

**DECISION
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
WILDLIFE HAZARD MANAGEMENT
FOR
[REDACTED] AIRPORT**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Damage Control (APHIS-ADC) program, has received requests to conduct wildlife hazard management to protect human safety, aircraft, and airport property from wildlife aircraft strikes at [REDACTED], Hawaii. APHIS-ADC has produced the environmental assessment (EA) upon which this Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based.

APHIS-ADC currently operates at [REDACTED] to reduce bird strikes through technical assistance, and lethal and nonlethal control methods through an integrated wildlife hazard management program. APHIS-ADC biological technicians are present at the airport each day to assist the airport manager in implementing the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan.

APHIS-ADC is the Federal Government agency authorized to manage wildlife creating human safety hazards and damaging property. APHIS-ADC's authority comes from the Animal Damage Control Act of March 2, 1931, as amended, and pursuant to the Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1988. APHIS-ADC cooperates with the [REDACTED] Airport manager for the control of wildlife in potential conflict with airport operations and human safety. The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (HDLNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permit APHIS-ADC to take bird species when necessary to protect human safety.

APHIS-ADC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on May 15, 1990 to support certified airports with the requirements contained in FAR Part 139.337 as it pertains to conducting ecological studies and developing wildlife hazard management plans when specific wildlife events occur as defined by the regulation.

Representatives and advisors from each of the cooperating agencies assisted in the evaluation of wildlife damage management activities at the airport. The USFWS, HDLNR, and the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Officer cooperated with APHIS-ADC to determine whether or not APHIS-ADC activities were in compliance with relevant laws, regulations, policies, orders, and procedures.

This analysis examined the environmental consequences and compares two alternative methods of addressing proposed wildlife hazards at [REDACTED]. The analysis and supporting documentation are available for review from APHIS-ADC (3375 Koapaka Street, Suite H420, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819).

II. DECISION AND RATIONALE

I have carefully reviewed the EA and the input resulting from the public involvement process. I believe that the issues identified in the analysis are best addressed by selecting Alternative A, the no action alternative which is the current program and the preferred alternative from the EA. The EA was revised based on comments received.

Alternative A is the preferred alternative. It best addresses all issues identified in the EA and provides the environmental safeguards that address concerns about public safety. Alternative A is reasonable and fully compatible with agreements between APHIS-ADC and █████. It provides a service to the airport with no significant adverse effects on the environment. All wildlife hazard management will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and an informal Section 7 consultation that has been completed with the USFWS for █████.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A number of local organizations and individuals were notified of the availability of the draft EA. In addition, a formal notice was published on August 5, 1996, in the Garden Island newspaper on Kauai to solicit comments on the draft. One person from Maui responded with written comments on the draft EA indicating that concerned citizens should be involved in the interdisciplinary team on a continuous basis and that an advisory committee to APHIS-ADC and FAA be arranged to deal with matters resulting in the lethal control of wildlife.

Public input into APHIS-ADC is achieved on the national level through the National Animal Damage Control Advisory Committee (NADCAC) made up of 20 individuals representing agricultural, wildlife management, animal welfare, and public health interests. Committee members serve a 2-year term, and can be on the committee for three consecutive 2-year terms. NADCAC meets annually, usually in the Washington, D.C. area. Notices are published in the Federal Register announcing solicitations for membership and announcing meeting dates and locations. NADCAC was authorized in 1986, and is one method that APHIS-ADC uses to obtain public input into the program.

APHIS-ADC went beyond minimum requirements for public notice (APHIS Implementing Procedures 7 CFR 372.8(b)(3)) by soliciting public input at the predecisional stage. The documentation on the public involvement effort, including the written comments, are available for public review.

IV. MAJOR ISSUES

The following issues were identified as being important to the scope of the analysis (40 CFR 1508.25): impacts on federally listed threatened and endangered species; impacts on target and nontarget species; animal welfare, impacts on migratory birds; and effectiveness (avoiding bird strikes and thereby reducing threats to human safety and economic losses from wildlife conflict

incidents), noise impacts from propane cannon, and costs of funding the APHIS-ADC program at █████.

V. ALTERNATIVES

The following two alternatives were developed to respond to the above issues. A summary of the effects of the alternatives is contained in the EA.

I reached my decision based on the following review of the alternatives developed from the EA.

Alternative A. The “Current Program” Alternative is the continuation of the current APHIS-ADC program at █████. The No Action Alternative was studied and used as a baseline for comparing the effects of the other alternative and the option as required by 40 CFR 1502.14(d). Alternative A was selected because it is sufficient to respond to the needs corresponding to wildlife activity for wildlife hazard management at the airport. The alternative fully meets the objective of providing █████ with an integrated wildlife hazard management program.

Alternative B. The “No APHIS-ADC Control” Alternative was not selected because it would limit APHIS-ADC involvement in any wildlife hazard activity and reduce the necessary expertise to successfully alleviate problem situations. This alternative would not provide sufficient protection for airport safety if a situation warranted wildlife control expertise. Under this alternative, increased possibilities of aircraft strikes along with possible threats to human safety and loss of human life, represent serious threats. The alternative would affect APHIS-ADC’s ability to quickly address wildlife hazards by limiting actions to technical assistance only. Therefore, this alternative was not selected.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The EA indicates that there will not be a significant impact on the quality of the human environment as a result of this proposal. I agree with this conclusion, and therefore, determine that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared. This determination is based on consideration of the following factors which are addressed in the EA:

1. The proposed activities will not significantly affect public health and safety.
2. The proposed activities will not have an impact on unique characteristics of the geographical areas such as historical or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
3. The effects on the human environment of the proposed activities are not highly controversial.

4. The effects of the proposed activities are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks.
5. The proposed activities do not establish a precedent for future actions.
6. There are no significant cumulative effects identified by this assessment.
7. The proposed activities do not affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or will cause a loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including interference with native Hawaiian traditional uses or sacred sites.
8. The proposed activities will fully comply with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. An informal Section 7 consultation for the proposed activities has been completed and is included as an appendix to the assessment.
9. There are no irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments identified by this assessment.
10. The proposed activities will not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

For additional information concerning this decision, please contact Gary Oldenburg, USDA-APHIS-ADC, 720 O'Leary St. SW, Olympia, WA 98502 or Tim Ohashi, USDA-APHIS-ADC, 3375 Koapaka St. Ste. H420, Honolulu, HI 96819.

Reviewed By:

J. Gary Oldenburg
State Director
WA/HI/AK/Pacific Islands
Animal Damage Control
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Date

Approved By:

/s/

4/29/97

Michael V. Worthen
Director, Western Region
Animal Damage Control
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Date