

## Student Reading

# Lupe Kia'i Nui

The konohiki of He'eia Fishpond asked the help of the stingrays that lived at Kekepa island near Mōkapu to watch over his pond. He paddled his canoe to the island and prayed to the god of the hīhīmanu (stingrays) to help him protect the fish in his pond.

"Oh hīhīmanu akua, I need you to help save my crop of 'ama'ama (mullet). The kākū (barracuda) and 'aihue loko (pond robbers) are stealing all my fish. I will do anything to get your help."

The hīhīmanu akua replied. "I want you to promise me that your fishpond will always be a fishpond and will be a fishpond for your children and for their children and for their children forever."

"Ae, 'ae," the konohiki answered. The super-watching stingray Lupe Kia'i Nui then pulled the konohiki in the canoe back to the



pond by flying in the sky like a kite. The kite string made of olonā was over a mile long.

Lupe Kia'i Nui then made his home near the mākāhā. From this spot, he could watch the fishpond walls and all that happened inside the pond. He could swiftly fly to any spot when he sensed a predator or intruder. If there were many intruders or predators, he would call to his friends at Kekepa for help. Lupe Kia'i Nui would kill and eat the predators such as the kākū. If human pond robbers were seen, he would slash them to death with his tail.

To this day, He'eia Fishpond is still a fishpond, so the konohiki kept his word. At times during the year, the waters of the pond will sparkle and glow in the night as it is whipped and lashed by the legendary hīhīmanu chasing the kākū.



Summarized from Sterling, Elspeth P. and Catherine C. Summers. 1978. *Sites of Oahu*.