

Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS)

Meeting Notes*

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Tuesday, December 2, 2025

In-person participation @ Hawai'i State Capitol Room 229, or via videoconference

Updates by each agency/org to summarize the agency/org's major invasive species-related purpose/objectives and any recent detections or actions that you'd like to highlight for this community.

***These notes are not reviewed or verified by the speakers and are for informational purposes only.**

Attendees:

In Person: Christy Martin (CGAPS), Stephanie Easley (CGAPS), Ambyr Miyake (CGAPS), Dexter Kishida (HDOT), Franny Brewer (BIISC), Tiffani Keanini (KISC), Dave Smith (DOFAW), Rob Hauff (DOFAW), Mike Melzer (UH-CTAHR), Jodi Chew (USFS), Alan Holt

Online: Andrew Porter, Arisa Barcinas, Chuck Chimera, Elizabeth Monaghan, Jamie Miller, Janet Ashman, Jeremy Gooding, Joshua Fisher, Keith Weiser, Klm Rogers, Kimberly Kahaleua, Craig Gorsuch, Laura Brewington, Liat Portner, Mark Fox, Mary Beust, Mason Russo, Maya Sweeny, Nicole Olmsted, Rebecca Chong, Richard Kim, Sanna Matheny, Brenton Fila, Melanie June, Troy Levinson

1:00 – 1:10 Welcome and Introductions: Alan Holt, 2025 CGAPS Chair

1:10 – 1:20 Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity: Richard Kim

- HDAB Biosecurity Framework: Had several meetings with other agencies prior to infobriefing on Nov. 24. Protecting resources from invasive species that have not entered HI yet. The framework uses the same mission statement as the HIBP. Act 231 (2024) and 236 (2025) = a lot of changes (ex. name of agency and authorities).
- Sent 2 delegations to New Zealand (NZ) and learned from NZ on how to operate an efficient program. Key components are broken down into Pre-Border, Border, and Post-Border. Biosecurity is not completed by only one agency, but rather everyone has to work together to accomplish shared goals. Agencies involved: DAB, DLNR, DOH, DBEDT, DLE, DOT, HISC, and CTAHR. Had to develop the biosecurity framework from Act 236 for presentation to the legislature.
- Biosecurity dashboard launched last Monday, 11/24. The 4 main targets of the dashboard are CRB, LFA, Coqui, and High-Pathways.
- Q: What are the next steps for this framework?
- A: We have color coded the areas where we think we are doing well (green) and what needs improvement in yellow and red.
- Q: How can this community help?
- A: There is a lot to be done, we are focusing on the framework and adding to the dashboard.

1:20 – 1:30 Hawaii Department of Transportation: Dexter Kishida

- Continue to support partners in Kona for the CRB response. P/U and D/O of greenwaste in Kona area.
- Working with Mason Russo to do better trapping, tighten fencing, etc. to reduce the chance of small mammals (skunks, opossums, etc.) escaping port properties.
- Working on updating the SNIPP (Statewide Noxious and Invasive Pest Program, see previous plan [here](#)) plan and using it as the basis for all the contracting we do across Highways, Airports, Harbors.

1:30 – 1:40 U.S. Customs & Border Protection: Rebecca Chong

- Lead the trade branch, overseeing incoming air, sea, and international mail branch, all ag specialists are the first line of defence for HI. The mission is to inspect everything that arrives from overseas, except US Mail. Goal is to detect and stop new pests and diseases.
- We use advanced intelligence to determine how and where to inspect the highest risk. Have some specialized pools, including canines to find items in luggage and cargo.
- We work closely with other agencies and coordinate strategies (ex. HIRAC - pest risk committee).
- We also try to take a deeper dive into gap areas (ex. exterior of containers from Italy for snails, and items arriving from Australia, etc.).
- Always getting new training from partners, including USDA. We work together to share information.
- We also do outreach with schools, airlines, shipping companies, and the public. Hoping to do more of that in the coming year.
- Q: You and your team are ag specialists, but you look at more than ag commodities, yes?
- A: Yes, we can look at anything. We did a recent operation to look at items coming in from Europe and wood packing materials, e.g. crates of wine, etc., to look for pests like snails. We just need to articulate why (usually country of origin and known regional pests).
- Q: How did the furlough affect or not affect your ops?
- A: Not much, we were exempt. We weren't paid, but we were here.

