



LATE

Bringing back the birds

Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Water and Land,
Senate Committee on Higher Education, and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Hearing: Friday, March 10, 2017, 1:15 pm, Room 224

American Bird Conservancy supports SCR 31 and SR 6, which urge the State Department of Land and Natural Resources to conduct an extensive statewide inventory of Pueo habitat.

The Pueo is an important member of Hawai'i's biological community and a culturally critical species. However, very little is known about this species' population abundance, distribution, or movements statewide. Although there are locations that seem to have many owls, such as the fields of Mauna Kea, the owls seem to be rare throughout most of the state, and are listed by the State as Endangered on O'ahu. Although there are active research and management programs for most of our forest birds, water birds, and seabirds, the Pueo has fallen through the cracks. The best recent estimate, from the State's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan, could only guess at the population trends and thought they were declining. The proposed resolution is a critical first step towards properly protecting and managing the Pueo – a bird found nowhere else besides the Hawaiian Islands.

We would respectively recommend that more than a habitat inventory is needed. The presence or absence of Pueo in suitable habitat should be monitored in multiple years. A population estimate for all the main Hawaiian Islands is urgently needed, so banding, telemetry, or other appropriate methods should be included in the study. As part of this, genetic analysis and the connections among the different islands' sub-populations need to be studied to determine the overall population's stability and health. There are many suggestions that the sub-populations are connected, and genetic and movement studies would answer whether there is one global metapopulation or each islands' Pueo are isolated and independent. These studies would also determine whether the Hawaiian Short-eared Owl should be split into a distinct species from the mainland Short-eared Owl as some have suggested. All of these are crucial components of understanding the overall biology of this species.

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a 501(c)(3) national non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wild native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. Founded in 1994, ABC is the only U.S. based group dedicated solely to overcoming the greatest threats facing native birds in the Western Hemisphere. Because of Hawai'i's overwhelming needs, ABC created a division in 2009 focused on protecting, managing, and restoring critical habitat for some of Hawai'i's most endangered birds. We have successfully engaged with the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife on multiple projects throughout the state. We are confident that DLNR and the other passionate conservation partners throughout the state could plan and implement the necessary Pueo research with your appropriate encouragement and support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this important matter. Aloha –

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LATE

First time testifier

I am in support of this measure to get a count of the number of Pueos in Hawai'i

I believe they help the environment by killing rodents.

Thank you for letting me testify

I'm a UH Mānoa Student studying Political science.

Sincerely
Nelson Mukai

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Karl Rhoads
Senator Mike Gabbard

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COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Kaiali'i Kahele
Senator Michelle N. Kidani

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard
Senator Gil Riviere

SCR 31/SR 6

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT
AN EXTENSIVE STATEWIDE PUEO HABITAT INVENTORY

March 8, 2017

Aloha Senators,

My name is Kanani Wond and while I support both resolutions calling for an extensive pueo habitat inventory I do not believe that these resolutions go far enough to protect the endemic endangered pueo on Oahu.

It is my understanding that pueo on the neighbor islands are not considered "endangered" as our Oahu pueo are. Therefore, I urge that that SCR 31 and SR 6 be amended to reflect that an *extensive habitat inventory* concentrate on Oahu.

The short-eared owl (pueo) is protected under the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Unfortunately, listing on the MBTA does not protect pueo habitat.

The Oahu Hawaiian short-eared owl (pueo) is listed as Endangered on Oahu and considered very scarce. Some of the reasons the Oahu pueo is considered endangered are:

- Due to its nesting habits the species is vulnerable to habitat loss at any season due to conversion of open habitats to recreation, housing and resort development and are key factors in its decline
- Wind-turbine developments may also impact the species

Presently there are no population estimates, no population trend estimates, no

movement data and little is understood of the general ecology, especially breeding of the pueo.

Having such information is vital to the survival of the Oahu pueo and will aid in the creation of conservation habitat plans for areas where the pueo is known to nest and hunt such as Honoluliuli.

In the past, food was plentiful and land was great in Honouliuli. The land provided native species such as the Pueo all that it needed to ensure its survival.

Presently, land ownership and construction has become more and more aggressive most times replacing our islands green space with concrete, forever changing the way the Pueo lives and breeds.

As an Educator for the Leeward School District & Outreach Coordinator for Na Pueo O Honouliuli, I have learned from local Kupuna and Ewa residents about the Pueo. They have taught me about the history and significance of the Ewa PLains and its gulches. Kupuna have said they would see Pueo living in the area flying overhead or perched in a nearby tree.

For some, the Pueo is a sacred ancestor watching over them, a family Aumakua.

Unfortunately, the harsh reality today for the Pueo once prevalent on all islands are now endangered on Oahu. They can be seen along Saddle Road on Hawai'i Island and upcountry Maui but nearly unseen on Oahu.

It is our living breathing responsibility to protect animals that have been listed Endangered. The Pueo is endangered and unaccounted for. I ask you, when was the last inventory taken of the Pueo?

****1976-1983**

Hawaiian Forest Bird Survey Explains the loss of habitat & decline of Pueo population

****1982** the Pueo is listed as endangered on Oahu

****2004** §195D-26, HRS, requires that an annual report be prepared by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) **This report did not include the Pueo**

****2005** Hawaii's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy **This is only a report and implies future management. Was a population survey ever done?**

I support SCR 31/SR6 to ensure its Habitat and future, so should you.

Mahalo for your time,

Kanani Wond, Na Pueo O Honouliuli, Education Outreach Coordinator