

Pacific Seabird Group



DEDICATED TO THE STUDY AND CONSERVATION OF PACIFIC SEABIRDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

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January 15, 2008

Christen Mitchell
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Environmental Assessment for Kaena Point Ecosystem Restoration Project

Dear Christen Mitchell:

On behalf of the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) we offer our views on the Environmental Assessment for the Kaena Point Ecosystem Restoration Project on Oahu with respect to seabirds. PSG is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote the knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds. It has a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Russia, Japan, South Korea, China, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Among PSG's members are biologists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. Since its inception PSG has been a strong and vocal advocate of removing invasive species from seabird colonies throughout the Pacific region. PSG members are some of the world's experts in island restoration, and many of our members have worked on seabirds in Hawaii.

PSG strongly supports your proposal to erect a predator-free fence at Kaena Point to eliminate the harm that dogs, cats, mongoose and rats cause to seabird colonies at the Kaena Point Natural Area Reserve. Seabird islands throughout the world have been threatened by introduced predators, which plague seabird colonies. In the worst circumstances, a seabird colony can be entirely destroyed; in other situations a colony can be crippled, suffering huge losses each year of eggs, chicks and adult birds. Such changes can disturb the entire island ecosystem. We understand that a least 100 seabirds are killed at this reserve each year, and suspect that this interference is a major obstacle to maintaining healthy wedge-tailed shearwater and Laysan albatross colonies there. If predators are removed and native vegetation restored, colonies of red-footed boobies or

Christen Mitchell, DLNR

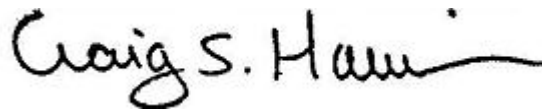
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frigatebirds might become established. Indeed, it is possible that storm-petrels and other seabirds might one day occupy the area.

We believe that a fundamental mission of Hawaii's Natural Area Reserve is to restore habitat such as that found at Kaena Point to its natural state, and to allow wildlife such as seabirds to flourish there. Predator-free fencing was pioneered in New Zealand, and the author of this letter recently had the privilege of viewing Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in Wellington, New Zealand, where predator-free fencing has been successfully implemented for more than a decade. We have confidence that if the proposed project is implemented (and that the fence is monitored to keep its integrity), that this project will be a great success for native seabirds and plants. This project may also promote increased tourism in this area, once the seabird colonies have become re-established.

For these reasons, we strongly endorse this proposal. Please contact us if we can be of further assistance in implementing this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig S. Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Craig S. Harrison
Vice Chair for Conservation

cc: Office of Environmental Quality Control
235 South Beretania Street, Suite 702
Honolulu, HI 96813