1:40 – 1:50 USDA APHIS: Mary Beust

- For Cheryl Young, State Plant Health Coordinator, stated that Lance Otsubo (Maui) is the current acting director and not sure when there will be a permanent fill. Also, Act 7721 (Farm Bill) "suggestions" for projects is under review, spending plan may be announced March 2026
- Mary Beust is the supervisor at USDA APHIS Plant Inspection Station at DKI airport in HNL. USDA APHIS PPQ has trained staff (entomology, pathology, biology, ID), all experts. We have ag specialists and techs in the port to look at imported (from foreign) propagative plant materials flagged by CBP, they must be inspected at the port by the USDA APHIS PPQ staff before entering. Great communication with US Customs and Border Protection.
- We also consult with folks wanting to import. If we see something that may be a concern for DAB, we will advise them to reach out to DAB.
- Seeing a lot of e-commerce entering. Under this admin, they did away with the deminimus rule that allowed items in small amounts (\$800) to be able to be imported. Now, all imports have to have import paperwork and that can help us look at what is coming in and relative risk. Relationships and communication is key to aiding in helping HI.
- Per Mary (via chat): Mary Beust, Supervisory Plant Protection & Quarantine Officer, APHIS PPQ Honolulu Plant Inspection Station, mary.v.beust@usda.gov, phone: (808) 834-3253.

1:50 – 2:00 USDA Wildlife Services Guam: Aaron Collins

- Not Present (apologies, we had a date mix-up)

2:00 – 2:10 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Josh Fisher

- One of the primary agencies that service the ESA. Invasive species are a large problem. Our invasive species team is a 6-person team, we continue to work with regional staff for HACCP trainings (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point), and we provide services to the Pacific Territories.
- MJ Mazurek is attending the Island Meeting in NZ and wants to reach out to folks who know or were a part of the HDAB NZ trips. She wants to make the most of her trip to Aotearoa.

2:10 – 2:20 DLNR DOFAW: Dave Smith, Rob Hauff

- Per Rob Hauff: HISC Coordinator position recruitment has closed. Working to get a list of candidates together. Have brought Pat Chee on as an 89 day hire in the interim. Our wildlife program is updating our injurious species list (only animals, primarily vertebrates), looking at adding species including some invertebrates like CRB. Complementary to DAB's authority.
- Dave: Working with the legislature to ban feeding of animals (predators - cats/rats/mongoose/dogs) on any

state land.

- Q: Is there any chance of getting pigs added to that list?
- A: Rep Kusch has also been pushing this. Also, am very concerned about the Kauai mongoose situation.
- Josh: The Tesoro funds I mentioned were some funds that had to be allocated, but that has now been allocated to Kauai.
- Tiffany: That last one was caught right on the wall at the port, in September, and so the funds will help, they can be extended and expended whenever we need to ramp up and do a response. That's how all invasive species rapid response funding should be.

2:20 – 2:30 DLNR DAR: Jesse Boord, Lizzy Monaghan

- Lizzy Monaghan is the Ballast Water and Biofouling Coordinator. Hawaii participates with West Coast states in the Pacific States Data Sharing Hub (PacDASH). All 4 states submit vessel arrival data. Can look at vessels by type, by state, by month, by port, and also amount of ballast water by all of these attributes. You can also select a single state to look at your individual risk.
- [PACDASH Data Summaries](#)
- Jesse Boord is the AIS Team Manager. Majano anemone response on the patch reef in Kaneohe Bay has been held up due to Goverment shutdown and permitting issues.
- Received a report of Capnella spp. in Kaneohe Bay on the reef fringe near Lilipuna Pier, still being identified by the ToBe LAB. The soft coral is overgrowing a porites coral, 3x5m patch, which we treated with Thierry Work (USGS) and the new hot water treatment unit (the unit is funded by his ESTCP grant which allowed the building of 2 units modified from the unit he trialed for the treatment of a corallimorph in Palmyra). It is a great example of how a rapid response is supposed to work. US Navy has two hot water units they are using and they loaned one to us.
- DAR is the lead under an agreement with the US Navy to survey the mouth of Pearl Harbor, outside of the known distribution of Unomia, but we've had a bit of a slowdown for our work at the mouth of PH due to the many responses we have going on.
- *Montipora foliosa* found in July in Kaneohe Bay (the second pop of this detected in the Bay, also likely to be purposefully outplanted) is something we are monitoring and will be surveying the surrounding area before moving forward with a response.
- All of these have the same thing in common: they are illegal marine aquarium trade species. We need to work together to address pathways.
- Q: You have good public support from the dive community?
- A: Each detection is unique, but with the anemone, we reached out extensively to engage community groups. As for this more rapid response, we notified our partners and are working on outreach.
- Q: Were you able to minimize impact to coral for the heat treatment?
- A: Yes. We were able to target specific areas with the funnel nozzle.

