

Haleakalā National Park 'Ua'u and 'A'o Program Update for Seabird Working Group
February 26, 2013

The Park resumed regular monitoring and predator control of 'ua'u nests in February 2013. The Park plans to conduct only "front country" monitoring and predator, if the federal government's sequestration plans go into effect on March 1, 2013. Approximately 15,000 acres of "back country" 'ua'u nesting area, with 2,000-3,000 nests, will not be protected from predators.

In January 2013, a feral dog was removed from the "back country" area. The dog depredated at least eight adult and an unknown number of young endangered nēnē. Feral dogs has not been recorded in the "back country" for over 30 years. Feral animal removal crews are currently pursuing a pack of feral dogs in the adjacent leeward area of the Park. There are currently no reports of feral dogs in rainforest areas, where 'a'o reside. Feral cats, mongoose and rats continue to be captured in 'ua'u nesting habitat.

There are no plans for formal monitoring of 'a'o.

USFWS Biological Opinion was completed in December 2012 for all routine Park Activities. An incidental take statement was issued,

"Incidental take in the form of capture, injury or mortality may result in up to 195 Hawaiian adults, chick or eggs over the next 20 year of Park operations, not to exceed 15 Hawaiian petrel adults, chicks or eggs in any given year."

The following information provides perspective for the above take statement.

The 'ua'u population at the Park has recovered dramatically because of Park activities. Aggressive and continuous habitat management by removing feral ungulates and introduced predators has proven beneficial for 'ua'u. There are currently over 1,700 known 'ua'u nests in the Park. Based on Park breeding data and GIS modeling, the population is estimated at 3,000 – 4,000 breeding pairs out of a total estimate of 8,000 – 9,000 individuals. This estimate represents a 1000% increase from the estimated population of 300 – 400 breeding pairs in 1966.

Based on the current number of 1,700+ known nests, known burrow activity of $63.16 \pm 12.79\%$ and fledgling rates of $40.88 \pm 9.85\%$, the Park estimates that, 266 – 656 'ua'u will fledge in 2013. This estimate is a result of benefits from current and improved management activities and is well over the "take" estimate provided in the Biological Opinion.

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