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Close encounters of the feral swine

Rosanna M. Vail, Jack H. Berryman Institute, Department of Wildland Resources, Utah State University, 5230 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-5230, USA *rosanna.vail@usu.edu*

It was late one night on the island of Kauai, and I was fresh with the freedom of a driver's license. Leaving an event with a friend as my passenger, I drove at the speed of island life on a street we had traveled a thousand times. On a downhill slope, dimly lit, at a sharp curve quite dangerous even by day, the headlights shone on 2 huge masses in the road. I slammed on the brakes of my family's Ford Escort. At a dead stop, shaken up, and grateful to not be rear-ended, we sat and waited—2 teenage girls at a near-collision with 2 enormous wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) blocking the dark road. What a way to miss curfew.

Although such encounters are rare in the daily lives of most locals, wild pigs are among the most abundant invasive large vertebrate species in the Hawaiian Islands, causing damage to native vegetation and island ecosystems (Hess et al. 2020). Yet, the origin story of this species in the islands has only recently been unfolding. Studies linked genetic markers of Hawaiian wild pigs to smaller pig species of Polynesian ancestry, indicating that Polynesian voyagers rather than Captain James Cook introduced pigs to the Hawaiian Islands several centuries earlier than originally thought (Linderholm et al. 2016). Over time, the Polynesian pig, called *pua'a*, "repeatedly interbred with multiple varieties of domestic swine, Asiatic wild boar, and European wild boar introduced by explorers and colonists beginning in the 1770s" (Hess et al. 2020, 405). The pigs grew larger in another way, too—with each retelling of my story from that dark and dangerous night.

Today, the history of the wild pig in Hawaii intertwines with its cultural significance, which can both inform and complicate wildlife management practices. Lohr et al. (2014) examined perceptions of wild pigs and other game species among Hawaii residents from 6 islands. Although pig hunting is common and pig consumption is part of Hawaiian tradition, respondents in non-hunter groups across all islands generally wanted pig abundance to decrease. Respondents also assigned varying levels of cultural value to pigs and other species in the study. This variability indicates a need for localized management approaches (Lohr et al. 2014). Additional human dimensions research focused on discrete island communities can further facilitate balanced management plans.

The specificity of wildlife management in Hawaii, and further, on Kauai, led me to wonder: how can wildlife professionals achieve a greater balance of effective management and localized values and opinions going forward? To what extent are academic curriculums or professional development trainings adapting to address sociocultural factors in the wildlife profession? How can multiple voices, each with something at stake, cohere toward end goals of species management and positive human–wildlife interactions and perceptions that hold equal weight with a culturally conscious process of getting there? I approach these questions from outside the field of wildlife management myself, but with an eye on the intersection of those who know the management strategies and those who connect the culture. At such a complex intersection, the possibility of collision will always require quick and careful maneuvering.

Because I connect to both my island upbringing and my editorial role with *Human–Wildlife Interactions*, I am especially excited about the journal's upcoming special issue on island invaders (see call for papers in this issue). The research and management, spanning islands around the world, will help amplify localized approaches far beyond their points of origin. I am proud of how the small and often marginalized places of this earth can be sites of such meaningful and influential contributions to wildlife management. Such a field has seemingly endless human–wildlife conflicts to address, but as a popular Hawaiian saying goes: *'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia*—"no task is too big when done together by all."

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Rosanna M. Vail was born and raised on Kauai and is the managing editor of *Human–Wildlife Interactions*. She has a B.A. degree in English from Southern Oregon University, M.S. degree in technical communication from Utah State University, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. degree in technical communication and rhetoric from Texas Tech University with research interests in the rhetoric of science. Her professional background also includes >12 years in marketing communications.

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