

WETLANDS AND
WETLAND VEGETATION
OF HAWAII

by

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Site 49. KANAHA POND

Kanaha Pond is an ancient Hawaiian fishpond which now serves as one of Hawaii's most important waterfowl refuges. It is located on the northeastern edge of Kahului, along the arid windward coast of Central Maui (Map 49). Rainfall here averages less than 10 in per year.

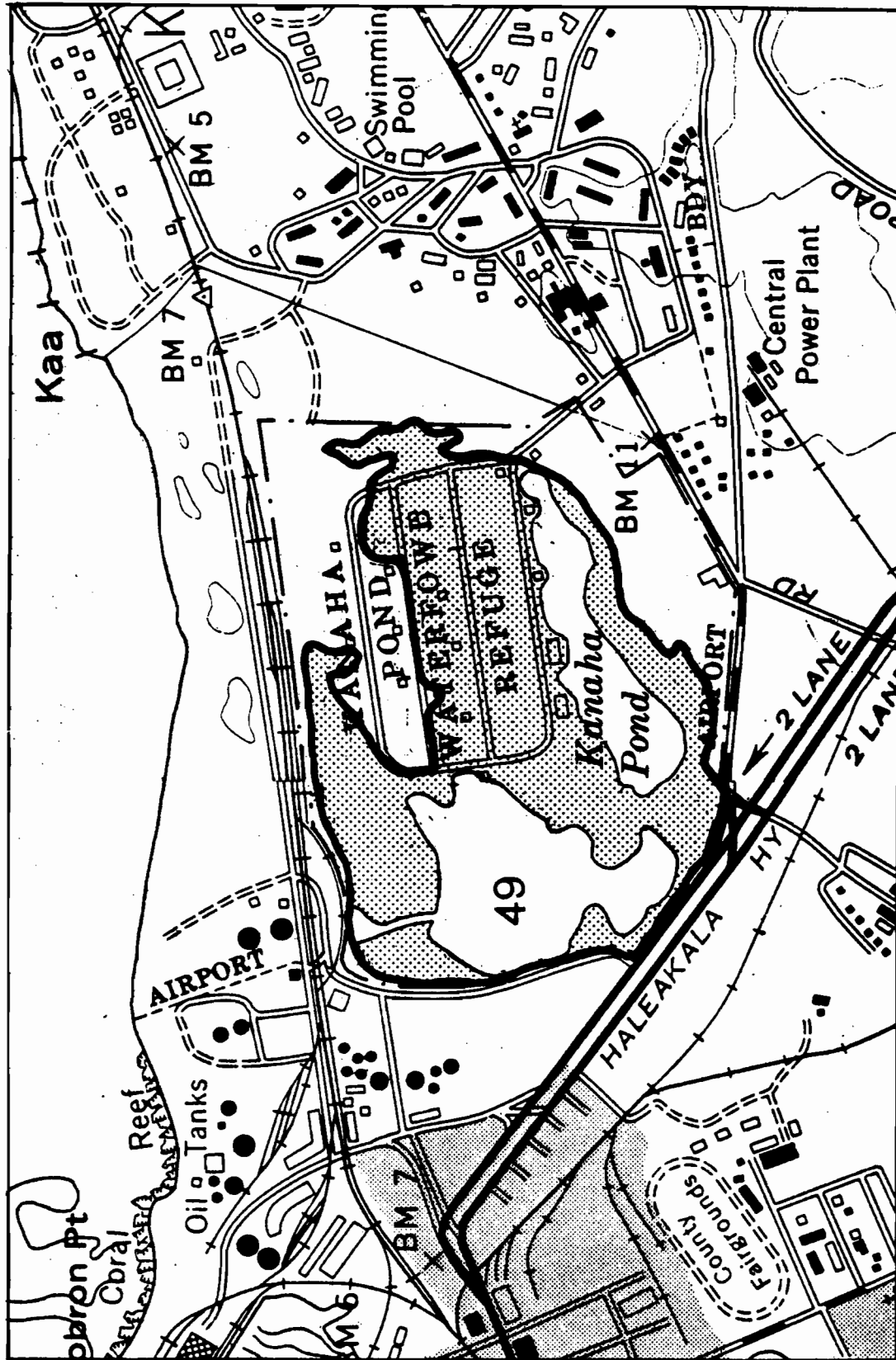
This spring-fed pond once occupied a much greater area than it does today. Its location between busy Kahului Harbor and Kahului Airport has influenced development of areas into commercial, industrial and, until recently, military land use. The remaining pond area is now a bird refuge under the jurisdiction of the Fish and Game Division of the State.

