

# KOHOLĀ CONNECTION

THE VOICE OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS HUMPBACK WHALE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

SUMMER 2010

## State of the Sanctuary

Management Plan Review Special Edition



NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARIES

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS  
HUMPBACK WHALE



# KOHOLĀ CONNECTION

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## Aloha, e komo mai!

Welcome to the special edition of the Kohola Connection magazine. This issue will provide readers with an overview of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and its programs and accomplishments over the past several years.

Nearly two decades have passed since the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was created to protect humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i. Through inspired partnerships, the sanctuary has developed and implemented programs focusing on resource protection, research, education and community outreach.

By reflecting on the sanctuary's past and current programs, we answer the question "What have we done?" It is timely to now ask, "Where do we want to go from here?" Eighteen years later, we face a new generation of opportunities and concerns, along with an increasing number of new and emerging environmental issues that challenge our ability to protect and conserve our fragile island resources. Communities across our state are concerned about the need to protect the waters and coasts that surround our island home, and they have come to recognize the additional benefits that a national marine sanctuary can provide.

In order to address these questions, NOAA and the state of Hawai'i are embarking on a process that provides communities with an opportunity to collectively determine the preferred long-term future of how the sanctuary might evolve to help meet the marine resource protection needs of Hawai'i over the next 15 to 20 years and beyond. The management plan review will provide an opportunity for a public discussion on the current assessment of the marine environment in Hawai'i.

To begin the process, public information meetings were held across the state to gather input to inform a shared future vision of the sanctuary. Within these pages, we present a proposed vision of the sanctuary and a series of questions that we are asking the public to comment on during the 90-day public comment period which includes a series of statewide public scoping meetings.

In this special edition, we invite you to learn more about the management plan review the sanctuary is undertaking to assess its current programs and how you can get involved in shaping its future.

Together we will work towards creating a future that honors our rich ocean and cultural heritage.

Mālama pono,

**Allen Tom and David Nichols**

*Inā mālama 'oe i ke kai, mālama no ke kai iā 'oe*

If you care for the ocean, the ocean will care for you





Paulo Maurin

## WHAT IS A MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW?

- A management plan is a site-specific document that guides current and future sanctuary operations at an individual sanctuary.
- Each national marine sanctuary is required by law to periodically review and update their management plans. This process, known as a management plan review, takes several years to complete and results in a new management plan for the sanctuary.
- Management plan review is a way to keep the sanctuary relevant and up-to-date with ongoing and evolving issues in the ocean community.

### Guiding Principles for the Management Plan Review

- The management plan review will be conducted in an open and transparent process.
- All voices, whether from an individual or an organization, will have an opportunity to provide input into this process.
- Native Hawaiian perspectives and values will be incorporated into resource management strategies and actions.
- Management strategies will be developed that strive to achieve a balance between resource protection, human use and economic sustainability.
- We will commit to conducting this process with a high level of community involvement, guided by inspired partnerships and creative leadership.