2:30 – 2:40 Break

2:40 – 2:45 Hawaii Invasive Species Council: Pat Chee, Mason Russo, Chuck Chimera

- Mason Russo, Port of Entry Monitoring Program Coordinator under the HISC. Just finished phase 2 of the Port of Entry Monitoring program (POEM). Utilizing devices to detect CRB in ports of entry. Entering the 8th month of the program.
- Chuck Chimera, Hawaii-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment Screener under the HISC: Did have the first HISC council meeting, after Chelsea's departure. Plans that are being developed on a county level for CRB, LFA, and coqui. Updates from council members included funding. The transfer of HISC will occur by 2030, but the initial steps of the transfer of HISC will begin next year in 2026. There are a few items that we would like to see transferred including the POEM program, the [643-PEST.org](#), and the Weed Risk Assessment program.

2:45 – 2:50 DoD: Norma Creps, Nicole Olmsted

- Nicole: JBPHH AIS Updates: Manual removal of *Unomia spicifera* is complete on the west side of the channel, which removed all Unomia on that side, and now that entire area is shifted into the monitoring phase. On the east side of the channel, we did mostly tarping (due to bottom structure and density of Unomia) of the area around Bishop Point, and completed successful heat treatment trials for Capnella (Kenyan tree coral) and some of the other target species. Efforts are ongoing on the east side of the channel. With RIMPAC coming in 2026, we are working with a lot of trainers from various countries on biosecurity efforts here in HI.

2:50 – 2:55 National Park Service: Stacey Torigoe

- Stacey: Just coming back from government shutdown. Our management team is in a holding pattern and have been working on fire related incidents. Providing operations, biosecurity, and EDRR for the park in general. We are worried about CRB in Kona and the Queensland Longhorn Beetle.

2:55 – 3:00 USDA Forest Service: Jodi Chew, Jeremy Gooding

- Jodi: Kylene Roy (USFS Entomologist) got the SplatVerb (verbanone) labeled for use permit for use on ambrosia beetles in ohia, also for coffee berry borer, and mac nut trees (it is a beetle-repellant paste).
- Hope payments to partners have continued, we had staff on even during the shutdown to process payments. There are a lot of leadership changes in USDA FS, so reach out to me if you have questions or are stuck. Regarding research, Christian and Susan are still there but they are facing difficulties.
- Jeremy: From R&D (Christian, Susan, etc in IPIF): They are looking at very limited funding for their work on invasives. We are funding some extension agents across the US-affiliated Pacific Islands, looking for forest stewardship, forestry, wildfire, forest health, and forest management in CNMI, RMI, Palau, American Samoa.

3:00 – 3:05 University of Hawaii Agrosecurity Lab: Mike Melzer

- Mike: Looking for a new Dean for Cooperative Extension for CTAHR. Just hired a new staff member from ARS in the mainland. Doing a citrus commodity survey, tropical host survey, palm commodity survey, and citrus huanglongbing, solanaceous pest survey. May have found a new disease on pomegranate. Also characterizing viruses affecting plumeria and developing procedures for treatments. We are also collecting virus isolates for CRB biocontrol from Palau. Collecting virus isolates for CRB biocontrol from Palau, American Samoa, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. We are also rearing insects for host range testing.
- Q: for host testing, you can only work on larvae?
- A: Yes, at this point, so I want to request using the adults to test, and see what the regulators say. If I need to upgrade the facility, then will need the modular containment unit. I don't want to sit and wait, we need to test it. Campus facilities needs to chime in with the containment unit and if/where we can put it.

