

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL HAWAI'I

IMPACT REPORT

JANUARY 2020 - DECEMBER 2022

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

Hawai'i



A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Matt Ramsey, Senior Director,
Conservation International Hawaii'i

The last three years were transformational for the Hawaii'i Program at Conservation International. While the purpose of an impact report is to show collective progress, the pandemic made clear the merit of finding calm in chaos, of pausing to reconnect and of rethinking systems and ways of being in the world.

In close collaboration with our partners, we had the honor of being a part of several events to advance Hawaii'i towards a more sustainable future. A future where communities work hand in hand with government and industry to respect, value, and care for Hawaiian natural and cultural resources.

During the global pause in travel, the Conservation International Hawaii'i team worked deeply with community partners and catalyzed community-

based marine monitoring efforts. Supply chain issues led to action. As Hawaii'i imports nearly 50% of its seafood, shortages led to deep collaborations to provide alternatives to imported fish for a local invasive species called ta'ape - supporting a solution where smart choices in seafood production and consumption are a win for all.

And in the last three years working with partners in government, our Conservation Policy and Incentives Lab informed the creation of landmark legislation setting the stage for tremendous advances in marine conservation finance and more informed decision-making.

It is not coincidental that while rethinking systems, our team grew to include an Indigenous Knowledge Systems Fellow to cultivate our long-standing efforts

to elevate the awareness, protection and integration of Indigenous knowledge in Hawaii's formal fisheries rulemaking and to share these efforts with Indigenous communities throughout the globe.

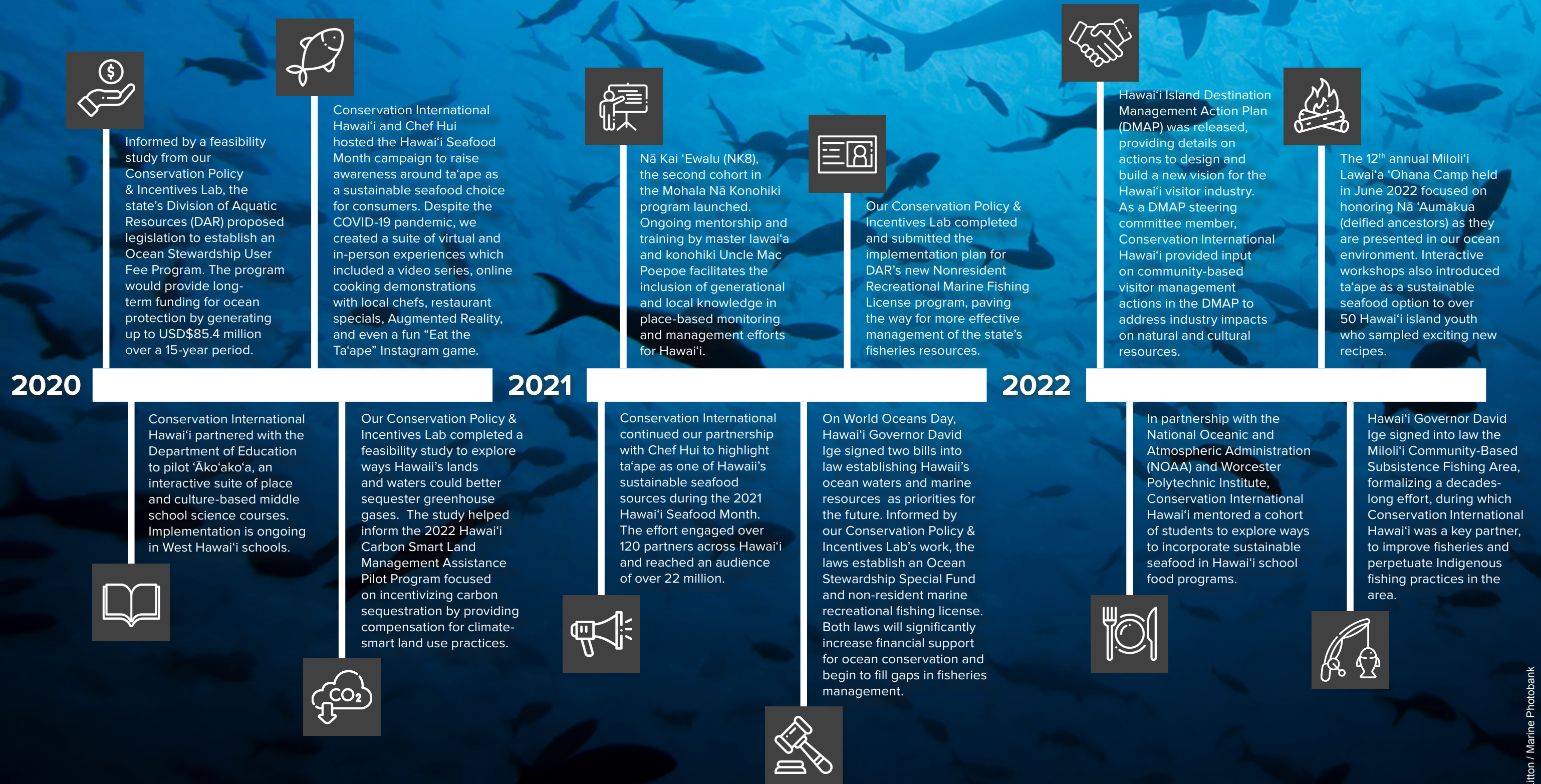
We are proud of the impact that our small team has had furthering engagement with the ocean stewardship community and the seafood industry, building and empowering ocean leadership. Without you, our partners, friends, and families in Hawaii'i, these achievements would not have been possible. Please join us in celebrating these successes as they are wins for all of Hawaii'i.