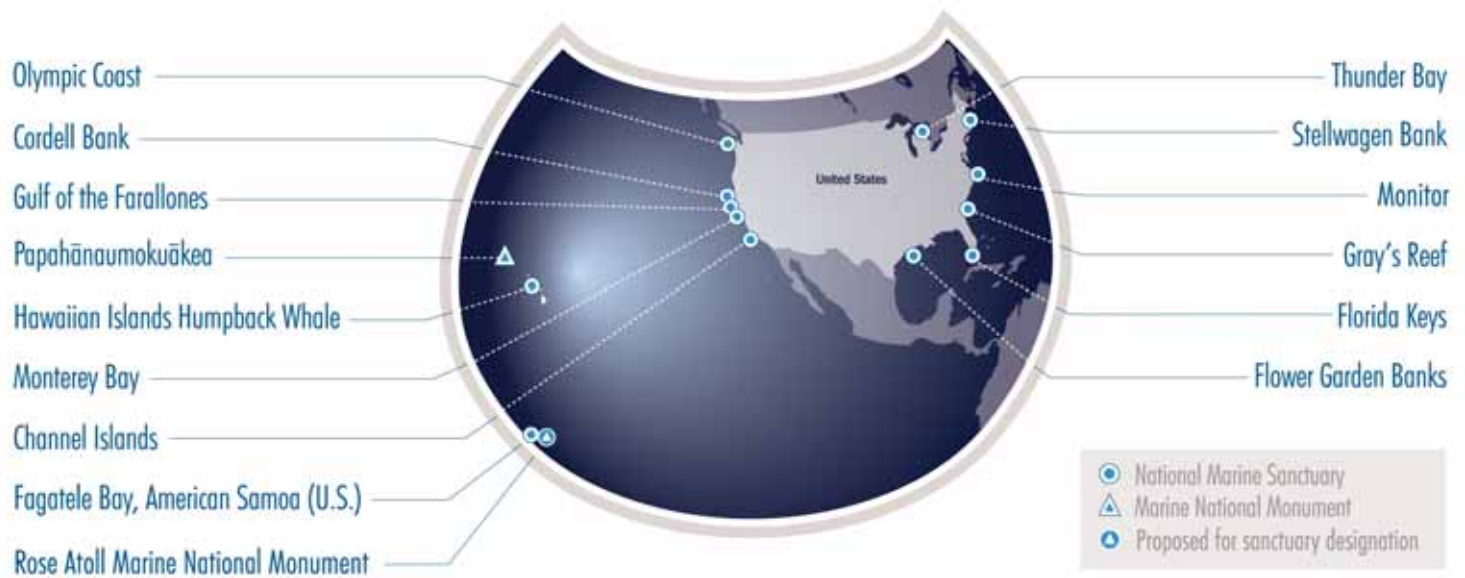
## The National Marine Sanctuary System

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The sanctuary system is managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which works cooperatively with the public to protect sanctuaries while maintaining compatible recreational and commercial activities. Sanctuary staff work to enhance public awareness of our nation's marine resources and maritime heritage through scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs and outreach.

## What Is a National Marine Sanctuary?

Our national marine sanctuaries embrace part of our collective riches as a nation. Within their protected waters, giant humpback whales breed and calve their young, coral colonies flourish, and shipwrecks tell stories of our maritime history. Sanctuary habitats include beautiful rocky reefs, lush kelp forests, whale migration corridors, spectacular deep-sea canyons, and underwater archaeological sites. Our nation's sanctuaries can provide a safe habitat for species close to extinction or protect historically significant shipwrecks. Ranging in size from less than one square mile to over 5,300 square miles, each sanctuary is a unique place needing special protections. Natural classrooms, cherished recreational spots, and valuable commercial industries - marine sanctuaries represent many things to many people.

# NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

## Pacific Islands Region

### Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was designated by Congress in 1992 as the 12th national marine sanctuary in the U.S. The sanctuary lies within the shallow 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 migrates 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 sustaining the long-term recovery of this endangered species.

### Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Created by Presidential proclamation on June 15, 2006, the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is the single largest conservation area under the U.S. flag, and one of the largest marine conservation areas in the world. Covering 140,000 square miles, Papahānaumokuākea is dotted with small islands, atolls, and a complex array of marine and terrestrial ecosystems stretching out over 1,200 miles in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The extensive coral reefs found in Papahānaumokuākea are home to over 7,000 marine species. Many of the islands and shallow-water environments are important habitats for rare species such as the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. Papahānaumokuākea is also of great cultural importance to Native Hawaiians with significant cultural sites.

### Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary comprises a fringing coral reef ecosystem nestled within an eroded volcanic crater on the island of Tutuila, American Samoa. Designated in 1986, this smallest and most remote of all the national marine sanctuaries is the only true tropical reef in the system. Fagatele Bay provides a home to a wide variety of animals and plants that thrive in the protected waters of the bay. The coral reef ecosystem found in the sanctuary contains many of the species native to this part of the Indo-Pacific biogeographic region. Turtles, whales, sharks and the giant clam all find refuge in this protected area.

### Rose Atoll Marine National Monument

In 2009, President George W. Bush designated Rose Atoll in American Samoa as a marine national monument. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is considering the atoll for sanctuary designation. Rose Atoll is located approximately 130 nautical miles east-southeast of Pago Pago Harbor in American Samoa, and is the easternmost Samoan island. Rose is the only square atoll in the world, one mile long on all four sides.




## Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

# How Is the Sanctuary Managed?

Currently, the sanctuary boundary extends from the shoreline to the 100-fathom isobath (600-foot depth) and is composed of five separate marine areas accessible from six of the main Hawaiian Islands. These 1,370 square miles of federal and state waters encompass areas of highest humpback whale density. The sanctuary is one of 14 sites overseen by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), which is authorized by Congress to “identify, designate, and manage areas of the marine environment of special national, and in some cases international, significance due to their conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, research, educational, or aesthetic qualities.”

The sanctuary is jointly managed by NOAA, through the ONMS, and the state of Hawai‘i through the Department of Land and Natural Resources. A Compact Agreement between NOAA and the state of Hawai‘i outlines how they will work together to protect humpback whales and their habitat. This agreement also requires that the sanctuary periodically evaluate its management plan and regulations, and subsequently re-propose them in their entirety to the state, so they can certify that the terms are still acceptable in state waters.

For more information on sanctuary management, please visit <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>. 



*The sanctuary headquarters headquarters in Kihei, Maui.*



*Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge serves as the gateway to the sanctuary on Kauaʻi.*



## TOP 10 SANCTUARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2002, *organized alphabetically*

**Community Connections:** The sanctuary has significantly expanded its presence throughout the state operating five offices on four islands (Hawaiʻi, Kauaʻi, Maui, Oʻahu). The sanctuary opened a new 4,600-square-foot Sanctuary Learning Center in Kihei, Maui, in 2009 and welcomed over 15,000 visitors and more than 6,000 students.

**Coordinated Enforcement:** In coordination with the sanctuary, the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement has increased their joint patrols with the U.S. Coast Guard and state Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) on the water, from land, and in the air during the humpback whale season.