3:05 – 3:10 CRB Team: Arisa Barcenas

- Arisa: (see current maps online: <https://www.crbhawaii.org/>) On Oahu - airport treatment and monitoring as well as some work in Waimanalo. On Hawaii Island - treatments at airport and surrounding area. On Kauai, just forwarding reports and providing guidance and sending reports to KISC. Trying to work with communities on Kauai to do local treatments and outreach. On Lanai and Molokai, we have not had any finds this quarter. We completed some trainings on both islands this year. Lastly, we hosted the CRB symposium (www.crbhawaii.org/symposium2025)

3:10 – 3:15 KISC: Tiffani Keanini

- Tiffani: Miconia - YTD - 37 mature trees and 11,496 immature trees have been controlled and completed within 200 ground survey acres. Infestation area is 7,000 acres. UAVs better able to detect, vs. helicopter. Now have 26 sites for LFA, in the last 6 years, we've had 25 sites detected. One has been eradicated, only able to treat 6 sites, some by the landowners. Two of the sites we had been treating have been moved to monitoring, one of which was a nursery and they have remained clear for a year and is a great example of how this can work. There is a problem of interisland movement of LFA. That's how we are receiving them.

- 144 coqui frogs at 9 sites, three are breeding sites, DAB is sending us 2 additional pallets of citric acid.
- Naio thrips were detected in Aug 2025. Did a rapid response but it was found in 10+ locations. Based off of distribution and how things happened on other islands, we believe there will be no eradication. KISC is not responding.
- Received 2 petrified snakes. Different sides of the island. Did surveys around the areas. Determined that if they were alive, it was a long time ago and so no trapping was done. Talked about doing some press and outreach about
- Q: What were the dates of detection, do you have points?
- A: Yes, that was Sept 17 and Oct 29, the October one was likely there and they know the commodity that they think it may have come in on. Don't know if it arrived live or not. Awaiting analysis. Laura and Clyde on Kauai.
- Troy Levinson: There are other comms to make sure we also follow up. Will get Tiffani's coms from Christy.
- Per Troy: Hi folks, following up on the snakes on Kauai- Snake sightings which are reported to HDAB can also be reported to the **USGS Rapid Response Program (bts-rapidresponse@usgs.gov or 671-777-HISS (4477)**. Thanks everyone

3:15 – 3:20 BIISC: Franny Brewer

- Franny: CRB expansion in Kona. It now has a larger range in Kona. Found in Kiholo Bay (most Northern location) and furthest south is in south kona and found up in Kaloko. We have had 4 sites found with larvae. Damage has been found in Palisades and Keahole Ag Park. Also found at the Palamanui location of UH site in Kona. CRB Hawaii Island Community CRB Traps Dashboard can be found at <https://www.biisc.org/pest/coconut-rhinoceros-beetle/> (click on the green "map" button)
- In October, we worked with SDAV lab to survey above Kona airport of greenwaste piles. There are two types of piles (currently used piles and excess/waste piles) so there is a 2-prong approach. Trying to work with HWMO (Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization) to press upon the public of these greenwaste sites/piles as being potential sources of wildfire.
- Queensland Longhorned Beetle goes after ulu, cacao, citrus and lilikoi. So far about 30+ plants are being affected by QLB. Gearing up the nematode program to help get these nematodes out to landowners who want to utilize them to treat QLB.
- 2-lined spittlebug: According to Cattleman's Association is that so far 2-lined spittlebug has been found at various ranches, yet not at Parker ranch or in Honokaa. Just found on the east side for the first time, and looks like it moved on equipment.
- Keep losing staff to other programs. Will be hiring 3 positions in the new year.
- Q: Re the netting. There is again the question of legality. As long as you call it a "monitoring device", it is not meant to kill a species.

3:20 – 3:25 MISC: Jorge Renteria

- Not Present

3:25 – 3:30 MoMISC: Lori Buchanan

- Not Present

3:35 – 3:40 OISC: Jamie Miller for Nate Dube

- Jamie: LFA - continuing cyclizing through sites throughout Waihee, Koolaupoko, and Lanikai.
- Coqui: transferring all of the coqui efforts to DOFAW begin in 2026. Frogs are moving laterally from the Waimanalo site. In Palolo, they are washing down the stream. In Kuliouou, it is difficult terrain, so there is not a lot of efforts occurring there at the moment.
- ROD: contracting Aloha Aina Drones to do some of the aerial surveys for ROD, due to lack of suitable aircrafts for surveying.
- Transitioning some miconia funds to Aloha Aina Drones as well for their survey.
- Outreach: training C&C park staff on doing surveys and ID'ing of ants.
- Funding: HISC funding has been awarded. Rebudgeted the REPI funds to DOFAW for coqui treatments.

