

PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP

c/o 900 Exposition Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90007

27 February 1979

Mayor Eduardo Malapit  
County of Kauai  
4396 Rice Street  
Lihue, Kauai, HI 96766

Dear Mayor Malapit:

At the recent meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group in Monterey, California a paper was given entitled "The status of Newell's Manx Shearwater, a Threatened Species" by Vernon Byrd, John Sincock (both with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Kauai) and Tom Telfer (Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources on Kauai).


As you know the A'O", which once nested on all the main islands of Hawaii, is now confined almost totally during the nesting season to the island of Kauai. They nest in earthen burrows which they dig themselves on steep mountain slopes under dense uluhe fern. Like many other birds that feed in the sea and only come to land to nest, the Newell's Manx Shearwater flies to and from land during darkness. Birds become confused and blinded by bright lights, and they collide with powerlines, buildings, and other structures. Many birds are run over by cars and dogs kill some. The worst part of the problem occurs in fall (October-November) when young birds fly for the first time from their nests to the sea. These young seem to be more attracted to the lights than adults and probably a high percentage of each years production collide with something before they get to the ocean. Since Kauai is the last stronghold of the A'O', what happens to it there determines its fate.

Our group of professional biologists who work with marine birds all over the Pacific area would like to congratulate the citizens of Kauai on their remarkable efforts to pick up fallen shearwaters this past fall. We understand approximately 900 birds were turned in at shearwater aid stations. Most of these birds were successfully released back into the wild.

We would like to encourage those involved in planning future developments on Kauai to consider the hazards to these unique birds. Perhaps consideration could be given to future lighting around resort and residential areas so that it could be no brighter than necessary and perhaps reduced or shielded during the critical period of shearwater movements (October and November). We understand Messers. Byrd, Telfer, and Sincock are planning an experimental study of light modifications to reduce shearwater mortality and they may be able to help in development plans. We would urge your cooperation in those studies.

We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can. Please call on us for any advice or assistance that we can offer.

Sincerely,



Ralph W. Schreiber, Ph.D.  
Chairman