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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO  
PROVIDE UPDATED STATISTICS AND FACTS RELATING TO THE  
DECLINE OF PALILA ON MAUNA KEA AND INVESTIGATE THE FACTORS  
CAUSING THE DECLINE OF THE PALILA POPULATION.

1           WHEREAS, the palila bird is a rare and critically  
2 endangered species of honeycreeper that can only be found on  
3 certain slopes of Mauna Kea in the County of Hawaii; and  
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5           WHEREAS, the palila has a close ecological relationship  
6 with the native mamane tree and it relies on those trees for  
7 food and nesting; and  
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9           WHEREAS, in 1979, a lawsuit was filed against the  
10 Department of Land and Natural Resources, alleging that the  
11 Department was "taking" palila for purposes of the federal  
12 Endangered Species Act by maintaining sheep and goats in the  
13 palila's critical habitat, which included all of Mauna Kea from  
14 an elevation of six thousand feet to ten thousand feet; and  
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16           WHEREAS, between 1979 and 1999, the United States District  
17 Court confirmed a mandate that the Department of Land and  
18 Natural Resources eradicate sheep and goats from the palila's  
19 critical habitat; and  
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21           WHEREAS, during that time, millions of dollars were spent  
22 on construction of fences and the eradication of sheep to comply  
23 with the order of the United States District Court; and  
24

25           WHEREAS, more than twenty-five thousand sheep have been  
26 eradicated, with fewer than three hundred remaining as of 2022;  
27 and  
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## H.C.R. NO. 50

1       WHEREAS, while efforts are made to salvage sheep meat, only  
2 about forty percent is typically recovered, leaving about sixty  
3 percent to rot or feed feral cats and mongoose, which are  
4 themselves a threat to the palila population; and  
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6       WHEREAS, despite the eradication of sheep and restoration  
7 of mamane forests, only an estimated three hundred palila were  
8 counted in 2021; and  
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10       WHEREAS, the routine cost of sheep eradication is  
11 expensive: in October 2022, \$8,844.50 was spent to eradicate  
12 fifty-nine sheep; and  
13

14       WHEREAS, due to the court mandate, thousands of residents  
15 have lost access to an important source of subsistence hunting  
16 on Mauna Kea; and  
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18       WHEREAS, the drastic reduction in sheep, combined with the  
19 recovery of vegetation on Mauna Kea, has resulted in an increase  
20 of vegetative fuel loads; and  
21

22       WHEREAS, wildfires on the slopes of Mauna Kea represent the  
23 most significant threat to palila and their habitat; and  
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25       WHEREAS, recent fires have resulted in the destruction of  
26 approximately two hundred fifty acres of palila critical  
27 habitat; and  
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29       WHEREAS, due to the threat of fire, the Board of Land and  
30 Natural Resources has proposed a fuel break expansion project on  
31 Mauna Kea, which will remove thirty-five acres of mature mamane,  
32 which is another example of costs resulting from the United  
33 States District Court's mandate; and  
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35       WHEREAS, despite the best efforts over the last forty  
36 years, the population of palila continues to be critically  
37 endangered; and  
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39       WHEREAS, further investigations must be conducted to  
40 determine why current efforts have not resulted in recovery of  
41 the palila, and to identify new strategies to preserve this  
42 species; now, therefore,



# H.C.R. NO. 50

1  
2 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
3 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
4 Session of 2023, the Senate concurring, that the Department of  
5 Land and Natural Resources provide updated statistics and facts  
6 relating to the decline of palila on Mauna Kea; and  
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and  
9 Natural Resources investigate factors resulting in the decline  
10 of palila for purposes of recommending updated strategies to  
11 preserve this species and updating the United States District  
12 Court's sheep and goat eradication mandate; and  
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and  
15 Natural Resources is requested to submit a report of its  
16 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
17 legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior  
18 to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024; and  
19

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this  
21 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the  
22 Board of Land and Natural Resources.  
23  
24  
25

OFFERED BY:



MAR 08 2023

