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For Immediate Release

Inaugural Maunakea Speakers Series Begins Thursday, February 9 in Hilo

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute Senior Scientist Presents “Birds of Paradise Lost”

Hilo, Hawaii (February 6, 2017)—The Office of Maunakea Management (OMKM), in collaboration with 'Imiloa Astronomy Center and University of Hawai'i at Hilo Department of Physics & Astronomy, is launching a new monthly lecture series giving community members unprecedented access to scholars and their knowledge-based work. The Maunakea Speakers Series brings scholars to Hilo to present on diverse subjects including fauna, biodiversity, climate change, botany, geophysics and other topics; all components of the immense resource diversity found on Maunakea.

“Our intent is to provide thought-provoking lectures and presentations while deepening our collective knowledge and understanding of the resources on Maunakea and strengthening educational opportunities —goals we all share,” said OMKM Director Stephanie Nagata.

Birds of Paradise Lost: Evolution, Extinction and Conservation of Hawai'i's Birds

The first program under the Maunakea Speaker Series kicks off with a one-hour presentation, *Birds of Paradise Lost: Evolution, Extinction and Conservation of Hawaii's Birds* by Dr. Rob Fleischer, Senior Scientist, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, National Zoological Park. Dr. Fleischer will discuss Hawai'i's native birds and how he and his colleagues use DNA methods to study evolutionary relationships, population genetics, diet, and the impacts and mitigation of introduced disease.

Dr. Fleischer's Smithsonian research involves application of DNA and genetic analyses to studies in conservation, evolution and animal behavior. His research often focuses on the use of DNA and genetics to document changes in genetic variation and to study the evolutionary interactions between hosts, vectors and infectious disease organisms (such as introduced avian malaria in native Hawaiian birds).

The Birds of Paradise Lost presentation will be held on Thursday, February 9 from 7:00 to 8:00 pm at the UH Hilo Science & Technology Building auditorium (Room 108) and is free and open to interested community members. On-campus parking is available without charge.

The Maunakea Speaker Series is a monthly scholar-focused presentation in partnership with the Office of Maunakea Management, 'Imiloa Astronomy Center and the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Department of Physics & Astronomy. For more information visit malamamaunakea.org or call 808-933-0734.

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About Office of Maunakea Management

The Office of Maunakea Management is charged with day-to-day management of Mauna Kea Science Reserve as prescribed in the Master Plan. The adoption of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve Master Plan by the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents in June 2000 marked a critical milestone in the management of Maunakea.

Meetings and public hearings spanning a period of nearly two years went into the formulation of the Master Plan, which established management guidelines for the next 20 years. The Master Plan reflected the community's deeply rooted concerns over the use of Maunakea, including respect for Hawaiian cultural beliefs, protection of environmentally sensitive habitat, recreational use of the mountain, and astronomy research.

It places the focus of responsibility locally with the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. The UH-Hilo Chancellor established the Office of Maunakea Management and the Board of Regents established the Maunakea Management Board in the fall of 2000. The Maunakea Management Board in turn formed Kahu Kū Mauna, a council comprised of Hawaiian cultural resource persons to serve as advisors.

The mission of the Office of Maunakea Management is to achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Maunakea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.