

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony of the National Park Service
Comments on S.B. 96

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments.

The eight national park units in Hawai'i protect significant elements of our natural and cultural heritage ranging from coral reefs to alpine stone deserts, ancient trails and heiau to living Hawaiian cultural arts. One of our parks is additionally recognized as international treasure by its World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve designations. Millions of visitors and thousands of residents come to Hawai'i's national parks to see and experience these unique resources.

Our stewardship responsibility is to ensure that the lands and waters under our care are restored and preserved as living, functioning systems in perpetuity. For even our largest parks, partnership with others is an important aspect of our work to enact resource restoration and conservation on meaningful scales. For us and our partners, introduced species pose one of the most pervasive and serious threats to the continued integrity and existence of natural and cultural resources in Hawaii.

- Virtually all recovery plans for endangered and threatened plants and animals in Hawaii list control of invasive mammals as a priority action. Invasive ungulates have damaged cultural resources across the state.
- Unchecked, invasive mammals cause substantial and unacceptable damage. In Hawai'i's national parks,
 - Feral pigs rooted in and round Aimakapa Fishpond at Kaloko Honokohau National Historical Park.
 - Feral goats damaged the Keokea Holua (slide) at Pu'uuhonua O Honaunau NHP.
 - A feral cat killed six adult Nene, and may have been responsible for the disappearance of six additional adults, at Kipuka Nene within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park in 2001. The Nene population in this location still has not recovered.
 - At Kalaupapa NHP, feral pigs damaged archeological features at historic Siloama Church in Kalawao.
 - Feral goats and sheep have eaten outplanted endangered Mauna Loa Silverswords within Hawai'i Volcanoes NP.
 - Feral goats contributed to the decline and possible extinction of an endemic greensword in and around Haleakala National Park.
- NPS uses innovative techniques to restore degraded lands, protect our sensitive and irreplaceable cultural resources, and preserve endangered species. These methods rely on our ability to effectively remove invasive plants and animals.
- NPS maintains a diverse tool kit of methods to combat invasive animals. We deploy these methods singly or in combination, carefully tailoring the suite of tools to each individual situation.
- In some situations, padded legholds, snares and conibear-type traps are essential tools to protect resources. Although park professionals are continually looking for better methods, there are few effective methods for controlling ungulates and small mammals in remote areas, when animals reach very low densities within fenced units, or when there is an imminent threat to a high-value resource. However, whenever possible, NPS staff employ the results of current field research to ensure that these tools minimize suffering and potential catch of non-target animals.
- This diverse suite of management tools is essential for the NPS to effectively protect the fragile resources under its care.

I appreciate your consideration of the National Park Service's comments.