



Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale



Habitats

Humpback whale breeding, calving, & nursing grounds

Coral reefs

Sandy substrate

Key Species

Humpback whale

Spinner dolphin

Hawaiian Monk seal

False killer whale

Green sea turtle

Reef fish

Coral

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale

National Marine Sanctuary lies within the shallow (less than 600 feet), warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands and constitutes one of the world's most important humpback whale habitats. Scientists estimate that two-thirds of the entire North Pacific humpback whale population migrate to Hawaiian waters each winter to engage in breeding, calving, and nursing activities. The continued protection of humpback whales and their habitat is crucial to the long-term recovery of this endangered species.

Research Activities

The sanctuary serves as an important laboratory for natural scientists seeking to better understand Hawai'i's marine resources. The sanctuary supports whale research and long-term monitoring to improve our understanding about social behaviors, population dynamics, habitat requirements, and impacts from natural and human factors on humpback whales.

Education Activities

Educational activities are an essential part of the sanctuary operations. Classroom and shipboard presentations, educational displays, kiosks, and videos all generate interest in the community. A sanctuary Web site, brochures, pamphlets, and poster contest are other ways citizens participate in sanctuary activities.



Location

Within the 100-fathom isobath in the four-island area of Maui; Penguin Bank, and off the north shore of Kauai, the north and south shores of Oahu, and Kohala coastline off the Big Island.

Protected Area
1,370-square miles

Designation
November 1992

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Above: A mother and calf humpback whale; left to right: breaching whale; community event at Maui sanctuary office; diving humpback whale



NMFS Permit #822

