



## Letter to the Editor

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### **Prevention key to coqui frog problem.**

Soma Grismaijer's November 12<sup>th</sup> letter stating that coqui frogs have been on O'ahu for years is incorrect. Coqui frogs are not established on O'ahu. O'ahu previously had a naturalized population of over 125 calling frogs in Wahiawā, but with adequate funding and interagency cooperation, that infestation has been eradicated from the area. Coqui frogs do arrive on O'ahu quite frequently, but with the public's help in reporting coqui frogs to 643-PEST, they have been caught before they could become established.

Most support for controlling the spread of coqui frogs has been based in the fact that it has clearly made Big Island residents unhappy and affected their quality of life. The call is loud and piercing—loud enough that some residents in coqui infested areas have said they cannot talk on the phone, watch TV or sleep with the windows open. Many people may have adjusted to the continual nightly chorus, but the majority of Big Island residents have made clear that they are unhappy with the new soundscape. It is therefore our responsibility on O'ahu to prevent them from establishing here.

Money has not been wasted in management and control of coqui frog. Prevention and rapid response to small infestations is the most cost-effective way to deal with coqui and that is exactly what is happening on O'ahu. O'ahu's Coqui Frog Working Group made up of the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, Department of Land and Natural Resources/Division of Forestry and Wildlife and Oahu Army Natural Resources Program cooperatively monitor for coqui frogs across the island, respond to coqui frog reports, and conduct joint control operations.

It's true that a coqui frog's diet consists mainly of alien insects, which are the prevalent prey in densely populated areas the frogs currently occupies, but their opportunistic feeding habits make any edible-sized insect fair game. This not only directly affects native insects, but also vulnerable native forest birds, which specifically feed on various native insects and could not compete with the tiny frog's voracious appetite.

A study by Karen H. Beard entitled "Diet of an invasive frog, *Eleutherodactylus coqui*," revealed that ants, which are not native to Hawaii, make up about 30 percent of coqui frogs' diet. In regards to coqui frogs eliminating pesky insects such as mosquitoes—no such luck. Examination of coquis' stomach contents revealed no mosquitoes. As coqui frogs continue to spread into pristine native habitats, native arthropods and spiders become an edible alternative.

Coqui frogs are not without charm. Just like any tree-frog, they seem somewhere in the middle of alien and cartoonish, with suction-cup toes, and their big, globe eyes. But the coqui frog's societal, ecological, and economic impacts on Hawaii are anything but cute.

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