MEMORANDUM

To:      Dr. Christopher A. Lepczyk
            Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management

From:    Dr. Robert H. Cowie
            Chair, Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology (EECB) graduate specialization

Date:    1 April 2008

Re:      Proposed course in Wildlife Ecology and Management

Thank you for contacting me about this proposed course. The EECB program has as one of its goals the integration of basic science (ecology and evolution) into the management of biodiversity (conservation). At present, while many students address questions in ecology and evolution with conservation very much part of the agenda driving their research, there is little explicit application of that research to on-the-ground conservation action.

Also, while courses are available in the three contributing disciplines of EECB, which of course overlap with each other, there is no course that explicitly addresses the application of research and basic knowledge to management of wildlife from a conservation perspective. This is a gaping hole in instruction at the University of Hawaii, especially inasmuch as the University is located in arguably one of the places that from a global perspective is most in need of active conservation management. Hawaii is known equally as the endangered species capital of the world and the invasive species capital of the world. Yet the University does not train people in the area of biodiversity or wildlife management.

Your proposed course, which looks to be at the same time comprehensive, profound, challenging and vital, will be a major step forward in placing the University where it should be in the training of the conservation managers of the future. Hawaii is an ideal location to teach such a course, and Hawaii has a serious and growing need for such well-trained individuals.

I am sure that many EECB students would be interested in the course, and while at present it is proposed at the 400 level, where it will have a huge impact on graduate level education in this area, if it were developed in the future to be offered at the 600 level, and thus eligible to fulfill EECB graduate course requirements, I think it could also have a major impact at the graduate level.

I support this exciting initiative wholeheartedly and hope that you succeed in getting your proposed course accepted.