



**Report to The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii for the
Aquatic Invasive Species Response and Outreach Project:
Marine Alien Algae Community Clean-ups**

*Submitted 2/15/06 by Signe Opheim and Christy Martin,
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The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) gratefully acknowledges the funds provided by The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii to support a Marine Outreach Specialist (MOC) between January 1 and June 30, 2005.

The addition of the MOC to the CGAPS staff has brought much-needed aquatic and volunteer components to ongoing public awareness work about invasive species. The MOC conducted alien algae clean-ups, outreach to targeted community and school groups, and facilitated monitoring activities by University of Hawaii students.

This grant proposal set a goal of five alien algae clean-ups in the six months starting January 1-June 30, 2005. However, in January 2005, the Hawaii Marine Algae Group members involved in steering these efforts determined that algae clean-ups would be more cost-effective if they were conducted every other month. The reasoning is that divers pick up loose clumps of seaweed and during monthly clean-ups divers did not find enough loose seaweed to remove. Since the amount of seaweed removed did not justify the amount of clean-up costs, donations or number of volunteers, clean-ups were scheduled every other month.

Three clean-ups were scheduled, and the first was conducted on February 26, 2005 at Edmonson Reef, part of the Marine Life Conservation District next to the Natatorium (referred to as "Natatorium"). Three tons of alien seaweed were removed, using 91 volunteers. The MOC solicited donations to support the event, including Starbucks, Hawaiian Earth Products, Ltd., and others. See the table on page 2 for a full list of donations.

The second clean-up was planned for April 2, 2005 in the same location. However, this event was cancelled that morning due to a large number of box jellyfish were spotted nearshore. Although the original date for the event was planned for March and was checked against the City and County of Honolulu jellyfish calendar, the date was changed due to multiple scheduling conflicts, and the April 2 date was not checked. A checklist has since been developed by the MOC to ensure that clean-up dates do not conflict with either predicted jellyfish days, or with major City and County community events, fairs or races which may affect clean-up locations. A total of 70 volunteers attended the event.

The third clean-up was held on June 18 at the same location. Three tons of seaweed were removed by 72 volunteers.

Although not covered as part of this 6-month award, a clean-up was also held on Aug 13 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, where 93 volunteers attended. The Hilton site is the location of a native seagrass bed, which will be monitored along with the algae data in a University of Hawaii-Manoa graduate student project to restore the native seagrass.

Table 1. Alien Algae Clean-up Events January 1-June 30, 2005

Jan 1-June 30, 2005	Location	Tons Removed	Volunteers	Donation per Event
February 26	Natatorium	3	91	\$1,378.50
June 18	Natatorium	3	71	\$831.00

The alien algae clean-up events are rather costly and the donations are on a case-by case basis. The MOC turned to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council Resources Working Group chair for help in approaching business and industry leaders for support. The Resources Working Group Chair, Elizabeth Corbin of DBEDT, has agreed to present this issue and request for help along with other key invasive species issues, to the Business Roundtable, a group of key leaders that meet with DBEDT monthly to discuss issues important to Hawaii. The MOC is working with other outreach staff in developing materials to present in this meeting, which will be scheduled in 2006.

The MOC has also conducted outreach activities beyond the alien algae clean-ups. The MOC worked with other outreach specialists to develop a display about invasive marine species. The information booth was set up and staffed at outreach events including the Malama I Ke Kai event on April 9th at Hanauma Bay, the Kokua Festival on Maui on April 13 and April 16 on Oahu and at the E Malama I Ke Kai event on May 7th at Kapiolani Park. The MOC is working to develop interactive games and components to use in conjunction with the displays.

The Kaneohe Bay area was targeted for outreach to community leaders due to the newly active “supersucker”. Presentations on the issue of invasive algae and efforts to mitigate the effects were made at the Kaneohe Community Association on April 21, 2005, the Malama Kailua Meeting on May 2, and at the Kahaluu Community Board Meeting on May 11.

In May 2005, the MOC conducted a pilot program to educate 7th & 8th graders at King Intermediate School about algae. The program consisted of 3 after school classes on algae (both native and introduced), two of the sessions were spent introducing the students to historical and cultural uses of native seaweed, as well as the problems caused by invasive algae. The third session was a trip to Coconut Island, where the students waded in the shallow areas off the beach and were able to view examples of both native and invasive algae. The program involved 15 children and was so successful that the MOC is now in the process of expanding this course with the Pacific American Foundation for Spring 2006. The course will provide a more extensive program using a curriculum created to fulfill DOE standards in science and math.

Outreach via the media using press releases written and sent by the CGAPS PIO during this period resulted in television news stories on KITV 4 and KHNL 8. `Olelo producers also covered the issue and clean-up, and the invasive species program will air in 2006. In addition, work is underway by the MOC and the HISC outreach specialist, to develop new printed outreach materials for the general public, along with a single-page fact sheet, which will be used for the media, dignitaries and for the Business Roundtable meeting.

Networking with other groups to advance awareness and collaborative work was accomplished through participation in CGAPS, HISC Public Outreach Working Group, OISC and Hawaii Invasive Marine Algae Group meetings. The MOC also works closely with the AIS Team, and

will eventually take on more outreach responsibilities associated with their work as funding shifts.

The August 2004 Statewide Public Awareness Survey about invasive species polled 501 residents, and showed that 47% of people “have heard of invasive seaweeds”, and 26% of people “have heard of snowflake coral”. The CGAPS Silent Invasion media campaign includes a marine invasive species message, and the public service announcement will air from January 23-April 30, 2006. At that time, awareness will again be measured by phone survey and it is expected that work conducted by the MOC and media attention will show a tremendous return on the investment that The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii has made. CGAPS would like to thank TNCH for these funds and for the significant in-kind contribution of staff time and expertise.

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Photos



Photo 1: Alien algae clean-up volunteers ferry bags of algae ashore for sorting.



Photo 2: AIS team member Kater Bourdon (in hat) assists the MOC in teaching King Intermediate students about gorilla ogo during a field trip to Coconut Island



Photo 3: New photos were collected for use in outreach materials.



Photo 4: Alien algae clean-up diver prepares to collect clumps of gorilla ogo in waters off Waikiki.