**Enhanced Resource Protection through Coordinated Management:** The sanctuary has been actively involved in a collaborative effort to assist with the response, rescue, and education and outreach efforts for other whales and dolphins, Hawaiian monk seals, and sea turtles. These efforts are coordinated to support existing management authorities with NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service as the lead.

**Establishment of Science and Research Program:** The sanctuary's science and research program focuses on two of the most significant threats to humpback whales – entanglements and vessel collisions – as well as other human activities. Sanctuary science and research staff collaborate with a variety of partners locally, nationally and internationally to understand the scope and impact of these threats to humpback whales throughout their range in the North Pacific.


**Global Engagement:** The sanctuary has played a leading role in engaging global partnerships to promote marine mammal conservation by co-convening an International Whaling Commission-sponsored workshop on large whale entanglement with the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service and co-hosting the First International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas.

**Hawaiian Islands Large Whale Entanglement Response Network:** The sanctuary leads and coordinates response efforts involving entangled large whales through a community-based network made up of state and federal agencies, whale researchers, the ocean tourism industry, fishermen, and many private citizens.

**Increasing Ocean Awareness and Literacy:** The sanctuary has established itself as a leader in education and outreach on the marine environment in Hawaiʻi. It has created both formal and informal education programs across the state and continues to reach tens of thousands of students, visitors and members of the community in order to spread awareness of the need to protect our ocean resources.

**Reducing Vessel-Whale Collisions:** The sanctuary advisory council sponsored a Vessel-Whale Collision Avoidance Workshop to assess ship strike risks to whales in Hawaiʻi and to identify possible actions to reduce the occurrence of vessel-whale collisions. The sanctuary collaborated with partners to implement the recommendations of the workshop, which led to several successful resource protection initiatives.

**SPLASH Research:** Sanctuary science staff coordinated the largest whale research project ever conducted. The Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance, and Status of Humpbacks (SPLASH) research project involved over 400 researchers, 50 organizations and 10 countries around the North Pacific. The study determined migration patterns, population estimates, genetic structure and assessed health and human impacts for humpback whales in Hawaiʻi and the rest of the North Pacific Ocean.

**Volunteer Stewardship:** The sanctuary has actively engaged volunteers from the community to enhance operations and increase capacity to protect humpback whales and ocean resources in Hawaiʻi. Volunteers have contributed more than 20,000 hours of service to support sanctuary programs that help protect the marine environment through their stewardship efforts. 



KEY SANCTUARY PROGRAMS

# Resource Protection Program



*A humpback whale is freed from a life-threatening entanglement on the north shore of O'ahu.*



**Addressing Primary Threats:** Sanctuary staff are recognized experts that provide leadership in mitigating the impacts of whale entanglement in Hawai'i, nationally and internationally. Entanglement in fishing gear and debris and collisions with marine vessels have been widely identified as the primary human-caused sources of serious injury and mortality among humpback whales in Hawai'i and elsewhere. These threats are of foremost concern for the sanctuary. As part of their efforts, sanctuary personnel conduct on-water assessment of reports of humpbacks in distress and, when conditions and resources permit, attempt to free whales from potentially life-threatening entanglements. The sanctuary gathers valuable information from these response efforts that may mitigate these threats in the future.


**Hawaiian Islands Large Whale Entanglement Response Network:** The Hawaiian Islands Large Whale Entanglement Response Network was created in 2002 as a collaboration between state and federal agencies, local whale researchers, the tourism industry, fishermen and private citizens. The network operates under federal authority of NOAA's Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMPA/ESA Permit # 932-1905). The purpose of the network is to coordinate a sanctuary-led, community-based response effort for entangled large whales around the main Hawaiian Islands. Since its inception, the network has received more than 144 reports of entangled whales, 83 of which were confirmed, representing as many as 57 different animals. The actual number of entangled whales is likely greater, as many go undetected or unreported. Currently, the network includes over 170 trained participants and has, to date, conducted more than 100 on-water entanglement responses, removed over 6,500 feet of entangling gear, and successfully disentangled 14 humpback whales.

**Entanglement Response Training:** Sanctuary staff have provided large whale entanglement response training and assisted in response efforts in other regions of the U.S. and internationally. Trainings have been done along the east and west coasts of the U.S., Alaska, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and Canada and are proposed for South Korea, Argentina and Brazil. Large whale entanglement is a global threat and needs to be addressed as such.

**Documenting Vessel-Whale Collisions:** Over the last decade, reports involving confirmed vessel-whale collisions are on the rise. However, the increase in reports may be due to greater boat operator awareness and subsequent reporting. From 1998 to 2004, at least 10 collisions occurred, five of which resulted in the serious injury or death of a humpback whale. From 2005 through the end of the 2010 whale season, at least 42 confirmed collisions have occurred with at least 14 animals showing signs of injury.

**Vessel-Whale Collision Avoidance Workshop:** In 2003, the Sanctuary Advisory Council Vessel Strike Working Group and its partners sponsored a workshop to assess ship strike risks to whales in Hawai'i and to identify possible actions to reduce the occurrence of vessel-whale collisions. More than 75 resource managers, scientists, industry leaders and representatives of the marine community participated and developed recommendations to minimize vessel-whale interactions. The sanctuary continues to implement programs to make vessel operators aware of humpback whales during the time of year when they are in Hawai'i.

