

THE ROLE OF PUPPETS
IN PRESERVING NATIVE HAWAIIAN ECOSYSTEMS*

Dina Kageler, Jo Diotalevi, Kate Schuerch, Kay Fuller
Puppets on the Path
P.O. Box 810
Volcano, Hawaii 96785

Puppets on the Path is an environmental education performing troupe comprised of four women and approximately 30 puppets. Through the use of original songs, rhymes, puppet characters, and humor, the group teaches the natural history of Hawai'i. Geological processes, competition between native and introduced plants and animals, and the fate of endangered species are among the topics dramatized by the troupe.

Puppets on the Path has performed statewide for more than three years, and has reached an audience of more than 75,000 children and adults. While performing under sponsorship of the Hawai'i State Department of Education and Aloha Airlines, the troupe has toured O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui, and the Big Island. In addition to presentations to preschool and elementary school audiences, the group has also performed for adult and family audiences at museums and shopping centers and for conservation organizations.

The scientific community in Hawai'i is the source of information for Puppets on the Path, both through published works as well as through personal communications from supporting scientists. Puppets on the Path depends on scientists for subject matter information and provides scientists a conservation voice. It is through this blending of the arts and sciences that Puppets on the Path is able to reflect the natural history of Hawai'i in a way both playful and accurate.

*ABSTRACT