



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DROUGHT CONDITIONS DESCEND ON HAWAI'I DURING WHAT IS TYPICALLY THE RAINY SEASON

(HONOLULU) – Most of Hawai'i is beginning to experience drought conditions, during the time of year when rain is normally plentiful and regular.

The State Commission of Water Resource Management (CWRM) is advising people to take immediate actions to reduce water use in Maui County especially, describing current drought conditions as historic.

CWRM Deputy Kaleo Manuel said, "A significant lack of rainfall across the island has resulted in a lack of groundwater recharge and surface flow. Normal wet season rainfall has not materialized and streams that are normally gushing with water are barely flowing. This is deepening our already grave concerns about the effects of seasonal drought on water supplies.

The County of Maui's municipal water supply is heavily reliant on surface flow to meet the potable water demands of the upcountry, central valley, and west Maui regions and the lack of streamflow will directly affect water supply for these areas.

Additionally, many communities on Maui are reliant on surface flow for domestic water supply, agricultural irrigation, and for growing kalo. A lack of wet season rainfall will also signal potential consequences for water supplies in the traditional, upcoming dry season.

Continuously monitored streamflow stations across the state are flowing at record low rates, with some approaching the lowest flows ever recorded. Drought conditions, as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor show nearly the entire state in some level of drought, with all eight of the Main Hawaiian Islands experiencing at least moderate drought. The northwestern tips of Kaua'i and Maui are currently in severe drought. The only exceptions are a small slice in the center of Hawai'i Island, described as abnormally dry, and the east side of Hawai'i island, as the only place in the state, not currently experiencing drought conditions.

Oheo Stream at Kipahulu, Maui has stopped flowing above Seven Sacred Pools and Kaluanui Stream near Punalu'u on O'ahu has stopped flowing completely. Streamflow from North and South Kaukonahua streams into Lake Wilson is currently below 0.64 million gallons per day (mgd), threatening agricultural uses along the north shore.

Maui County stream flows	Period of record	Median flow for March 8	Current flow	Percentage of median flow
Hanawi	102 years	6.46 mgd	1.34 mgd	21%
West Wailuaiki	102 years	10.34 mgd	1.01 mgd	10%
Waikamoi	27 years	0.14 mgd	0.01 mgd	5%
Naililihaele	61 years	14.22 mgd	1.42 mgd	10%
Honopou	110 years	2.52 mgd	0.21 mgd	9%
Waihee	38 years	36.84 mgd	21.39 mgd	60%
Kahakuloa	73 years	7.11 mgd	2.55 mgd	36%
Honokohau	104 years	15.5 mgd	5.6 mgd	37%

Honolulu County stream Flows	Period of record	Median flow for March 8	Current flow	Percentage of median flow
South Fork-Kaukonahua	57 years	4.5 mgd	0.50 mgd	11%
North Fork-Kaukonahua	99 years	3.88 mgd	0.11 mgd	3%
Opaeula	61 years	5.09 mgd	0.09 mgd	3%
Kaluanui	53 years	0.97 mgd	0.00 mgd	0%

Hawaii County stream flows	Period of record	Median flow for March 8	Current flow	Percentage of median flow
Alakahi	57 years	3.23 mgd	0.01 mgd	0.4%
Kawainui	57 years	4.53 mgd	0.14 mgd	3%

Kauai County stream flows	Period of record	Median flow for March 8	Current flow	Percentage of median flow
East Branch North Fork-Wailua	107 years	21.3 mgd	8.08 mgd	38%

“As we enter, the more typically dry summer months, and without significant precipitation in the next few months, Hawai‘i could be in store for devastating wildfires this year. We are seeing this consequence of global climate change, played out on many fronts, including fire seasons that are now year around,” said Michael Walker, the State Fire Manager with the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW). He said it’s important that people become educated now about how to prevent wildfires, which indirectly have impacts on water supplies, when native vegetation burns in forest watersheds.

CWRM is recommending water conservation measures including the elimination of landscape irrigation, car and truck washing, and reductions in home water use such as shorter showers and not running the faucet continuously when brushing your teeth.

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US Geological Survey WaterWatch Real-Time Streamflow Conditions website:
<https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/?m=real&r=hi>

U.S. Drought Monitor for Hawai'i (March 1, 2022):
<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?HI>

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