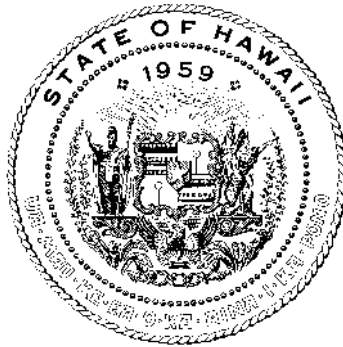


**REPORT TO THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE  
STATE OF HAWAII  
2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY**

**FISCAL YEAR 2023**



Prepared by

THE STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE

In response to Act 315, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022

Honolulu, Hawai'i  
December 2023

## RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY

### PURPOSE

The Legislature finds that Hawaii's reliance on imported food makes the State particularly vulnerable to supply chain disruptions, which can leave many residents of Hawaii without access to affordable food, and that it's essential for the State's food self-sufficiency strategies to be sustainable. The Legislature also finds that the greater recognition of game mammals and birds as a food source would greatly benefit the State's food self-sufficiency and sustainability goals. In Act 315, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022 (Act 315), it is requested that the State recognize that game mammals and birds provide a sustainable food source and that those negative impacts on the environment are sufficiently minimized or offset through native ecosystem protections that merit quality habitat with sufficient food, water, and refuge to support viable game mammal and game bird populations enough for hunting.

Act 315 from the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2022, requires an annual report to be submitted by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) on its progress in incorporating local hunting and fishing industries in its food security and sustainability strategies, including any findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation.

The Department advocates for wildlife management and improved access to create and maintain sustainable public hunting opportunities. Through wildlife monitoring, negative impacts caused by game animals will be mitigated and managed to continue providing a reliable program.

The Department provides many resources for hunters. Over the last few years, the Department implemented a convenient mobile hunter check-in/check-out process, game harvest reporting, and an online tag purchasing program. Current laws under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 183D provide direction to the Department to administer a sustainable hunting program and to promote public hunting. Recently, HRS183D-2 was updated to clarify that game mammals and birds provide sustainable food sources. The hunting program supplies access to public hunters; some hunters give a significant portion of their meat through hunting. Over the last 5-7 years, the Department's hunting program under the Division of Forestry and Wildlife has been increasing its capacity for raising and releasing many different species of game birds into designated game bird hunting units across the state. With funds collected from the sales of hunting licenses, stamps, and tags, the program raises and releases thousands of birds yearly to bolster game bird populations and provide a recreational and sustainable resource for the public. The program is growing each year, and the division will continue to build its capacity. The Division of Forestry and Wildlife is also working with communities throughout Maui Nui to promote the hunting of axis deer through a Landowner Incentive Program. This program, which began in FY24, incentivizes private landowners to hunt and remove axis deer from their lands. In the first two weeks of the initial project, 845 deer were removed from participating landowners. Participants have the opportunity to provide access to areas where public hunting is not available. These actions and an open bag limit for these species help protect priority watersheds and may offer a sustainable food resource.

The food security and self-sufficiency strategy created by the Department of Business Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture does not reference game mammals and game birds as a self-sufficient food source, and perhaps this plan can be updated to incorporate and promote the hunting harvest.