

**Hawaii CSP Wildlife Habitat Assessment for Tier III**

November 2005

Job Sheet**General Habitat Assessment**

Name: _____ Farm Unit(S): _____

WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT**Worksheet Instructions**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide a method for you to assess property under your control for the desired wildlife habitat type for this watershed. Wildlife habitat for this watershed could include: wetlands, riparian buffers, forest corridors, and streams. The questions will help you assess your operation for wildlife habitat. The assessment questions help determine whether your operation meets minimum CSP quality criteria for wildlife habitat. If you wish to be eligible for Tier III, your entire farm operation must meet the wildlife habitat quality criteria. This assessment is not required for Tier I or Tier II contracts.

If there is a perennial stream running through your operation, you must also complete the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (Short Version) for CSP Tier III eligibility. NRCS Field Office staff will be available to help you complete the on-site Stream Assessment.

In addition, NRCS field office staff will use ArcGIS to map critical habitat and threatened and endangered species (if present) on operation (See Hawaii NRCS Biology Technical Note No. 13—"Critical habitat for Endangered Species". If there are species present, their protection must be addressed to quality for Tier III.

Definitions of terms used and lists of species referenced in the questions are found at the end of the assessment. Areas of "contrasting vegetation" referred to must be contiguous with the offered acreage. It must be on the same tract as the offered acreage; adjoining lands may not be used to satisfy this requirement. The one exception to this is that if the adjacent land is under permanent protection (through public ownership or conservation easement) it may be used in the evaluation. The areas of contrasting vegetation should be under the control of the primary participant. If the areas are not under the control of the primary participant, the required conditions must still be met for every year of the contract.

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Cropland Habitat Assessment

Check "Yes" or "No" for each of the questions. If the identified habitat type is not present on the operation, mark N/A. All applicable questions must be marked "Yes" to meet the minimum quality criteria for wildlife habitat for Tier III.

Cropland Habitat (includes hay in rotation)		YES	NO	N/A
1	Do you maintain a minimum 35 foot buffer of vegetative cover on all stream reaches within the offered acres? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide photo documentation of this activity.</i>			
2	Do you maintain vegetative cover (minimum 35 feet wide and 18 inches tall) on at least 50% of the edges of irrigation conveyance ditches, canals, reservoirs, sumps, or other waterways? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide photo documentation of this activity.</i>			
3	Are at least 25% of your cropland acres flooded or have herbaceous or standing residual crop cover (>30% vertical cover) during non-cropped periods? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide photo documentation of this activity.</i>			
4	Is year-round drinking water available and accessible for wildlife on your property? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide description of accessibility.</i>			
5	Do your farming practices allow for the needs of federally and state listed threatened and/or endangered plant and animal species? (Examples: crop rotation of fields including fallowing, delayed harvest during nesting brooding and rearing periods, use of low impact chemical treatments or IPM.) <i>Evidence of this should be reflected in your baseline inventory description and schedule of operations. Identify the species protected by your activities.</i>			
6	If harvest or mowing activity occurs during the nesting season, is a flush bar or similar apparatus used on farming equipment? <i>If yes, describe the methods used to flush ground nesting birds.</i>			
7	On your farm, do you have undisturbed (unfarmed and not managed for agricultural production) vegetative cover interspersed with your cropland or situated along field borders totaling a minimum of 2% of total farm area? <i>If yes, describe these areas and identify them on the inventory map.</i>			
8	Do you avoid harvest or mowing activity at night? <i>If yes, this will be verified in the field by NRCS.</i>			
9	Are the streams on your property free of manmade barriers to fish passage? <i>If yes or not known, this will be verified in the field by NRCS.</i>			



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Pastureland and Rangeland Habitat Assessment

Check “Yes” or “No” for each or the questions. If the identified habitat type is not present on the operation, mark N/A. All applicable questions must be marked “Yes” to meet the minimum quality criteria for wildlife habitat for Tier III.

