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HABITAT RESTORATION AND MONITORING OF AN URBAN SHEARWATER COLONY AT THE FREEMAN SEABIRD PRESERVE (2008 – 2015)

Wendy Johnson *¹, K. David Hyrenbach ²

¹ Hawai'i Audubon Society, 850 Richards Street, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813, USA, johnsonw002@hawaii.rr.com; ² Hawai'i Pacific University, Oceanic Institute, 41-202 Kalaniana'ole Hwy., Waimanalo, HI 96795, USA

In September 2007, the Hawai'i Audubon Society was gifted a one-acre coastal property at Black Point, on the southern coast of O'ahu, by Buck and Doreen Freeman. This area has long been a nesting site for Wedge-tailed Shearwaters ('uau kani, *Ardenna pacifica*) and is the only habitat of its kind remaining on Oahu's south shore. Thus, restoring this property from a vacant residential lot into a native coastal habitat supporting a shearwater breeding colony is an ongoing priority of the Hawai'i Audubon Society. The Freeman Seabird Preserve has been constantly evolving since 2007, with ongoing habitat restoration efforts, educational activities, and Wedge-Tailed Shearwater research. Each year, volunteers remove invasive plants from the Preserve during the 3-month period (January through March) when there are no shearwaters in residence. Maintenance work entails opening up blocked burrows, removing litter from the area, and conducting predator control. Population monitoring involves weekly checks of marked nests (July – December) and two colony-wide censuses, scheduled during the peak incubation period (July 14th) and once the chicks have hatched (September 14th). In 2015, the incubation period census documented a record 268 nests, the highest count to date. The resulting significant 7-year trend (2009-2015) indicates that, on average, 29 +/- 4 (S.E.) nests are added to the colony each year. Despite ongoing impacts from cat predation and year-to-year changes in ocean productivity, this shearwater colony continues to grow and to provide unparalleled opportunities for public outreach and education about shearwaters, student training and scientific research.