In the late 1950's, when this writer first plunged
into Hawaiian wildlife management, life was so simple. "Ecosystems" were discussed mostly by professors of bi-
ology at the University of Hawai'i. Occasionally, a
visiting scientist would pursue his specialty in our
forests and prepare a paper on the importance of pro-
tecting the "unique Hawaiian biota." Few listened.
Government agencies were primarily concerned with
watershed protection to assure irrigation for agri-
culture, and with promoting commercial forestry, devel-
oping large State parks, and preventing the extinction
of large, obvious endangered species (the nene). Citi-
zen perception of natural resource management was that
it should lead to consumption or use. Zoologists, bot-
anists, malacologists, entomologists, and wildlife bi-
ologists, for the most part, were seen as oddball spe-
cialists with selfish professional motives.

Today, the word "ecology" is on the lips of aver-
age citizens, reporters, transients, and politicians.
(In the 1960's, a local Honolulu candidate for office
paraded a sign by the side of the road touting his pri-
mary qualification as an "ecologist".) Specialists in
the fields of mammalogy, water resources, arachnidolo-
gy, ornithology, and terrestrial ecosystems now abound
in our institutions. Environmental protection as a
concept permeates our Constitution, statutes, ordi-
nances, rules, regulations, and policies. Citizen so-
cieties for the preservation of the treasures of nature
have proliferated, and their representatives crowd the
legislative hearing rooms. Natural scientists are
honored by appointment to advisory boards and are inun-
dated with Environmental Impact Statements to review.
Things have become very complex.

With an enormous increase in our fund of informa-
tion about native ecosystems, the lists of endangered
species have grown longer, and a developer can barely
move without stirring up a bee's nest of protest. New
demands are being made upon the land, battering against
the walls of preservation zoning. Ordinary people are
beginning to see their lives affected by insect infes-
tations, contaminated water supplies, and crowded wil-
derness areas. The first terrestrial ecosystem recog-
nized by the State government in the form of a regula-
tion to protect it was the Alaka'i Wilderness Preserve
on Kaua'i in 1964. Since then, the Natural Area Re-
serve System has gobbled up the best parts of several
State forest reserves. Other pieces of relatively na-
tive biotic complexes have been declared wildlife or
plant sanctuaries, Nature Conservancy preserves, and
expansions of National Parks.

Confrontations (not yet violent) have developed
between academia, managers, administrators, and special
interest groups over the use (or non-use) of our wild
lands. Each group tends to perceive things in a vacuum
of idealism or inertia. Strange as it may seem, how-
ever, a hunter can find common ground with a vertebrate
zoologist, given a proper forum and time to communi-
cate. (I have actually seen it happen!) That is why
symposiums such as this one on "Hawai'i's Terrestrial
Ecosystems: Preservation and Management" are so impor-
tant. This is especially so if invited guests and
speakers include bureaucrats, middle-level managers,
educators, and interested citizens, and the forum al-
lowstime for discussion. For too long biologists have
talked only to their own professional kin about the
problems affecting our native biota. Government repre-
sentatives are often too busy with budgets, legislative
testimonies, and staff meetings to attend symposiums
which expound upon the plight of our beasties and
hibiscadelphuses.

A new trend in scientific gatherings has emerged
in recent years. Heretofore, most "papers" were
couched in classical formats, drawing weighty conclu-
sions based on the formula of: data = hypothesis =
experiment = theory = principle. Now the question is
being added, "So what?" "Recommendations for manage-
ment" now often appear in discussions at the end of
journal articles.

The present Symposium not only revealed some of
Mother Nature's most intimate secrets, but included
discussions on what's wrong with her garden and pets,
and suggested all of us get our act together to help
her out. The sessions included consideration of con-
servation strategies, recovery potential, preserve de-
sign, management-research coordination, agency roles,
legalities, incentives, cooperative planning, and
costs. Tools of terrestrial ecosystem preservation
were laid on the table as well. Look for repeated re-
commendations on restricting alien importations, and on
active management (as well as preservation), biological control, research, and public education. Administrators and managers had their day in court and provided insights into the realities of politics, budgets, priorities, and legal constraints.

This book should be read with a sense of wonder that a common ground was found upon which no blood was spilled. It bodes well for the practical solution of our most acute terrestrial ecosystem problems.

Honolulu, Hawaii

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