



## Pacific Seabird Group

Dedicated to the Study and Conservation of Pacific Seabirds and their Environment

20 March 2018

**Testimony against [SCR No 36](#), Hawaii Senate, 29<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 2018, State of Hawaii, Senate Concurrent Resolution, “Urging State Department and private land owners to support effective and humane reduction of free-roaming cat populations using the trap-neuter-return-manage strategy.”**

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is requesting that you reject this proposal as Trap/Neuter/Release is not an effective long-term strategy to eliminate cat colonies.

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds with a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including Canada, Mexico, Russia, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Among PSG's members are biologists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds (including Hawaii), government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. Over the years, PSG has been a leader in conservation. Collectively, the Group's members have a great deal of knowledge and experience with respect to feral cat management and tropical seabird research in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific Region where they range.

It is patently unfair that specific user groups usurp public spaces for a single purpose, in this case, maintain feral cats. Harbors, parks, and school yards belong to everyone and giving one group of cat advocates direct land management control violates the very principal of open space, especially when that use creates a suite of health problems for people and other animals.

There is no justification for the presence of free ranging feral cats on any of our public lands. Yet a small number of very vocal cat supporters are attempting to rebrand feral cats as “community cats”. These predators spell death to our native animals, both seabirds and forest birds. Cat feces on beaches have infected our monk seals with Toxoplasmosis, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins have died of Toxoplasmosis and children are vulnerable to Toxoplasmosis, whose health effects can be debilitating. We do not accept that feral cats are in any way a community responsibility to maintain. They are a public nuisance, disaster for many Hawaiian endemic and endangered species, and a public health threat.

For example, in 2017 at the harbor in Kihei, Maui, about 100 Wedge-tailed Shearwater chicks were killed by feral cats, based on specific evidence collected by seabird experts. The feral cat colonies at the harbor are supported by people who feed them, and public land managers are ultimately responsible of these bird deaths, which violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Ear-tipped cats from cat colonies continue to be found at Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge, Kaua'i, where cat predation results in the death of hundreds of endangered waterbirds every year. And feral cats are caught on camera with regularity in the mountains of Kaua'i killing endangered Newell's Shearwaters and Hawaiian Petrels.

Controlling animals at our public parks is a good step in the right direction to protect us from feral cats. We support legislation and or rules that prohibit the feeding or maintaining of feral cats on any state, county, or federal lands.

This is but one example of the "Tragedy of the Commons," a lesson learned long ago, where one public user of open space determines the future for everybody else. Please sign the bills that will help prevent this tragedy from going any further; indeed if you don't, where will it end?

Mahalo for considering our request.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark J. Rauzon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Rauzon" clearly legible.

Mark J. Rauzon  
Vice-Chair for Conservation