

## **Full-Lesson #14: Hawaiian Wildlife in Local Culture**

### **Overview of Outcomes**

Students will be prompted to consider the importance of Hawaiian wildlife in modern culture and society. Plants and animals in Hawaii have often been associated with certain characteristics which make them appealing as ‘aumakua or as mascots for schools and other organizations. This activity will delve into the reasons behind the reverence for certain animals. Students will be asked to consider their school’s mascot, or any sort of animal or plant that is associated with a particular social group. What are the qualities of that organism? Why would it be chosen to represent that organization? Is the species endemic to the Hawaiian Islands? If so, does it have a Hawaiian name, and does that name carry any sort of connotations? If an animal or plant is chosen as a family’s ‘aumakua, how should that family honor and protect that particular species?

### **Materials**

In-class reading: “*The ‘Aumakua – Hawaiian Ancestral Spirits*” by Herb Kane (Hawai‘i Division of Aquatic Resources) (pp. 148-149)

### **Activity Directions**

- 1) Teachers will begin class with a brief overview of the lesson topic (< 5 minutes) and hand out copies of the reading to students. Students will be given 5-10 minutes to complete the reading.
- 2) After finishing the reading, students will discuss the topic with their classmates in small groups. (~15 minutes) To organize discussion, teachers may wish to distribute a worksheet/table for students to address key talking points (e.g. “do you know anyone with a family ‘aumakua?”, “what is the significance of ‘aumakua to Hawaiian families?”, “why do we have mascots for groups like sports teams and schools?”)
- 3) Teachers will reorganize the class to discuss highlights from the small group discussions. They may wish to talk about the significance of their own school’s mascot, or have students with family ‘aumakua speak to the class about their perceptions and beliefs regarding ‘aumakua.