Thank you for being part of our 'ohana.

With gratitude,
Matt Ramsey



TIMELINE OF IMPACT





HIGHLIGHTS

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Eating the Invasives: The Ta'ape Project

In the 1950s and 60s, the bluestriped snapper was introduced to provide additional fishing opportunities and food sources for Hawai'i. Locally known as ta'ape, this introduced fish quickly became an invasive species, establishing themselves throughout the entire Hawaiian archipelago.

Starting in 2020, Conservation International Hawai'i teamed up with O'ahu-based nonprofit, Chef Hui, and over 120 fishers, chefs, and seafood businesses to show that eating ta'ape is a great – and tasty – way to boost local food security, support sustainable fishing, and decrease fishing pressure on native species.

Through virtual and in-person cooking and dining experiences, media outreach, and an ambassador chef program, this market-based approach is continually transforming an invasive species into wins for Hawai'i's people, economy, and environment.

While we are proud of this tremendous success, we are even more excited that this proven model can now be expanded to address other issues. Moving forward, we will be using this collaborative market-based model to address a local and global challenge: Exploring ways to turn seafood waste into valued food and products for local communities, such as promoting whole fish cooking techniques and fish leather products.

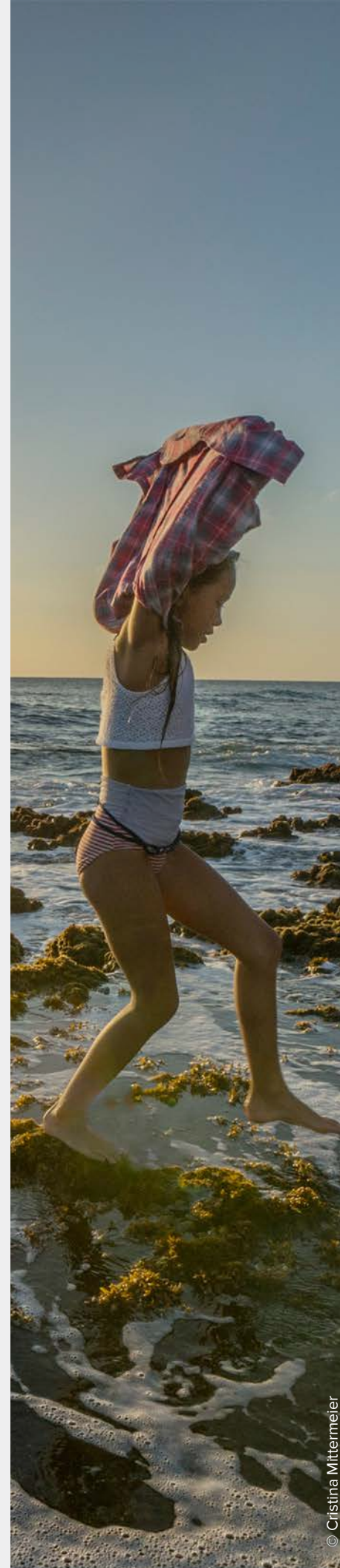


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Chef Mark "Gooch" Noguchi, co-founder and Executive Chef at Pili Group, and U.S. National Spearfishing Champion Kimi Werner show off their ta'ape catch. Conservation International Hawai'i and Chef Hui teamed up with a diversity of partners like Chef Gooch and Kimi to raise the profile of The Ta'ape Project.

