord et al. 2009](#)). We recommend that Maui County require that cats be microchipped, licensed, sterilized, and kept under their owners' control, just like dogs.

In the long-term, we also support the removal of existing feral cats from the landscape. The removal of feral cats has been identified as a preferable management action in Hawai'i, supported by 78% of residents ([Lohr and Lepczyk 2014](#)). One option, already in place on Lana'i, is placement of feral cats in a cat sanctuary where cats may live out the remainder of their lives in comfort and with care.

American Bird Conservancy appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and is willing to work with the committee to achieve meaningful, positive results. We recognize that feral cats and other feral animals are a nuisance to Maui residents, endanger wildlife, and are a human health risk.

Respectfully,

Grant Sizemore, M.S., AWB®
Director of Invasive Species Programs

Chris Farmer, Ph.D.
Hawai'i Program Director