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## Press Release

**Date: February 20, 2014**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **KIRC Forms National Coalition to Develop Kaho'olawe Seabird Restoration Plan**

The Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) is pleased to announce that its Kaho'olawe Island Seabird Restoration project has been selected for a grant in the amount of \$131,352.32 through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)—a non-governmental organization chartered by Congress. The project will protect threatened Hawaiian seabirds, such as the Hawaiian Goose, Laysan Finch, and Nihoa Finch, by developing a governance structure and enabling conditions to remove invasive vertebrates from Kaho'olawe.

Working with extinction prevention experts Island Conservation (IC), a coalition of local, statewide and national conservation champions will be assembled to create a comprehensive business plan for an invasive-predator-free Kaho'olawe Island Reserve, addressing financial, social, and biological implications.

A global, not-for-profit conservation organization whose mission is to prevent extinctions by removing invasive species from islands, Island Conservation has deployed scientists to 52 islands worldwide to protect 994 populations of 389 native species. Headquartered in Santa Cruz, CA with field offices in Australia, British Columbia, the Caribbean, Chile, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Washington, DC, they work to rally governments, NGOs, and bi-and multi-lateral institutions worldwide to support island invasive species eradications.

“The Hawaiian archipelago accounts for only 0.2 percent of the U.S. land area but is home to nearly 75 percent of recorded extinctions in the United States,” said IC Program Manager Alex Wegmann, PhD “Kaho'olawe Island provides an unprecedented opportunity to protect Hawaiian species and preserve Hawaiian cultural practices tied to native plants, animals, and ecosystems.”

“The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is excited about the opportunity to restore habitat on Kaho'olawe for nesting seabirds and native biodiversity,” says Scott Hall, seabird conservation manager for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. “The strength of this partnership and the generosity of private donors are helping to set the stage for a landmark project that will benefit native flora and fauna in Hawaii for generations.”

Concurrent with this grant work preparing Kaho'olawe to become the largest island in Hawai'i free of invasive, non-native predators, the project steering committee will create the finance plan for a one million dollar challenge grant from NFWF for program implementation. When complete, the project will

result in one of the largest islands in the tropical Pacific free of invasive predators and represents an exceptional opportunity for seabird conservation in Hawai'i.

“A fundamental mission of the KIRC is to protect and restore the island’s natural and ocean resources to promote awareness of and participation in traditional Native Hawaiian cultural activities and practices,” KIRC Executive Director Mike Nāho‘opi‘i, “The collaboration with NFWF, IC and other key players will not only aid in the protection of culturally-important plants, animals, and landscapes that further our cultural learning and community engagement efforts – but also tap the KIRC into a world-wide conversation about the impact of this work on our global ecosystem.”

Please visit <http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov/restoration.shtml> for further info regarding the KIRC’s Restoration Program, or connect with the KIRC in the following ways for timely updates and announcements:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KircMaui>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/KIRCMAUI>
- KIRC website at <http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov/leg-updates.shtml>
- KIRC Blog: <http://kircblog.blogspot.com/>
- KIRC e-newsletter (through Constant Contact): <http://bit.ly/1bJEEL3>

To make a tax-deductible donation to the Kaho‘olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund in support of this project, send your contribution to the KIRC at 811 Kolu Street, Suite 201, Wailuku HI 96793 or give online at [hawaiianwayfund.org](http://hawaiianwayfund.org) (donor designation #130). Every dollar makes a difference.

### **About the KIRC**

The Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) was established by the Hawai‘i State Legislature in 1993 to manage the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve while it is held in trust for a future Native Hawaiian sovereign entity. The mission of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) is to implement the vision for Kaho'olawe Island in which the kino (body) of Kaho'olawe is restored and na poe o Hawai'i (the people of Hawaii) care for to land. The Commission has pledged to provide for the meaningful and safe use of Kaho'olawe for the purpose of the traditional and cultural practices of the native Hawaiian people and to undertake the restoration of the island and its waters. The organization is managed by a seven-member Commission and a committed staff. For more information, call (808) 243.5020 or visit [www.kahoolawe.hawaii.gov](http://www.kahoolawe.hawaii.gov).

### **About National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) sustains, restores and enhances the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 4,000 organizations and committed more than \$2.1 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).

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