

HFC Committee

From: Kelly King
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 4:35 PM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: FW: Endangered species facts

With Aloha,



Office of Councilmember Kelly Takaya King

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Subject: Endangered species facts

Aloha councilmen. Before you vote to kill our managed colonies of community cats please read this.

If you want to fix the problem of native species extinction, fix the correct problem, not the scapegoat.

Reasons WHY Hawaii Species are Endangered (It's not cats.)

Currently the mosquitos are now the number 1 threat to our native birds, especially the Hawaiian Honeycreepers, apapane, by transmitting a disease called Avian (bird) Malaria. (This is in another article sent to Maui Councilmembers.

Quick facts from the article:

People today are also responsible for the decline of our native species. People are polluting our environment which is causing harm to our native species' habitats. (Pollutants in sunscreen is toxic to our reefs. Overdevelopment, herbicides and pesticides are poisoning our marine life.)

Irresponsible people smuggle in illegal reptiles such as iguanas, alligators, and snakes which are turned loose into the wild when they are too big or too hard to take care of. These pets then become predators of our native species and disturb nestlings of native birds. Also people invade the ocean and beaches that use to be breeding grounds for Green Sea Turtles, and the Hawaiian Monk Seals.

Read more here: <http://www.hisurf.com/~enchanted/isolation.html>

Hawaii is the endangered species capital of our world because of two main reasons: isolation and foreign invaders. Hawaii is the most isolated groups of islands in the world! It is 2,400 miles to the nearest continent and the nearest group of atolls or low island are 850 miles away. Over the years, before the Europeans arrived in Hawaii, many species have developed unique abilities and in turn many animals and plants evolved in Hawaii that couldn't be seen anywhere else in the world. These species then became known as Hawaii's native or endemic animals or plants.

The Hawaiian Islands isolated from the world started out barren and lifeless and was considered a paradise. The first flora and fauna arrived by ocean waves and/or jet stream, by birds' droppings, and by hitch-hiking on a piece of object. The species adapted to the island environment. The animals and plants in Hawaii slowly evolved to be defenseless because they had no fear of predators. Thorny plants such as the Hawaii raspberries, 'akala, lost their thorns, the ko'oko'okau lost the barbs on its needles, some plants lost their strong scents, several birds lost their ability to fly, the birds' beaks changed their shape, and the root system of some plants became fragile. Hawaii's flora and fauna lived a happy and peaceful life and many unique species evolved, but this all came to an end when our foreign intruders arrived.

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Foreign or alien invaders to the islands are the major cause of Hawaii's species becoming endangered. Long ago, the Polynesians brought domestic animals like the dogs, pigs, and chickens. These animals harmed endemic (native) birds and other small species. The polynesians destroyed many of the native species' habitats by clearing forests to grow crops and to build their homes.

The animal that is doing the most harm to our native species and rainforest is the feral pig that is closely linked to the European boars. They have destroyed many of the native species' habitats and the creatures that depended on them.

These feral (wild) pigs crush, eat, and uproot plants. They gnaw at the roots of the plants causing the plants and trees to die. When the trees die, the dirt has nothing to keep it in place. When there is heavy rainfall, the dirt slides and the land starts to erode. Our rivers, streams, lakes, and ocean become polluted from the dirt that rolls down the hills. The feral pigs also wallow (roll around in mud) in the forest ground which become a perfect place for mosquitos to breed in.

The mosquitos is also a threat to our native birds, especially the Hawaiian Honeycreepers, apapane, by transmitting a disease called Avian (bird) Malaria.

The mongoose and the rats were introduced by the Europeans and have caused harm to our native species. The mongoose were purposely brought in to kill off the rats in the sugar cane fields. Unfortunately, they didn't study them well enough, and their plan failed because the mongoose sleeps in the night and hunts in the day, and the rat sleeps in the day and hunts in the night, so they never met. Therefore, in order to survive, the mongoose and the rats are doing harm to our native species by harming the ground nesting birds such as the Hawaii's state bird, the Nene goose..

The exotic plants that were once cherished for their beauty are a threat to our native plants. Plants such as the South American banana poka are vines that kill native plants in Hawaii's rainforest by suffocating them. They block out their oxygen and sunshine. As the vines kill the trees and let in too much light, like a chain reaction, the second and third layers in the rainforest are also harmed. Recently, another plant invader from South America that is considered as one of the most dangerous threats to Hawaii's ecosystems is the miconia. In Tahiti it is called "the brown tree snake of the plant world" because it can choke out many native plants.

Foreign invaders such as the goats and the Argentine Ants also contributed in causing our famous Silversword to become endangered. Many years ago people thought the Silversword was snow on Haleakala (inactive volcano) located on the island of Maui. The feral goats which were brought in as a source of food by the Europeans have turned many of the endangered Silverswords into stumps by crushing and eating them. The Argentine ant is a new and deadly foe to Hawaii's Silversword. They eat the larvae of the native yellow-faced bees, important pollinators of the Silversword. Without the bees to pollinate the Silversword, it won't be able to produce seeds.

Shiloh St Vincent
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