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## **Experts to Address Coexistence and Support for Endangered Species at Kaua'i Visitor Industry Wildlife Summit on May 16**

**LĪHU'E, KAUA'I** – In an effort to bring greater awareness to the community on how residents and visitors can more respectfully co-exist with Hawai'i's precious endangered species in nature, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) and Kaua'i Visitors Bureau (KVB) are hosting the Kaua'i Visitor Industry Wildlife Summit on May 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Outrigger Kaua'i Beach Resort. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and the summit is a free event for the public.

HTA is hosting this event as guided by its Kaua'i Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP). Action A, Sub-action A.7 of the community-driven plan asks the state to "Support awareness and education of appropriate behavior towards endangered species, such as Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, Newell's Shearwaters, kōloa maoli (native ducks) and native birds."

"This summit brings together wildlife experts and community stakeholders for a timely conversation on how we can all take a more proactive role in fostering a better coexistence and support for endangered species on Kaua'i and across the Hawaiian Islands," said Mufi Hannemann, HTA Board Chair. "Elevating these types of critical issues and ensuring residents continue to have a platform to share their keen insights with us on better destination management will continue to be a priority of HTA."

The list of confirmed wildlife experts and the topics they will address are as follows:

- **Alan Silva**, Resident Naturalist and (Retired) Wildlife Botanical Technician, Timbers Kaua'i and Hawai'i State Department of Land and Natural Resources: Understanding our nēnē.
- **Dr. Andre Raine**, Science Director, Archipelago Research and Conservation: Focuses on Newell's Shearwater ('A'o).
- **Dr. Lisa "Cali" Crampton**, Project Leader, Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project: Addresses issues concerning endangered forest birds.
- **Hob Osterlund**, Founder, Kaua'i Albatross Network: Specializes in albatross conservation.
- **Jamie Thomton**, Kaua'i Marine Animal Response Coordinator, NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office: Shares about Hawaiian monk seals and spinner dolphins.
- **Jean Souza**, Kaua'i Program Specialist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: Offers insight and awareness on humpback whales.
- **Mike Coots**, Surfer, Shark Advocate, and Shark Survivor: Expertise in shark conservation.
- **Mimi Oly**, Field Coordinator, Kaua'i Marine Mammal Response Program: Speaking to mindful interaction with our honu (turtles).

"Over the past three years, it has been our mission to work on various action items in our Kaua'i Destination Management Plan focusing on how to mālama our natural resources and wildlife," said Patti Ornellas, Kaua'i destination manager. With this summit, the visitor industry is showing its commitment to protecting our island's beautiful wildlife and empowering residents and visitors with information on how we can collectively safeguard the habitats they call home. E Kūlike Kākou, we are in this together, working to ensure a thriving future for all species."

Attendees will also have the opportunity to talk and share their ideas with other industry leaders who will be exhibiting at the summit. The following organizations will be in attendance:

- The Friends of Kaua'i Wildlife Refuges
- Kaua'i Ocean Discovery Center
- Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project
- Kaua'i Marine Animals (NOAA/DLNR-DAR)
- Pacific Birds

To RSVP, contact the Kauai Visitors Bureau at 808-245-3971 or via email at [kauai@hvcb.org](mailto:kauai@hvcb.org).

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### **About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to Mālama Hawai'i – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit [hawaiitourismauthority.org](http://hawaiitourismauthority.org) or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Threads and [Twitter](#).

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