State involvement in the feral cat issue:
Overview of Policies and Strategies Regarding Cats

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Cats & Hawaiian Ecosystems

- Evolution in isolation: no mammalian predators, very few pathways for parasite introduction
- Predation impacts
- Toxoplasmosis
  - Native birds: nene, alala, red-footed booby
  - Game birds: Erckels francolin
  - Hawaiian monk seal

Photo: Dick Daniels  
Photo: Gregg Yan  
Photo: Francis C Franklin  
Photo: USFWS
State Policy Framework

- Hawaii has no statutory definition of “pets”
- Cats are variously designated as:
  - Animals (Dept of Agriculture, regarding import, HAR 4-29)
  - Predators (Dept of Land & Nat Resources, regarding wildlife impacts, HRS 183-D)
  - A domesticated animal (Inferred by Dept of Agriculture, as an exclusion to the definition of “non-domesticated animals”, HAR 4-71)
  - Invasive species (Hawaii Invasive Species Council, non-regulatory)
County Policies

- City and County of Honolulu requires owners to sterilize cats older than 6 months (ROH 7-6.6) and provide them with an ID collar, tag, or microchip (ROH 7-6.2)

- Maui County requires all cats released for adoption to be neutered (CC 6.04.070)

- Hawaii County prohibits owners (undefined) from taking cats to county beach parks or businesses where food is sold (CC 4-18), and prohibits feces or other nuisances on any public areas (CC 4-19)
Federal Policies

  - Unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take capture, kill, attempt to take capture, kill, possess, offer for sale... any migratory bird

  - Prohibits any person from harassing or harming any endangered or threatened species within the United States
Current Practices

- State
  - Predator control in remote areas / near native wildlife
  - Prohibition on feeding cats at small boat harbors
- County / Hawaiian Humane Society contract
  - High volume spay/neuter
- Private practices (individual actions, not endorsed by government)
  - Sanctuary on Lanai
  - Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)
  - Return to Field?
Recent Policy Efforts

Efforts originating with the State:
- Abandonment penalty increases
- Feeding prohibitions on state lands

Efforts originating with animal welfare groups:
- Exempting cat colony managers from other laws
- Funding for TNR
Actions Elsewhere

- Australia: widespread control
- Cats Indoors
- NY Lawsuit

A hunter in Australia. *Australia is deadly serious about killing millions of cats*, NY Times, 4/25/19

A catio

Cat backpack. Source: American Bird Conservancy

A hunter in Australia.
Effective solutions should be socially acceptable

Lohr & Lepczyk (2013):
- 87% of HI residents want to see reduced cats on landscape
- 78% of HI residents want cats permanently removed from areas with T&E species
**TABLE 2** The score for each item used in the behavioural prioritization of nine cat-owner behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Cat owners</th>
<th>Veterinarians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation impact</td>
<td>Likelihood of adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat(s) in at night</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.82 ± 0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contain to property via fence</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.12 ± 0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collar</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.57 ± 0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat in 24 hr</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.76 ± 0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict cat to run</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1.38 ± 0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register cat like dog</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.94 ± 0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microchip</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.97 ± 0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit number of cats</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.54 ± 0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-sex</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.77 ± 0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conservation impact is represented by an average score (range 1 to 10). Likelihood of adoption and veterinarian opinions about the impact of the action on cat welfare are represented by average (±1 SE) Likert scores on a scale of 1 to 7. Current penetration rate is represented as a proportion of survey respondents (ranging from 0 to 1). Behaviors were ranked based on their calculated effectiveness score with higher scores being judged better subjects of an advocacy campaign. Calculation of effectiveness was based on the modified McKenzie-Mohr (2000) formula: effectiveness score = conservation impact × probability of adoption × (1-current penetration rate) × cat welfare.
HISC Resolution 19-2

Non-regulatory policy statement recommending:
- Keeping cats indoors
- Exclusion tools to separate cats from wildlife: catios, sanctuaries, leashes
- The use of peer-reviewed science in finding humane solutions to population reduction
- No TNR
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