

HAWAII



LEE
CATALUNA HS-A

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The silver lining in this very dark cloud

Folks must be reaching up into the cobwebby garage rafters and digging into backyard storage sheds to retrieve long-idle fishing gear, because fishermen are out on the shorelines, looking busy and looking happy.

Maybe it's part of the recent turning back to old subsistence ways, like victory gardens and homemade bread and brushing up on sewing skills to make cloth masks.

Maybe it's just a ruse to be able to stand on the beach without Kirk Caldwell coming by and yelling at you to get off the sand.

But certainly part of the reason so many Oahu residents are out fishing along the beaches is because they can. If you were to drive around the island just to take a look at what Oahu is like without approximately 226,000 visitors a day, you'd see people fishing where there usually isn't room for a scoop net, let alone a pole and a line. (According to Gov. Ige's most recent proclamation, people can fish for food, but no groups of two or more people can fish together unless they're all part of the same household.)

And there's another old-fashioned thing you can do now: You can take a leisurely ride around the island. You can pack up the kids and go holoholo like in the old days when there weren't regular weekend traffic jams and hundreds of rental cars parked haphazardly on the shoulders around beach parks. You can stop by a local plate lunch place, buy some takeout food while obeying social distancing and have a picnic in the car under the tree. (You can't park at the beach under the current

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rules, but you can park outside the parking lot on the grass, apparently.)

If you were to holoholo around the island, you would see things you haven't seen in decades. Hawaii residents are enjoying the ocean. If you think everyone is at home on the couch, you should (safely) get outside and look around. People who live here are in the water in Waikiki and paddling around Kailua Beach and reveling in the

uncrowded waves at Sandy Beach and Makapuu. Even the water looks relieved of a burden, somehow more sparkling and blue.

Maybe enough time has passed and it's OK to say it out loud now, though certainly many are already thinking it: This terrible time has quite a silver lining, and Hawaii is really nice without the weight of 10 million visitors a year. It's like the Hawaii of generations ago. Ironically, it's like the image of Hawaii that is sold to tourists to get them to come here, because naturally, the ads never show the reality of

traffic and packed beaches.

Community spread is being controlled by all of us good citizens doing our part, which we have proved we can do. The uncontrolled danger now is the virus flying in on a plane or cruising in on a ship.

Hawaii could open up more safely if it didn't mean opening the state to an influx of travelers. Hawaii could get back to business much sooner if Hawaii's main business weren't tourism.

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