

The ‘Ohana pages

Welcome to the Hawaiian Airlines family. On these pages you’ll find out what’s new with our ‘ohana and learn about our efforts to support a wide variety of community causes.



Tor Johnson

Working through Conservation Dogs Hawai‘i, Kyoko Johnson trains volunteer handlers and their dogs to sniff out a variety of invasive pests. Here she works with a dog in the Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge on Kaua‘i.

Detection Dogs

Canines—or specifically, their noses—have long been used to detect everything from airport contraband to a variety of early-stage human diseases. Now, Island conservationists are training dogs to help weed out invasive species. The preservation initiative is led by Conservation Dogs of Hawai‘i (CDH), an O‘ahu-based nonprofit founded in 2018 by Kyoko Johnson.

Johnson got her start training dogs for conservation detection after being called upon to help find and monitor endangered seabirds and bats on O‘ahu’s wind farms. Since its inception, CDH has trained thirty dog-handler teams throughout the state to find everything from devil-weed to melon flies, mongooses and rodents. “Dogs are very effective searchers and elevate the accuracy of our monitoring efforts,” says Johnson. “Many dogs already have the stamina and drive to do this type of work, and

the owners who approach us want to contribute to the cause while doing something fun with their pet.”

Hawaiian Airlines is supporting CDH’s work by sponsoring its Neighbor Island flights throughout 2021—including to Kaua‘i, where it is assisting the Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge. “Our focus has been on training and certifying dog-handler teams who will then help the refuge conduct surveys to prevent or curb avian botulism, a disease that can affect the native waterbirds that live there,” Johnson explained, while noting that detection dogs are also highly effective ambassadors.

“People stop us in the field all the time to ask what we’re doing. It gives us opportunities [to talk about] how they can help us protect the environment.” To learn more about CDH’s work, visit conservationdogshawaii.org.