



PUBLIC NOTICE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District

Regulatory Branch (CEPOH-RO)
230 Otake Street
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440

Public Notice Date: August 30, 2024

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE CORAL ECOLOGICAL SERVICES AND FUNCTIONS ASSESSMENT TOOL (CAT) FOR THE STATE OF HAWAII

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District Regulatory Office (Corps) announces the availability of the Coral Ecological Services and Functions Assessment Tool (CAT) for the state of Hawaii. The Corps Regulatory Program involves the regulation of discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (WOTUS) and structures or work in navigable waters of the United States, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, respectively. Activities in waters of the U.S. that require a Corps permit include the incorporation and implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures intended to reduce adverse environmental impacts resulting from the proposed activity. For unavoidable impacts, compensatory mitigation may be required to offset the loss of waters of the U.S., special aquatic sites and/or other aquatic resource functions. For projects that impact corals, the CAT would assist the Corps in determining the appropriate form and amount of compensatory mitigation required.

The CAT is a modified version of the State of Hawaii's Coral Assessment Tool and is available for public use when coral loss is unavoidable to aid in coral remediation efforts. The CAT was first developed over ten years ago by the State of Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) coral expert, Dr. David Gulko. Dr. Gulko and The U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) have modified and adapted the CAT for use by the Corps' Regulatory Program. The goal of the CAT is to provide a numeric value of the ecological worth of individual corals that would be impacted by a proposed activity. The Corps can then use this value to assess the need for avoidance, minimization, and/or compensation to offset the loss of impacted corals.

To accomplish this, the CAT calculates a coral Ecological Characterization Value (ECV) using three variables: the species of coral for each colony impacted, the size of each colony impacted, and the type of sub-habitat (i.e., substrate) each colony occurs on. When calculating the ECV, users can assess if proposed actions would increase or decrease impacts to corals and determine appropriate minimization or mitigation measures.

This specific version of the CAT is only for activities in waters of the U.S. within the state of Hawaii. In the future, the Corps plans to release additional versions of the

tool for use in other regions of the Honolulu District's Area of Responsibility, such as Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

The CAT, the CAT user manual, and additional resources will be available online at <https://www.poh.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/>

The Corps will be beta testing the CAT for one year and will accept comments and feedback from the public at the end of that period. Comments may be submitted via email to CEPOH-RO@usace.army.mil.

For additional information on the Hawaii CAT, please contact:
Ms. Kirsten Lara, (808) 835-4307, Kirsten.F.Lara@usace.army.mil
Ms. Melody White, (503) 808-4385, Melody.J.White@usace.army.mil

For information about the Corps permitting process, please visit our website <https://www.poh.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Permits/> or contact the Honolulu District Regulatory Office via email at CEPOH-RO@usace.army.mil