

*Thursday's
Drop off*

Tourism officials fret over downturn

Industry leaders are rushing to address a worrisome drop in the top-spending markets

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The state's top tourism official said yesterday that she is "very concerned" about a 5.7 percent decline in January visitor arrivals and that the boom portion of the visitor industry's cycle might be over.

The new numbers are a sign that the visitor industry's once frenetic pace, characterized last year by difficulties for tourists getting flights or hotel rooms, has slowed, said State Tourism liaison Marsha Wienert.

January visitor numbers released yesterday by the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism were small enough to prompt some members of the visitor industry to call them a harbinger of challenging times to come.

While DBEDT statistics showed that arrivals from Hawaii's top visitor market, the western states, rose 1.4 percent

ISLE VISITOR ARRIVALS

The number of visitors arriving in Hawaii in January with the percentage change from the same month last year:

	VISITORS	PCT.
Domestic	399,952	-2.4%
International	161,739	-13.0%
Total	561,691	-5.7%

BY ISLAND

Oahu	348,147	-4.6%
Kauai	97,972	+8.2%
Lanai	7,490	+7.5%
Maui	186,220	-4.3%
Molokai	5,966	-16.3%
Big Island	129,314	+1.5%

Source: Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

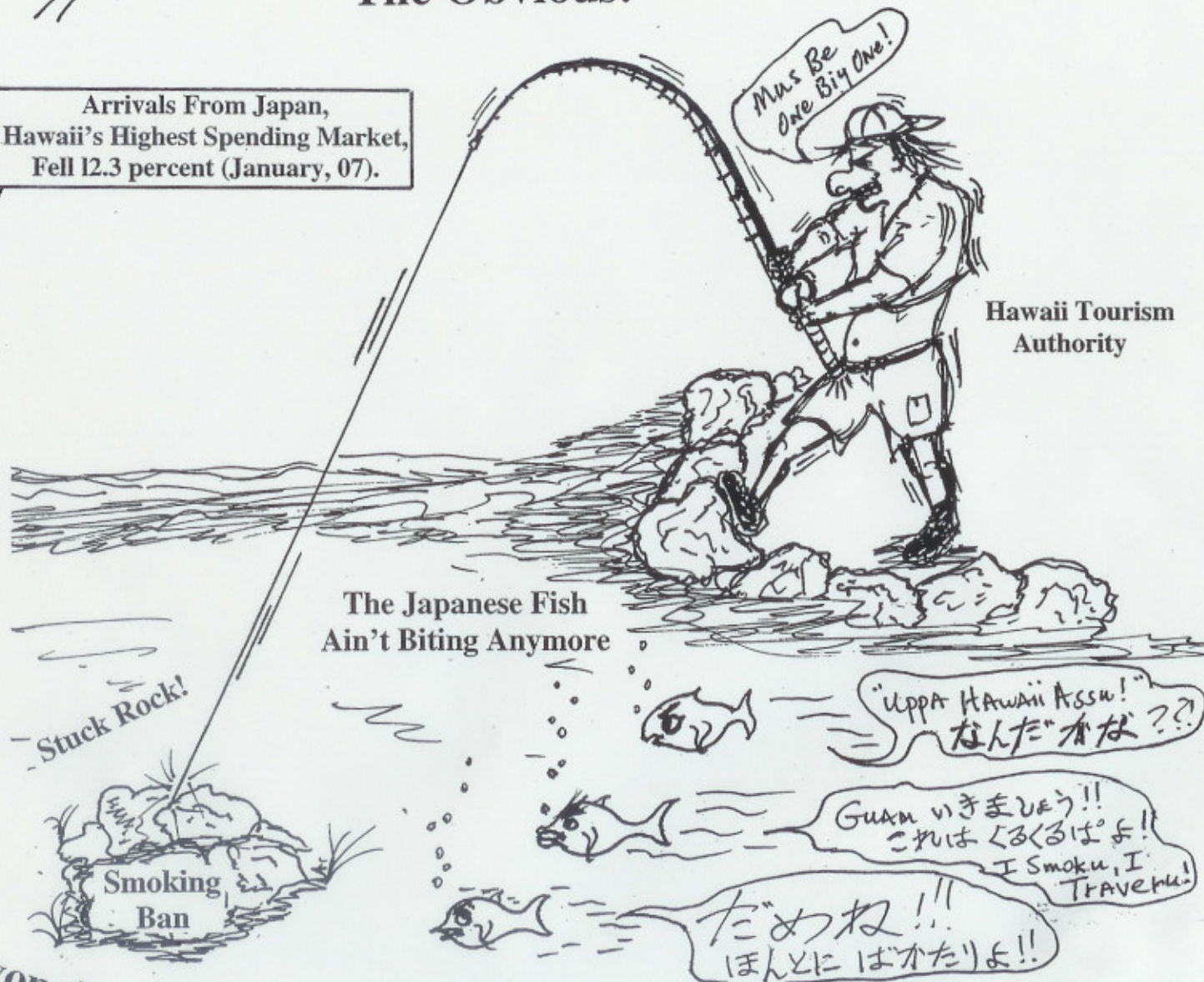
In January, arrivals from the more sought-after U.S. East market fell 9 percent, and arrivals from Japan, Hawaii's highest-spending market, fell 12.3 percent.

"There's no question that the drop in the U.S. East and Japan markets is concerning," Wienert said, adding that the Hawaii Tourism Authority has sent staff to Japan to take stock of the

Please see Tourism, A6

Ignoring The Obvious!

Arrivals From Japan, Hawaii's Highest Spending Market, Fell 12.3 percent (January, 07).



The Japanese Fish Ain't Biting Anymore

Exemptions For Bars, Anyone?



Ban the Ban