



Hawaii News

Public hearing: Bill funding invasive parakeet removal on Kaua'i draws widespread support

By [Scott Yunker](#)

February 15, 2024 · 1:21 AM HST

** Updated February 15, 2024 · 8:27 AM*



A rose-ringed parakeet in Bharatpur in India. Photo Courtesy: Balaji Srinivasan

Seemingly no one views rose-ringed parakeets through rose-colored glasses – at least on Kaua‘i, where the bright-green bird (*Psittacula krameri*) is categorized as an especially destructive invasive species.

A bill allocating \$150,000 to establish a one-year pilot program to reduce the population of the birds on the Garden Isle was met with overwhelming approval Wednesday during a public hearing held by the Hawai‘i House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

Representatives of state and county agencies, conservation and agriculture interests, and individual residents on Kaua‘i delivered written and oral testimony in unanimous support of [House Bill No. 2329](#) on Feb. 14.

Rose-ringed parakeets decimate farmers’ yields by eating seed and fruit crops including corn, sunflower, mango, lychee, longan, guava, rambutan, papaya and passion fruit. They are responsible for an estimated average of 10% in losses for the island’s small farms.

“The financial loss to farmers is substantial. Farming is hard enough as it is, and most farmers don’t make much money,” certified Master Gardener and resident Bill Skelton wrote. “Big losses might be the straw that breaks the back of some farmers. The last thing we need is reducing harvests of locally produced food ... Even

homeowners are losing fruit to the parakeets.”

The birds’ status as an agricultural scourge lay at the heart of nearly all testimony received by the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

“[P]opulation management of rose-ringed parakeets is paramount if Kaua’i is to mitigate adverse effects on the economy, environment and our community’s quality of life,” wrote Nalani Ka’auwai-Brun, director of the Kaua’i Office of Economic Development.

“Kaua’i has the potential to be the breadbasket of the state,” Ka’auwai-Brun continued. “Given our state’s widely known food insecurity and urgency to improve the security of our overall food system, resources must be committed to reaching target rose-ringed parakeet populations on Kaua’i.”

Ka’auwai-Brun’s office recently launched a “citizen science” mapping tool to engage locals and visitors in tracking and gathering data on the avian pests. To access the tool, click [here](#).

Rose-ringed parakeets – a popular pet species – were introduced to the Kaua’i ecosystem in 1968, when a pair escaped captivity. Several others joined the wild population following Hurricane ‘Iwa in 1982. Since then, rose-ringed parakeet numbers on the Garden Isle have exploded: More than 12,500 birds were estimated to exist in 2021.

Outside of agriculture, rose-ringed parakeets can present significant problems to both everyday

residents and the resort industry. Their mass roosting behavior, loud calls and accumulated droppings represent a nuisance at best – and a potential public health concern at worst. The birds may also harm native ecosystems by spreading invasive seeds, displacing other native birds and potentially spreading avian diseases.

House Bill No. 2329 was introduced by 16 lawmakers including Kauaʻi representatives Luke Evslin (District 16), Majority Leader Nadine Nakamura (District 15) and Majority Floor Leader Dee Morikawa (District 17). State Senate President Ron Kouchi, who represents Kauaʻi and Niʻihau, introduced a companion bill in the Hawaiʻi State Senate.

Although House Bill No. 2329 is specific to Kauaʻi, Oʻahu is also plagued by rose-ringed parakeets, according to all who spoke Wednesday.

“Let’s not minimize the extent of the problem. We have it right next door at ‘Iolani Palace,” said Brian Miyamoto of the Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau. “If you really want to see the extent of the problem, go to Beretania and Punahou at dusk and you will see thousands and thousands [of birds] ... They are in Central Oʻahu, they are in Pearl City, they are all over the place.

“We don’t want to take away from Kauaʻi,” Miyamoto continued. “But if there is funding, absolutely, let’s look at Oʻahu also.”

The pilot program funded under House Bill No. 2329 would reduce parakeet populations through roost culling, or the shooting of birds with small-caliber firearms. Past usage of the technique on Kaua'i is the [subject of a 2023 paper](#) published in the peer-reviewed science journal Biological Invasions, which found culling to be efficient under certain conditions.

Representatives of the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, while supportive of House Bill No. 2329, claimed culling alone will not solve islands' parakeet predicament.

“Several tools will be needed to develop a long-term effective control strategy for [rose-ringed parakeets],” wrote DLNR Chairperson Dawn N.S. Chang. “It is important to recognize that not all management options have been tested on Kaua'i, such as mist netting, or cannot be implemented given the current knowledge gaps of the behavior and ecology of this species (e.g., nest removal).”



Scott Yunker

Scott Yunker is a journalist living on Kaua'i. His work for community newspapers has earned him awards and inclusion in the 2020 anthology "Corona City: Voices from an Epicenter."

[READ FULL BIO](#)