- Cane Ti - have funds to work on cane ti
- Hiring of field crew in 2026. HIred 2 new associates and hiring for 3 more temp hires soon.
- Having ongoing meetings with C&C Hoomaluhia site and the former HPU site for potential baseyard space because OISC has exceeded the current space at the baseyard.

3:40 – 3:45 CGAPS: Christy Martin, Stephanie Easley

- Continue to provide support to partners at DAB, HISC, ISCs, DOFAW, DAR and DoD. Steph and Drew continue to assess biosecurity-related statutes and rules, and potential ways to address gaps. Continue to lead multi-partner efforts including the statewide POWG (Public Outreach Working Group), Stop the Ant Month, facilitate the HI Octocoral WG, etc.
- Q: Can you tell me a bit more about the public outreach working group?
- A: It was originally created as one of the HISC working groups, it was originally led by agency staff, first by HDOH, then DOT, now I co-lead it with Elizabeth Speith of HISC. We try to focus effort on statewide messages and initiatives that need some help, for example biocontrol.
- Q: Do we know how any of the working groups will change or stay the same when HISC gets transferred?
- A: Unknown. Once we pass the football, we don't get to call the shots.
- A: It is set in statute, but we don't know.
- Q: Richard is new and he has a lot to deal with. Have you checked in with him to see how you can help with the framework?
- A: Last Monday they unveiled it for the first time, it's their outline and where they feel they are strong/need help. DLNR staff attended some of the planning meetings and took some of the recommendations. They are taking in information and hopefully making updates to the framework, it is everyone working on biosecurity.
- Stephanie: adding to the CGAPS update, the HISC administrative rules were finalized and signed in January of this year, it allows any HISC department to survey for or control any of the listed species on private property after notification. It gives a mechanism for getting consent or recourse when you don't get consent.
- Q: What about the miconia on the private property?
- A: We had some meetings but it was not clear/decided if the ISC would be the first one. In other states, other states send a letter notifying that there is a nox weed and they are going to treat it. But that's how other states do it. We can have another meeting in the new year to advance the question.
- Can also consider compost/mulch pile and CRB on HI island.
- It would be best if it were an agency like DLNR, and it could be cooperative with the ISC.
- The ISC on Oahu has done a great job on miconia and this is a good opportunity.

3:45 – 4:00 Additional Partner Updates & Announcements

- Elliott Parsons, Pacific RISCC: CRB symposium was successful. Had about 300 participants. Looking at doing an in-person CRB symposium next year. The next NISC conference is in January 2026? Here is the link to register for the 2-day IISCCC (International Invasive Species and Climate Change Conference):
<https://naisma.org/event/international-invasive-species-and-climate-change-conference/>
- Janet Ashman, Hawaii Farm Bureau: See you all at the legislature and thanks so much for all your hard work.
- Mark Fox, Pacific Islands Innovation Landscape: help with natural and working lands support using DOD funding through SERDP and ESTCP. Proposals generally 2-3 years for less than \$2m each. No match required, must be engaged with/support military mission.
- Dave Smith: There is potentially an issue, the HISC Coordinator isn't actually the HISC Coordinator. We had an existing position that is the DOFAW Invasive Species Coordinator and we just tasked them with helping the HISC. The HISC is really just the council and the statute, the projects and the staff are not articulated in the statute. So the transfer of HISC to DAB will require us to think about this and how to do the nuts and bolts of complying with Act 236 (2025). HISC needs to be self-supported with positions and personnel to run it, which can help it be more successful. What should we collectively ask the legislature for to make it a viable entity moving forward?

- Q: Are you talking with the co-chairs about this?
- A: It came up at the recent HISC meeting, and the meeting submittal also caused some questions.
- Q: Are there other examples of councils that have cross-departmental focus?
- A: Yes, across the US. If you are asking about in-state cross-departmental focus councils, there are a few similar but not quite. (?).

Announcements:

- Next POWG meeting: 12/11 from 12pm - 2pm
- Next ROD Outreach WG meeting: 12/16 @ 9am
- Next Statewide ROD WG meeting: 12/18 @ 9am

4:00 End. Mahalo and Happy Holidays!

Note: To join or leave the CGAPS listserve, click here (<https://bit.ly/2RExLJP>).