**Ocean Etiquette Campaign:** The sanctuary has collaborated with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard, among others, to increase awareness through education and outreach as recommended during the 2003 Vessel-Whale Collision Avoidance Workshop. The sanctuary reaches out to ocean users through an ocean etiquette campaign with targeted outreach activities and boater workshops held throughout the main Hawaiian Islands. These workshops, geared to commercial and recreational vessel operators, feature presentations by sanctuary staff on whale behavior and collision avoidance, as well as open discussions and evaluations of the latest research findings and vessel operation guidelines. The sanctuary's efforts to raise awareness of collision avoidance guidelines have also included distributing outreach materials, conducting lectures, installing harbor signs, participating in outreach events, and contributing articles to appropriate publications and other media outlets.

For more information on sanctuary programs, please visit <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>. 

Courtesy of the USCG



## KEY SANCTUARY PROGRAMS

# Science & Research

*Sanctuary staff conduct and support a variety of research activities related to the North Pacific population of humpback whales.*



**Research Activities:** The sanctuary science and research program began in 2003 and today, sanctuary personnel are recognized as world experts in the area of large whale entanglement response and research. Current projects focus on the impact of entanglements, vessel collisions and other human activities affecting humpback whales and their habitat. These projects have been shared with the broader scientific community and general public in a variety of ways, including 67 scientific papers and presentations on whale biology, human impacts, and policy and management.

**SPLASH:** Sanctuary scientists coordinated the largest whale research project ever completed. The Structure of Population, Levels of Abundance, and Status of

Humpbacks (SPLASH) project, composed of over 400 researchers, 50 organizations and 10 countries, generated the most accurate population estimates ever calculated for humpback whales in Hawai'i and the North Pacific. The 2006 SPLASH results found the Hawaiian humpback whale population to be approximately 10,000 whales with an annual growth rate of 6 percent. The project also studied the known key threats to humpback whales (entanglement and vessel-whale collisions) and some other threats (pollution) throughout their entire habitat – something that had never been done before for any whale species – and found that entanglement in fishing gear and debris is at epidemic levels in the North Pacific.

**Scientific Staff Membership and Advisory Positions:** Sanctuary scientists belong to or advise the following organizations: the NOAA Humpback Whale Biological Review Team, U.S. delegation to the International Whaling Commission, International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas, Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environmental Program, and Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic (a sister sanctuary).

**Global Partnerships:** In 2009, the sanctuary co-hosted the First International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas on Maui. More than 200 managers, scientists and educators representing 40





HIHWNMS/NOAA Fisheries Permit #782-1438



Flip Nicklin/Minden Pictures

countries came together to discuss issues, build partnerships, and share information on effective approaches to marine management and conservation of marine mammals that often migrate long distances, regardless of boundaries or borders. Some of the topics addressed included the relationship of culture and managing marine protected areas, education, and whale sanctuaries.

**International Collaboration:** In 2010, the sanctuary and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service co-convoked a three-day workshop on large whale entanglement, sponsored by the International Whaling Commission. Attendees included representatives from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Korea, Mexico, Norway,

South Africa, Spain and the U.S. The workshop covered a broad range of topics, such as:

- The global scope of whale entanglement,
- The nature of entangling gear,
- The impacts of entanglement on both whale individuals and populations, and
- Response efforts and the difficulties entailed.

**Research Internships and Trainings:**

Every year, the sanctuary hosts a number of research internships and trainings to further facilitate the circulation of knowledge between staff and the global community. University and graduate students from Hawai'i, the U.S. mainland, Japan, Mexico, China and the Dominican Republic have contributed to and enhanced the work of the sanctuary through internships and research support on a variety

of topics such as acoustics, entanglement, genetics, pollutants, skin bacteria and interactions with vessels. Sanctuary experts have also led 10 research trainings for participants from Hawai'i, the U.S. mainland, Japan, Mexico, Samoa, American Samoa and the Dominican Republic.

For more information on sanctuary programs, please visit

<http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>







*Sanctuary volunteers conduct education and outreach programs.*





*Sanctuary advisory council members participate in a council meeting.*


## KEY SANCTUARY PROGRAMS

# Community Engagement

**Sanctuary Volunteers:** The approximately 20,000 hours donated annually by sanctuary volunteers are an invaluable resource that enable the sanctuary to actively engage the community in sanctuary programs. Volunteers contribute in a variety of ways such as staffing the Maui Visitor Center, counting whales on the islands of Kaua'i, Hawai'i, O'ahu and Kaho'olawe during the yearly Sanctuary Ocean Count, educating the public at outreach events, and supporting marine mammal and sea turtle stranding responses.