Pastureland and Rangeland Habitat		YES	NO	N/A
1	Grazing is by prescription with considerations for fish and wildlife resources (timing, duration, use, is planned and rotated, at least 10% of land is deferred from grazing during the nesting and rearing season)? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide supporting documentation of species managed in your grazing plan.</i>			
2	Do you maintain a minimum 35 foot buffer of vegetative cover on all stream reaches within the offered acres? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide photo documentation of this activity.</i>			
3	Do you manage wetland and riparian areas as separate grazing units to the benefit of fish and wildlife resources? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide supporting documentation of species managed in your grazing plan</i>			
4	Do you maintain vegetative cover (minimum 35 feet wide and 18 inches tall) on at least 50% of the edges of irrigation conveyance ditches, canals, reservoirs, sumps, or other waterways? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide photo documentation of this activity.</i>			
5	Is year-round drinking water available and accessible for wildlife on your property? <i>If yes, delineate these areas on your inventory map and provide description of accessibility.</i>			
6	Do your farming and ranching practices allow for the needs of federally and state listed threatened and/or endangered plant and animal species? (Examples: livestock exclusion for identified target species, delayed mowing/grazing during nesting and brooding periods, management of vegetative structure) <i>Evidence of this should be reflected in your baseline inventory description and schedule of operations. Identify the species protected by your activities.</i>			
7	If harvest or mowing activity occurs during the nesting season, is a flush bar or similar apparatus used on farming equipment? <i>If yes, describe the methods used to flush ground nesting birds.</i>			
8	Do you avoid harvest or mowing activity at night? <i>If yes, this will be verified in the field by NRCS.</i>			
9	Are the streams on your property free of manmade barriers to fish passage? <i>If yes or not known, this will be verified in the field by NRCS.</i>			



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Incidental and Other Land Uses

Check "Yes" or "No" for each or the questions. If the identified habitat type is not present on the operation, mark N/A. All applicable questions must be marked "Yes" to meet the minimum quality criteria for wildlife habitat for Tier III.

Incidental Areas (areas not used for crop or forage production)				
Answer the first three questions which apply to all incidental areas enrolled and areas used for contrasting vegetation, then answer the questions for specific types for the same areas, if applicable.				
All Incidental Areas		Yes	No	N/A
1	Are incidental areas protected from disturbance such as mowing or grazing between March 15 and August 1?			
2	Is less than 20% of the incidental area covered by species considered not desirable for wildlife? (see list)			
3	Do the incidental areas consist of a mixture of trees, shrubs and/or grasses or are there at least 4 different plant species present?			
Woodland Evaluate only woodlots that are at least 200 feet on each side and are not tree plantations.				
1	Are woodlands protected from grazing throughout the year?			
2	Is the woodland comprised of at least 2 native species with a diversity of sizes (e.g. saplings, large trees, snags?)			
Wetlands Evaluate only wetlands greater than 0.25 acres				
1	Are wetlands protected from direct surface runoff containing contaminants such as chemicals or livestock waste by diverting water or a permanent vegetation buffer at least 30 feet wide?			
2	Are wetlands not dominated by a single species such as California grass, cattail, or bulrush?			
Riparian Corridors Evaluate all perennial or intermittent streams flowing through the offered area				
1	Is there a permanent vegetated buffer (grass, shrubs or trees) at least 30 feet wide along all perennial streams?			
2	Are all streams protected from livestock through managed access to the stream?			

Definitions

Contrasting vegetation includes non-cropland cover such as field borders, windbreaks, woodland, vegetated stream/ditch banks, hedgerows or fence rows wider than 30 feet. Contrasting vegetation shall be undisturbed (not mowed, grazed, burned, etc.) until July 15 unless the disturbance is implemented as part of a wildlife plan. Contrasting vegetation shall consist of no more than 10% of the species listed as undesirable for wildlife.

Perennial stream – A water course with flowing water much of the year; does not include streams which flow only after precipitation events.

Snag – A dead standing tree or dead limb at least 10 feet long and 12 inches in diameter.

Undesirable Species for Wildlife – *Lantana camara* (lantana), *Clidemia hirta* (Koster's curse), *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Christmas berry), *Psidium cattleianum* (strawberry guava)

Certification Statement

The above other land information is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if requested, I can provide documentation to support the information provided above.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Certification of Review

I have reviewed this wildlife habitat assessment and the answers meet CSP enrollment criteria and are consistent with the farm records provided for review during the verification interview.

NRCS Representative: _____ Date: _____