About half of the refuge area is covered by brackish pond waters, mudflats and marsh. The remaining area is by contrast very dry and is distributed along a network of dirt roads and abandoned ammunition storage bunkers. These were probably used by the Navy when they occupied Kanaha Pond during the war years. Vegetation along these dry roads and embankments is dominated by kiawe (Prosopis pallida) and ironwood (Casuarina equisetifolia) trees up to 30 ft tall. The highest concentration of these trees is along the northern edge of the bunker area.

Most of the pond's waters are fairly shallow, averaging about 1 ft. A moat-like channel with deeper water encircles almost the entire main pond. Its function is to discourage predatory animals from reaching birds feeding in the pond waters.

Marsh areas are scattered and differ somewhat in their vegetative cover (PLATE 41). Some are characterized by mudflats and salt deposits, Sporobolus virginicus, Cynodon dactylon and Sesuvium portulacastrum. Other areas include Cyperus laevigatus, Scirpus paludosus, S. californicus and S. validus. Pluchea indica shrubs commonly occur on marsh edges. Table 49 lists those plants found in the marshy areas of Kanaha. It does not include vegetation restricted to the dry embankments and non-marshy areas.

Although a reserve, the future status of this pond is not totally secure because of the proximity of human populations and urban activity. Alteration of the wildlife habitat is possible through any form of pollution, development, or lowering of the water table. Over half of the total Hawaiian stilt population makes its home in this area. Hundreds of other birds, including other native waterfowl such as the Hawaiian coot, and non-native migratory species, depend on this area as a natural habitat.



Map 49. Kanaha Pond (Wailuku/Paia Quadrangles).

Scale = 1:12,000

Table 49. SPECIES LIST FOR KANAHA POND, MAUI (Site 49)

		<u>Cover</u>	<u>Abundance</u>
MONOCOTYLEDONAE			
CYPERACEAE			
** <u>Cyperus</u>	<u>laevigatus</u>	Makaloa	2 A
** <u>Scirpus</u>	<u>californicus</u>	Great bulrush	1 O
** <u>Scirpus</u>	<u>paludosus</u>	Makai	1 O
** <u>Scirpus</u>	<u>validus</u>	Great bulrush	1 R
GRAMINEAE			
<u>Cynodon</u>	<u>dactylon</u>	Bermuda grass	3 V
** <u>Paspalum</u>	<u>vaginatum</u>	Seashore paspalum	2 V
* <u>Sporobolus</u>	<u>virginicus</u>	Beach dropseed	2 A
PALMAE			
<u>Phoenix</u>	sp.	Date palm	1 R
DICOTYLEDONAE			
ACANTHACEAE			
<u>Thunbergia</u>	<u>erecta</u>	Bush thunbergia	1 R
AIZOACEAE			
* <u>Sesuvium</u>	<u>portulacastrum</u>	Sea purslane	1 O
AMARANTHACEAE			
<u>Chenopodium</u>	<u>oahuense</u>	'Aheahea	1 R
ANACARDIACEAE			
<u>Schinus</u>	<u>terebinthifolius</u>	Christmas berry	1 R
CHENOPODIACEAE			
<u>Atriplex</u>	<u>semibaccata</u>	Australian salt bush	1 R
COMPOSITAE			
* <u>Pluchea</u>	<u>indica</u>	Indian pluchea	1 O
* <u>Pluchea</u>	<u>odorata</u>	Pluchea	1 R
CONVOLVULACEAE			
<u>Ipomoea</u>	<u>brasilensis</u>	Beach morning glory	1 R
LEGUMINOSAE			
<u>Prosopis</u>	<u>pallida</u>	Kiawe	1 O
SCROPHULARIACEAE			
** <u>Bacopa</u>	<u>monniera</u>	Water hyssop	1 O

** Obligate species

* Faculative species

1 = <5% cover; 2 = 5-25%; 3 = 26-50%; 4 = 51-75%; 5 = 76-100%

R = Rare; O = Occasional; F = Frequent; A = Abundant; V = Very abundant