



**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**News Release**

**LINDA LINGLE**  
GOVERNOR

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For immediate release: November 25, 2009

**PUBLIC ASKED TO TURN OFF UNNEEDED LIGHTS  
AND LOOK OUT FOR DOWNED SEABIRDS**

HONOLULU – Yes, it’s that time of year again! The wedge-tailed shearwater chicks on O‘ahu’s offshore islands and coastal reserves are growing and getting ready to fly out to sea for the winter.

Though they face many challenges in their fight for survival in their normal oceanic habitat -- including sharks, storms, and waves -- many of our feathered friends don’t make it past our coastal towns because they are attracted to our lights. These young, inexperienced birds see our lights in the evening sky and fly towards shore instead of heading out on a moonlit path to the sea.

Attracted by the bright lights, the juvenile shearwaters collide with poles, wires, and buildings before crashing to the ground. Often seen on rural or coastal roadways, in parking lots, and lawns these young birds, once grounded, are easy prey for cats, rats, mongoose, dogs, and, more often than not, are hit by and/or run over by cars.

In windward O‘ahu in particular, shearwaters are attracted to the lights on shore and many can be found on roads, parking lots, and lawns between Makapu‘u and Kane‘ohe.

“There is so much more people can do, in addition to keeping a watchful eye out, to help reduce these threats to our young native seabirds,” said Laura H. Thielen, DLNR chairperson.

“Local businesses and homeowners can make a significant positive impact on the lives of Hawai‘i’s native seabirds by taking these simple and focused steps to manage outdoor lighting up through Dec. 15,” she said.

(more)

Reminder: dim outdoor lights and help protect coastal seabirds

- Keep outdoor lights to a minimum and bring lighting down to earth -- have all outdoor lights face down to the ground and use downward facing lights for illumination of signs;
- Replace bare spotlights, floodlights, and unshielded lights with seabird friendly lighting styles (including non-white or lower wattage lamps);
- Place floodlights and security lights on motion detectors;
- Shield outdoor lights with commercially available or home-make glare reducing shields; and
- Close curtains and blinds at night to help reduce overall glow and glare.

For illustrations and guidance related to seabird-friendly light styles that also protect the dark starry skies of Hawai'i visit the Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan website: (<http://www.kauai-seabirdhcp.info/minimization/lights/index.html>)

### **Watch out for the seabirds**

The public is asked to be on the watch for young seabirds especially endangered species such as Newell's shearwaters (A'o), Hawaiian petrels (Ua'u), and the more common wedge-tailed shearwater (Ua'u kani). (attach pictures)

The Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife asks the public to leave in place all wedge-tailed shearwater chicks that are found outside burrows on coastal trails and beaches unless there is imminent danger of harm due to dogs, cats, or other activity. These chicks, prior to their first flight, will normally sit outside their burrows exercising and imprinting on their natal area prior to leaving the nest.

It is important that the public realize that these birds are not lost, abandoned, or injured. If you have questions about a wedge-tailed shearwater, please call the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) office on your island.

### **SIDEBAR:**

Anyone finding a fallen or injured seabird is asked to do the following:

- Carefully and calmly pick the bird up by placing a towel or t-shirt over it, being mindful of traffic and other hazards to your safety; keep the bird at waist level, away from your face.
- Gently place it in a cardboard box that has ventilation holes and a lid, and keep the box in a cool, safe, quiet place.
- Do not feed, attempt to treat, or release the bird.
- If on O'ahu call or take the bird to Sea Life Park (561-8641)

Or call your local DOFAW office for instruction:

**O'ahu Branch** (808) 973-9778 or 721-0698

**Kaua'i Branch** (808) 274-3433

**Maui Branch** (808) 984-8100

**Moloka'i** (808) 553-1745

**Lana'i** (808) 565-7916

**Hawai'i Branch** (808) 974-4221

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60 second rip and read: Local businesses and homeowners in coastal areas can help save Hawai'i's native seabirds by reducing outdoor lighting through Dec. 15. Wedge-tailed shearwater chicks on offshore islands and coastal reserves are getting ready to fly out to sea for the winter, but are attracted by bright lights. They can collide with poles, wires, and buildings and fall where they may be hit by cars or killed by cats or dogs.

Here are some seabird-friendly tips:

- Minimize outdoor lights and have them face downward;
- Place floodlights and security lights on motion detectors;
- Use downward facing lights to illuminate signs;
- Replace bare spotlights, floodlights, and unshielded lights with seabird-friendly non-white or lower wattage lamps;
- Shield outdoor lights with commercially available or home-make glare reducing shields; and
- Close curtains and blinds at night to help reduce overall glow and glare.

For more information news media may contact:

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