Each year the sanctuary program nominates an outstanding volunteer to be nationally recognized for their contributions. In 2004, sanctuary volunteer and president of the sanctuary's non-profit partner 'Ao'ao Na Loko I'a O Maui, Kimokeo Kapahulehua, was named Volunteer of the Year by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for his dedication and leadership in helping to preserve, protect and promote the sanctuary. Other nominated volunteers have included: June Kawamata (2005), Bruce Parsil (2006), Bob Ragains (2007), Skip and Gloria Snyder (2008), and Bill Friedl (2009).

**Sanctuary Advisory Council:** Established in 1996, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council embodies a collaborative management approach by contributing significantly to sanctuary policies and programs. The council is a community-based advisory group consisting of representatives from various user groups, government agencies and the public at large. Its role is to provide the sanctuary management with advice on resource protection, research, education and outreach. For a complete list of all council seats, please visit

<http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov> 





*Volunteers participate in the Sanctuary Ocean Count.*



## KEY SANCTUARY PROGRAMS

# Education and Outreach

**Education and outreach are important tools used by the sanctuary to increase resource protection by enhancing public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the marine environment. Education programs focus on teaching communities about humpback whales and the ocean they live in. In addition, the sanctuary acknowledges the need to train the next generation by mentoring interns and students from a variety of backgrounds.**

### ENHANCING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The sanctuary works to enhance student learning opportunities about the ocean through formal education by augmenting existing school curricula and empowering teachers with the tools to expand ocean literacy through educator workshops.

**Student Programs:** In 2009, more than 6,000 students took part in interactive marine education programs offered at the Sanctuary Learning Center on Maui. In addition to learning about humpback whales, visiting students learned about topics such as coral reef ecosystems and invasive seaweeds and gained hands-on experience by conducting water quality tests. Throughout the state, sanctuary staff also provide classroom-based and in-the-field education programs.

**On-the-Water Experiences:** For the past several years, the sanctuary has conducted research cruises dedicated to educating students from around the state aboard the NOAA ship *Hi'ialakai*. The cruises, which allow 40 high school students and their teachers to spend a day at sea, introduce students to marine-related careers through participation in marine science activities. Additional on-the-water experiences and programs have been offered around the state, including a special Science Day at Sea in partnership with Norwegian Cruise Lines.

### INCREASING OCEAN AWARENESS

The sanctuary reaches out to the general public by providing information about the unique marine environment of Hawai'i through lectures, community events and media.

**Community Events:** The sanctuary has sponsored and participated in more than 250 community events throughout the state during the last eight years, reaching more than 150,000 people with important messages about protecting the marine environment. The Sanctuary Learning Center on Maui continues to host a monthly lecture series and welcomed more than 15,000 visitors in 2009.





*Students study an intertidal habitat during a workshop on Kaua'i.*

**Humpback Whale Awareness Month:** Every February the sanctuary hosts a month-long calendar of special events on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i, including lectures, video presentations and lunchtime whale watches. The effort is promoted through news articles, website announcements, radio and television segments, and informational materials provided to libraries, bookstores and other venues throughout the state.

#### **PROMOTING OCEAN STEWARDSHIP**


The sanctuary recognizes that an engaged and informed community is crucial to protecting our fragile marine environment. The sanctuary promotes stewardship by providing community members with knowledge of the ocean's importance to their lives and skills needed for active participation in the protection of marine resources.

**Sanctuary Ocean Count:** Held every year, the Sanctuary Ocean Count is one of the signature projects of the sanctuary. On the last Saturday of January, February and March, volunteers gather at more than 60 designated shore sites throughout the state to tally sightings and document patterns of whale behaviors. In 2010, Sanctuary Ocean Count volunteers contributed 12,000 hours to the project, which celebrated its 15th anniversary and continues to grow each year.

**Ocean Awareness Training:** Ocean Awareness Training is currently offered on the islands of Maui and O'ahu, with plans to expand this popular program to the islands of Kaua'i and Hawai'i. The course is open to the public and provides participants with interdisciplinary knowledge of the unique marine environments of Hawai'i. In 2009, more than 300 participants on O'ahu and Maui were trained in marine ecology, coastal and marine environmental threats, marine life identification, and environmental interpretation.

**Ocean Protection and Cultural Awareness:** In 2010, sanctuary staff partnered with the county of Maui to provide Ocean Protection and Cultural Awareness (OPACA) training for more than 300 participants. The county-required course was developed for commercial vendors that hold permits to operate out of county parks, such as snorkel and dive operators, kayak rentals, and surf schools.

For more information on sanctuary programs, please visit

<http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>. 



**1977**

First nomination for a national marine sanctuary for humpback whales in Hawai'i

**1979**

Nomination placed on NOAA List of Recommended Areas for marine sanctuary designation

**1982**

Site declared an Active Candidate for designation; public workshops held; further consideration of the sanctuary postponed

**1991**

Kaho'olawe Island National Marine Sanctuary feasibility study provides data supporting the designation of a national marine sanctuary

**1992**

Sanctuary designated by Congress, in consultation with state of Hawai'i

**1994**

Characterization report of the existing resources within the designated areas completed

**1997**

Compact agreement between NOAA and state of Hawai'i establishes co-management of the sanctuary; first management plan developed; Governor Cayetano formally approved state waters for inclusion in the sanctuary

**2002**

Management plan updated and revised with public input and comment; Governor Lingle approved plan

**2007**

Additional resources assessment report approved by governor of Hawai'i

**2009**

Management plan review visioning begins

**2010**

Statewide public information meetings held

## How Did We Get to Where We Are Today?

In 1992, when Congress designated the sanctuary, it mandated the sanctuary to identify and evaluate other resources and ecosystems of national significance for possible inclusion in the sanctuary. In 2002, the sanctuary updated its management plan to prioritize management actions and included an action to consider the inclusion of additional resources within the sanctuary.