Our efforts resulted in:

- >30** Ta'ape sourcing commitments
- 20%** Increase in statewide commercial ta'ape harvest
- 38%** Increase in ta'ape's market value
- 200%** Decrease in the amount of ta'ape released back into the ocean



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Creating a Long-Term Conservation Funding Model: Ocean Stewardship User Fee Program

In 2020, the State of Hawai'i contracted our Conservation Policy & Incentives Lab to develop a feasibility study for what would later be called an "Ocean Stewardship User Fee" program. The goal of the study was to explore ways that ocean tourism businesses might financially contribute to maintaining the marine ecosystems from which they profit. The study concluded that an Ocean Stewardship User Fee program had the potential to generate USD\$14.4 to \$85.4 million over a 15-year period.

Following the completion of the study, Hawai'i's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) submitted bills to the Hawai'i State Legislature proposing the creation of an Ocean Stewardship User Fee and a special fund for the collected fees. On World Oceans Day in June 2021, Hawai'i's Governor Ige signed the Ocean Stewardship bill into law, the first of its kind in the United States. This Stewardship program is projected to improve ocean management and long-term funding for ocean protection.

"Our oceans are under continuing threats from repeated coral bleaching events, pollution, marine debris, and unsustainable fishing practices," said DAR Administrator Brian Neilson. "The economic importance of ocean tourism requires a steady investment for critical marine management. The Ocean Stewardship Special Fund is a win-win for reefs, residents, visitors, and the economy across the state."

Through our Conservation Policy & Incentives Lab, Conservation International Hawai'i will continue to provide research and analysis support for DAR's design and implementation of the new Ocean Stewardship User Fee program, which will become effective in January 2024. We will provide similar support to advance the newly created non-resident recreational fishing license and other priority marine conservation approaches.



I ka wā ma mua, ka wā ma hope: The Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area

In August 2022, Conservation International Hawai'i joined the Miloli'i community to celebrate the Miloli'i Community-based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) as it was codified into law. The adoption of the CBSFA has resulted in improved protections for nearly 19 miles of coastline along the South Kona coast, making it the largest CBSFA in the state.

As a key partner in this 10+ year effort, Conservation International Hawai'i worked hand in hand with the community in their efforts to improve fisheries and perpetuate Indigenous fishing practices in the area. The Miloli'i CBSFA combines traditional Hawaiian fishing practices with modern approaches to conservation to protect and conserve fish populations, their habitats, and the communities that depend on them. This accomplishment illustrates a successful model of co-management by the lineal descendants of the area and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). During the CBSFA signing ceremony, Hawai'i Governor David Ige remarked, "Miloli'i is a shining example of how we can all work together for the benefit of our marine resources, our keiki and our kūpuna."

Conservation International Hawai'i will continue to stand with the Miloli'i Community and contribute to the vision of Aloha 'Āina ("love of the land") in and for Miloli'i.



Led by the Miloli'i 'Ohana of past and present, rules for the the Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area were formalized in August 2022 during a signing ceremony held at the heart of one of last remaining traditional fishing villages in Hawai'i.



Left: Hi'ilei Casco; Right: Ionatana "Tana" Tua

In collaboration with the Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law, two Native Hawaiian second-year law students were hired as interns to support research into the challenges and opportunities to protect and equitably share Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge in collaborative research relationships. Their foundational research is opening doors for tremendous opportunities to improve Indigenous partnerships and catalyze transformation across Hawai'i.



Fostering a Diversity of Conservation Leaders

Since 2020, Conservation International Hawai'i has developed several new opportunities and programs to cultivate ocean champions in critical areas of need: Indigenous knowledge, seafood, tourism, and law. By providing opportunities to learn from, participate in, and lead a diversity of ocean conservation efforts we fostered the development of over 40 passionate conservation leaders. In partnership with six universities and ten community partners, we were honored to host and mentor 22 undergraduate and law students and 21 seasoned community leaders to advance the understanding, use, and protection of Indigenous, traditional, and local marine knowledge, catalyze the creation of ocean conservation finance strategies, and explore solutions to island seafood security.

While these efforts were designed to create opportunities for leadership development, in many cases, we became learners. The students and community leaders not only advanced conservation efforts in Hawai'i, but also provided important insights on how we as a local and global organization can improve collaboration and equity in our engagements with communities in Hawai'i and throughout the globe.

MAHALO

Your support and partnership helps us create a healthy, productive and prosperous Hawai'i, now and into the future.



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