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The Project to Save the Hawaiian Bat

In the summer of 1988, the Honolulu Chapter of the Sierra Club formed the "Save the 'Ope'ape'a Project." Lead by BCI member Gary Andersen, who is Chairman of the Sierra Club's Honolulu Executive Committee, the group has accomplished a great deal in its first year. This spring both houses of the Hawaiian legislature passed a resolution recommending a census of the rare Hawaiian bat and development of a protection and recovery plan. The resolution also called for a public education program. Andersen has gathered strong support from the Hawaiian House and Senate to sponsor legislation to designate funds for the plan.

In the meantime, Gary Andersen has been conducting his own education campaign and lectures about the plight of the Hawaiian bat to enthusiastic audiences several times a month. His bat program for the general membership of the Hawaiian Sierra Club drew the largest audience in several years. His activities have gained local media attention in newspapers and on radio and television.

The "Save the □Ope'ape'a Project" has also begun enlisting volunteers on the island of O'ahu to determine the range of the rare bat, using visual sightings as well as bat detectors. Last summer one was seen on Mt. Tantalus, a forested area outside Honolulu, the first such sighting on the island. Another group is forming on the island of Maui to try to detect the bat's presence there. These preliminary surveys will be helpful in gathering information for a protection and recovery plan.

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