A full assessment of candidate resources to be included in the sanctuary was conducted and submitted to the governor of the state of Hawai'i in 2007. Candidate resources were identified from the public through scoping meetings held as early as 1993, 1994, 1997 and 2002, followed by recommendations from the sanctuary advisory council and the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. The marine resources listed for evaluation by state and community partners included other whales and dolphins, Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and maritime heritage resources such as historic downed aircraft and sunken ships. The governor subsequently approved the proposal to undertake a process to evaluate additional marine resources for possible inclusion in the sanctuary. Visit <http://hawaiiwhale.noaa.gov/documents/management.html> to view the 2007 report to the governor, "Assessment of Additional Resources for Possible Inclusion in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary".

This sequence of events establishes the basis to move forward during this management review process to propose the addition of these marine resources.

The NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service has been a partner in the initial review of living marine resources considered for addition to the sanctuary and has expressed willingness for the sanctuary to move forward with the process to further identify and assess the ability of the sanctuary to support the protection of those resources. In collaboration with NOAA Fisheries and other partners, the sanctuary has already demonstrated its capability to support protected species response and rescue and education and outreach efforts for other whales and dolphins, Hawaiian monk seals, and sea turtles.







Ken Tingman

## Input from the Community

The sanctuary recognizes that an engaged and informed community is crucial to its management effectiveness. The sanctuary continues to promote active communication and participation from user groups and individuals across the state, and is encouraging them to become involved and to express their concerns on critical sanctuary issues impacting their community.

To date, the sanctuary has actively sought public input each time changes have been proposed to the management and operations of the sanctuary. During the last review of the sanctuary's management plan in 2002, numerous public comments were received requesting the sanctuary increase its scope to include the conservation and management of other resources and species. To begin the visioning process in 2010, the sanctuary advisory council hosted an initial workshop with key constituents and community stakeholders to seek input on a planning process to ensure broad-based community participation.

Community members take part in a sanctuary public information session on the island of Kaua'i.



Following these recommendations, the sanctuary hosted a series of nine public information meetings across the state to seek input from communities on the scope and future direction of the sanctuary. Several hundred members of the public attended these meetings and the majority expressed strong support for the sanctuary to expand its role and become more actively involved in protecting humpback whales and additional resources in Hawai'i. Many participants expressed a strong desire for the sanctuary to be more proactive in addressing current and emerging threats, such as water quality and acoustic impacts, lack of enforcement and the need for better coordination with federal, state and community partners. Other members of the public came to learn about the sanctuary and the management plan review and find out how this process may affect ocean use.

In response to the congressional mandate, governor's support and public opinion, the sanctuary is now implementing this management plan review process to engage communities and explore, among other issues, the possibility of increasing the scope of the sanctuary to protect and conserve other living marine resources and submerged cultural resources in addition to humpback whales.

For more information, please visit <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>.





# Conservation Needs for Living Marine Resources

In addition to humpback whales, there are several species that reside within the sanctuary that are protected by the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and state law. Conservation needs of these species also involve education, research, rescue and response, and enforcement. *What role could the sanctuary play in protecting other species in the future?*

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## Hawaiian Monk Seals

Hawaiian monk seals are the most endangered seal species in the U.S. They spend two-thirds of their time at sea where they are found in waters surrounding atolls, islands and areas farther offshore on reefs and submerged banks. Monk seals are also found using deepwater coral beds as foraging habitat. When on land, monk seals breed and haul-out on sand, corals and volcanic rock.

**Status:** Critically endangered and heading towards extinction

- Approximately 1,100 individuals in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands – very low survival of juveniles and sub-adults
- Approximately 150 individuals in main Hawaiian Islands – survival rate better than Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
- Researchers feel main Hawaiian Islands sub-population essential for recovery

**Threats:** In main Hawaiian Islands – disturbance from human interactions, hooking and entanglement

**Current role:** Sanctuary currently plays a supporting role to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service in rescue and response and education and outreach efforts in the main Hawaiian Islands.

*Monk seals need to rest on shore to conserve energy for hunting and diving at night. It is recommended that people maintain a distance of at least 50 yards. Please keep dogs away from seals. Monk seal injuries, entanglements and sightings can be reported to the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service at 888-256-9840.*







## Sea Turtles

Five species of sea turtles are found in the nearshore and pelagic environments around the Hawaiian Islands: green, hawksbill, leatherback, loggerhead and olive Ridley.

