

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



GOV. MSG. NO. 1198

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

May 27, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate,
and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Nadine Nakamura
Speaker, and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on May 27, 2025, the following bill was signed into law:

S.B. NO. 849, S.D. 1,
H.D. 2

RELATING TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.
ACT 098

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Green M.D." in a cursive style.

Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Approved by the Governor

on MAY 27 2025

THE SENATE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

ACT 098
S.B. NO. 849
S.D. 1
H.D. 2

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State is home to
2 a rich diversity of indigenous species of aquatic life,
3 wildlife, and land plants that are vital to maintaining
4 ecological balance and preserving the cultural heritage of the
5 region.

6 The legislature further finds that many of these native
7 species face significant threats from overexploitation, habitat
8 destruction, and climate change, which require immediate and
9 enhanced protective measures to ensure their long-term survival.

10 The legislature recognizes the 'io, or Hawaiian hawk, as an
11 indigenous species of note, serving as a symbol of strength and
12 resilience in Hawaiian culture and playing a vital role in
13 Hawai'i's unique ecosystem as a native raptor. As an apex
14 predator, the 'io helps maintain ecological balance, controlling
15 populations of rodents and other invasive species that threaten
16 native flora and fauna. However, the 'io faces ongoing threats



1 from habitat loss, illegal hunting, and environmental
2 degradation.

3 The legislature declares that the unauthorized taking and
4 killing of indigenous species such as the 'io not only disrupts
5 ecological systems but also undermines ongoing conservation
6 efforts and risks the loss of irreplaceable biodiversity.
7 Therefore, penalties for harming or endangering indigenous
8 species, including the 'io, are crucial to deterring these
9 harmful actions to restore Hawai'i's fragile ecosystems for
10 future generations.

11 However, the legislature believes that the current
12 penalties for violations involving native species do not
13 adequately deter harmful activities. Strengthening these
14 penalties, including the imposition of significant fines and the
15 classification of certain offenses as class C felonies, will
16 provide stronger enforcement tools for the State to protect
17 these critical species.

18 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

19 (1) Prohibit and impose penalties for intentionally
20 taking, harming, or killing 'io; and



1 (2) Increase penalties and fees for taking and killing
2 species of aquatic life, wildlife, and land plants
3 that are native to the State.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 195D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately
6 designated and to read as follows:

7 "§195D- Taking, harming, or killing a Hawaiian hawk;
8 prohibited. Except as otherwise provided in section 183D-62,
9 the intentional taking, harming, or killing of an 'io, or
10 Hawaiian hawk (Buteo solitarius), shall be subject to penalties
11 under section 195D-9."

12 SECTION 3. Section 195D-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended as follows:

14 1. By amending subsection (a) to read:

15 "(a) Any person who violates any of the provisions of this
16 chapter [†]or[†] the provisions of any rule adopted [hereunder]
17 pursuant to this chapter shall be guilty of [a misdemeanor and
18 shall be punished as follows]:

19 (1) [For] A misdemeanor for a first offense, punishable by
20 a fine of [not] no less than \$250 or by imprisonment
21 of [not] no more than one year, or both; and



1 (2) ~~[For]~~ A class C felony for a second or subsequent
2 offense ~~[within five years of a previous conviction by~~
3 a] and upon conviction shall be subject to one or any
4 combination of the following:

5 (A) A fine of [not] no less than [\$500 or by
6 imprisonment] \$1,000;

7 (B) Imprisonment of [not] no more than [one year, or
8 both.] two years; or

9 (C) Rehabilitative community service."

10 2. By amending subsections (d) and (e) to read:

11 "(d) Except as otherwise provided by law, the board or its
12 authorized representative by proper delegation ~~[is authorized~~
13 ~~to]~~ may set, charge, and collect administrative fines or bring
14 legal action to recover administrative fees and costs as
15 documented by receipts or affidavit, including attorneys' fees
16 and costs, or bring legal action to recover administrative
17 fines, fees, and costs, including attorneys' fees and costs, or
18 payment for damages or for the cost to correct damages resulting
19 from a violation of this chapter or any rule adopted thereunder.
20 The administrative fines shall be as follows:



- 1 (1) For a first violation, a fine of [~~not more than~~
2 \$2,500,] no less than \$2,500 and no more than \$5,000
3 or rehabilitative community service, or both;
- 4 (2) For a second violation [~~within five years of a~~
5 ~~previous violation~~], a fine of [~~not more than \$5,000;~~
6 no less than \$5,000 and no more than \$10,000 or
7 rehabilitative community service, or both; and
- 8 (3) For a third or subsequent violation [~~within five years~~
9 ~~of the last violation~~], a fine of [~~not more than~~
10 \$10,000.] no less than \$10,000 and no more than
11 \$20,000 or rehabilitative community service, or both.

12 (e) In addition, an administrative fine of up to [~~\$5,000~~]
13 \$10,000 or rehabilitative community service, or both, may be
14 levied for each specimen of wildlife or plant taken, killed,
15 injured, or damaged in violation of this chapter or any rule
16 adopted thereunder."

17 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
18 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
19 begun before its effective date.

20 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
21 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



S.B. NO. 849
S.D. 1
H.D. 2

APPROVED this 27th day of May, 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. L. M.', written in a cursive style.

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII


THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I

Date: April 17, 2025
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate
of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i, Regular Session of 2025.



President of the Senate



Clerk of the Senate

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
STATE OF HAWAII

Date: April 4, 2025
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Third Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025.



Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker
House of Representatives



Brian L. Takeshita
Chief Clerk
House of Representatives