

Keep Your Popoki (Cats) Indoors!

It's that time again from late spring to early fall, when Hawaiian Humane Society's cat houses and kitten rooms begin to fill up even more than usual due to irresponsible pet ownership.

HAS would like to take the opportunity and strongly support the American Bird Conservation's (ABC) petition "**Keep Cats, Birds, and People Safe and Healthy!**" On <https://abcbirds.org/action/petition-happy-cats-healthy-birds/>, you can send a message to your elected official and ask them to incorporate the following into local ordinances:

1. Abandonment of an animal should be prohibited in all cases.
2. Sterilization should be required unless an owner explicitly wants to breed his/her pet.
3. Identification, such as licenses and microchips, should be required for pets to help return lost animals to their owners.
4. Roaming pets should be prohibited for the safety of the animal and its community.

Furthermore, you can support three measures being proposed (visit <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/> for more information):

- House Bill HB 1287 HD1: Requires dog and cat owners to microchip their pets, if the pets are not licensed,
- Companion Senate Bill SB1387 SD1 HD1, and
- House Bill HB 409 (deferred): Requires the Department of Health to contract with a nonprofit animal rescue group to oversee caretakers of feral cats and mongooses. Exempts registered caretakers of feral cats and mongooses from state laws and county ordinances relating to the feeding and confinement of cats and mongooses. Establishes a trap-sterilize-return process.

The lack of responsibility on both sides - government and pet owners - has been a decade old problem: See the following excerpt of the 2003 'Elepaio lead article "Popoki and Hawai'i's Native Birds", by former Director of "**Cats Indoors!**" Campaign for ABC, Linda Winter. Read the full article in the 'Elepaio 63.3 issue in our archive on <https://www.hawaii-audubon.org/elepaio-journal>:

"...Hawaii Audubon Society (HAS) members are well aware that Hawai'i is considered the endangered species capital

*of the world, with more endangered plant and animal species per square mile than any other place on the planet. Beginning with the Polynesian settlement over 1,600 years ago, Hawai'i's bird extinction crisis continued through the period of European settlement to today. By the late 18th century, at least 45 species of endemic birds had become extinct, including flightless geese and ibis, over a dozen honeycreepers, an eagle, a hawk and several species of owl and crow. Destruction of habitat for farming and human development, invasion of alien plant species, over-hunting, disease spread by introduced mosquitoes, predation by introduced rats, mongoose, and domestic cats (popoki), and habitat degradation by feral pigs, goats, sheep, and cattle have all played a role in bringing many of Hawai'i's unique native birds to the brink of extinction. ...Given the mild climate, cats can breed year-round in Hawai'i, with 3 litters per year of 4-6 kittens per litter. Rabies does not occur on the islands, and there are no wild predators of cats, such as coyote, bobcat, or fox, to help keep the free-roaming cat population in check. ...In 1997, concern about cat predation of birds nationwide prompted ABC to launch the **Cats Indoors!** Campaign to educate cat owners and the general public that cats and wildlife benefit when cats are kept indoors, in an outdoor enclosure, or walked outside on a harness and leash. The campaign also stresses the importance of spaying or neutering cats before a litter is produced, and strongly opposes cat abandonment..."*

Informational brochures are available in ABC's online shop <https://shop.abcbirds.org/>.

Find more information about this topic and other threats that birds around the globe face on <https://abcbirds.org/threats/>.

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Explore Hawai'i's Forest Birds today

Visit <https://cgee-hamline.org/MMGWeb/HIFB/> to check out this free, interactive learning resource, which is dedicated to some of the rarest bird species in the world.

Hawai'i's Forest Birds: Maui & Kaua'i Edition is produced by the Center for Global Environmental Education, the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project and the Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project. The site is a collaboration among a variety of organizations and people who are working to save Hawai'i's endangered birds from extinction.