### Status:

- Critically endangered – hawksbill and leatherback
- Threatened – green, loggerhead and olive Ridley

### Threats:

- Fibropapilloma disease causes fibrous growths on the eyes, neck, flippers, and in the mouth; it is believed to be caused by a virus and can be fatal to turtles
- Accidental capture, especially in long lines, gillnets, and entanglements in fish lines
- Collisions with boats
- Habitat degradation
- Human disturbance of nesting areas
- Illegal capture and killing

**Current role:** Sanctuary currently plays a supporting role to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service in rescue, response, education and outreach efforts in the main Hawaiian Islands.

*Report nesting or basking activities, and dead, sick, injured, or stranded turtles to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Honolulu Lab at 808-983-5730.*



## Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins

Spinner dolphins are found close to shore in shallow coves and bays during the day. These nearshore habitats are important for resting, caring for young, avoiding predators, and engaging in reproductive activities.

**Status:** Not currently listed under the Endangered Species Act

### Threats:

- Interactions with humans are a growing threat; because the species is active at night, daytime interactions with vessels and swimmers inhibit necessary rest
- Entanglement in marine debris
- Acoustic disturbance

**Current role:** Sanctuary currently plays a supporting role to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service in rescue, response, education and outreach efforts in the main Hawaiian Islands.

*Dolphin injuries, entanglements, and sightings can be reported to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service at 888-256-9840.*



Other dolphins and small whales that are commonly seen in Hawai'i include bottlenose dolphins, spotted dolphins, false killer whales (pictured here), pilot whales, Risso's dolphins, melon-headed whales, and pygmy sperm whales.

For a list of other species that will be considered for possible inclusion in the sanctuary please view the 2007 report to the Governor, "Assessment of Additional Resources for Possible Inclusion in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary" by visiting <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>.



## Coral Reef Conservation Needs

Coral reefs play a critical role as habitat and nursery grounds for living marine resources and are an integral part of the marine communities in the waters surrounding our islands. Globally, coral reefs have experienced declines of at least 30 percent over the last three decades. Coral reefs within the state of Hawai'i are fully protected by state law. Recently, a federal study was launched to determine if 82 species of corals should be added to the list of federally protected species under the Endangered Species Act. Adding federal protections could lead to additional measures to safeguard the survival of these species.

In the past, the sanctuary has supported education and outreach about coral reef ecosystems within the sanctuary. *What role could the sanctuary play to ensure the long-term protection of the coral reefs within the sanctuary?* 🐠







*This recently discovered WWII aircraft provides an interesting dive site near Maui.*

Paul Wong



*Traditionally important places such as Native Hawaiian fishponds are found throughout the Hawaiian Islands.*


## Protecting Cultural and Maritime Heritage

Cultural heritage includes cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history—including traditional connections to the sea, and the uses and values they provide to present and future generations.

The sanctuary contains many cultural resources like maritime resources (such as shipwrecks) and traditionally important places. The sanctuary recognizes that those resources of national significance may benefit from additional protections.

Resources of national significance may include cultural and historical resources, such as those of Native Hawaiians. Hawaiian culture is deeply rooted in the natural environment, and traditional and customary practices arose from learning to balance relationships with the land and sea. Fishponds exemplify the ingenuity that developed after generations of observing nature, and contributed to a successful subsistence lifestyle. Today, the sanctuary strives to sustain and perpetuate traditional Hawaiian knowledge by understanding these cultural treasures and sharing their cultural significance and the values that are ingrained in their mo'olelo (stories). In addition, the Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary Act directs the sanctuary to "facilitate to the extent compatible with the primary objective of protecting the humpback whale and its habitat, all public and private uses of the sanctuary, including uses of Hawaiian natives customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes".

Maritime heritage resources within the sanctuary system reflect our varied and multicultural seafaring past. The Sunken Military Craft Act (H.R. 4200) mandates protection for sunken military ships, aircraft and other sensitive archaeological artifacts and historical information. Within the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary there are at least 146 known losses of ships and aircraft, some dating back to 1824. Dozens of these sites have been located and they all have stories to enhance our understanding of our collective history.

In the past, the sanctuary has been involved in restoring important cultural sites, such as fishponds, and has supported the ONMS maritime heritage program. **What role could the sanctuary play in protecting cultural and maritime heritage in the future?** 



# Current and Emerging Topics

A photograph of a wind turbine on a grassy hill under a dark, stormy sky with a rainbow. The turbine is white with one red blade. The rainbow is vibrant and spans across the sky. The foreground shows a grassy field with a fence line.

*As the development of alternative energy sources increases in Hawai'i, the sanctuary will support technologies appropriate to conservation of the marine environment.*



The sanctuary has and continues to serve a lead role in protecting humpback whales and their habitat. However, new issues present new challenges. Since the creation of the sanctuary, many issues have been identified as important to communities around the state.

Water quality issues such as polluted runoff, injection wells and vessel discharges have raised concerns of ocean users. Reports of vessel-whale interactions have increased in the past decade. Acoustic impacts have been documented on several species. The role that development activities such as aquaculture and energy production will play in the future of Hawai'i will need to be explored. These are just some of the many issues that Hawai'i will face as we look to the future and work together to address needs such as clean water, cultural and resource protection, food security, and clean energy. Engaging community and agency partners in the management plan review will help to identify an appropriate role for the sanctuary in addressing these important issues.

**WATER QUALITY:**

- The condition of the marine and coastal waters of the sanctuary is vulnerable to land-based pollution as well as that from marine sources.
- Concerns over water quality issues have been raised by ocean users around the state.
- There appear to be no adverse impacts to humpback whales due to water quality in Hawai'i; however, other marine species may be affected.
- The sanctuary is currently conducting an assessment of what strategies other national marine sanctuaries have taken to address water quality issues.

**Current role:** The sanctuary recognizes water quality as an important issue and plays a supporting role through education and outreach programs.



Claire Fackler, NOAA



Offshore aquaculture structure.

**VESSEL-WHALE INTERACTIONS:**

- Reports of vessel-whale collisions have increased in the past decade. It is believed that this is due in large part to the success of collaborative outreach and education efforts that have helped to raise ocean-user awareness around the state.
- The effects of vessel-whale interactions require additional research and monitoring.

**Current role:** The sanctuary currently plays a supporting role to the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service in rescue and response and takes a lead role in education and outreach efforts and data collection to determine the most effective mitigation measures.

**ACOUSTIC IMPACTS:**

- Acoustic impacts are not clearly understood, but human-caused underwater noise could potentially adversely affect humpback whales by disrupting resting, feeding, courtship, calving, nursing, migration or other activities.
- Researchers suggest that increased background noise and specific sound sources might impact marine animals in several ways. The effects vary depending upon the intensity and frequency of the sound, and other variables.
- Potential impacts include sounds that cause marine animals to alter their behavior; prevent marine animals from hearing important sounds (masking); or cause hearing loss (temporary or permanent) or tissue damage in marine animals.

**Current role:** The sanctuary currently plays a supporting role through collaborative research activities which have measured levels of sound from coastal construction, demolition and typical vessel noise.


**AQUACULTURE:**

- Humpback whales prefer calm, relatively shallow waters, located just off the leeward sides of the main Hawaiian Islands. These areas are also often deemed suitable for new open ocean aquaculture projects.
- Structures are large, suspended in the water column, and moored to the ocean bottom with line.
- Potential impacts to humpback whales and other species include loss of habitat, entanglement and other potential impacts that require further investigation.

**Current role:** The sanctuary is currently working with community members, aquaculture industry representatives, the University of Hawai'i and NOAA to learn more about this emerging issue.

**ENERGY DEVELOPMENT:**

- In 2009, an alternative energy project was proposed and is currently being explored. The proposed project could include a 200-megawatt wind farm on Lana'i, a 200-megawatt wind farm on Moloka'i, and an interisland undersea cable system connecting the wind farms to O'ahu. As currently proposed, cable routes would pass through sanctuary waters.
- In 2008, a wind and wave energy project proposed the construction of 100 offshore towers covering 280 square miles of the Penguin Bank area of the sanctuary. The proposal was later withdrawn in 2009.
- Potential impacts to humpback whales and other species require further investigation.

**Current role:** The sanctuary is currently working with community members, the state of Hawai'i and industry representatives to learn more about this emerging issue. 





# PROPOSED VISION

## Where are we heading?

At this time, the sanctuary is proposing that it expand its scope and direction to protect and conserve other living marine resources, in addition to humpback whales and submerged cultural heritage resources within the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is interested in adding one or more of the following resources:

- Hawaiian monk seals
- Other whales and dolphins
- Sea turtles
- Federally protected coral species
- Areas of significant habitat
- Submerged cultural and historic resources

## Draft vision statement:

*"The sanctuary is globally recognized as a special place for the protection of marine and coastal resources in Hawai'i. The sanctuary accomplishes its mission by blending science and place-based knowledge to protect the ocean and coasts while enhancing the economy, natural environment and cultural connections."*





Flip Nicklin/Minden Pictures/NOAA Fisheries Permit #987

Our vision is to establish a national marine sanctuary in Hawai'i that is recognized as a special place where the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries works with other authorities to provide protection for an array of marine resources that include marine mammals such as other whales, monk seals and dolphins and their habitats; sea turtles; corals and other areas of significant marine habitat; and submerged cultural and historic resources. A marine sanctuary in the Hawaiian Islands will ensure a high level of biodiversity to conserve ocean resources, providing ecological and economic benefit for Hawai'i and the nation. Included within this vision are several key priority topics that will be highlighted throughout the management plan review and are components of a long-term vision for the sanctuary.

#### **Achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability**

The sanctuary will seek to strike a balance between economic, social and community, and environmental priorities, while ensuring that the natural resources within its boundaries are responsibly and respectfully conserved, used, and replenished for future generations. The sanctuary will work with communities, private sector and government agencies to determine which activities are compatible with natural resource protection and are suitable to take place within the sanctuary.

#### **Engaging communities**

The sanctuary will actively reach out to local communities and incorporate Native Hawaiian perspectives to connect the people of Hawai'i to their ocean and coastal environment and to foster kuleana (responsibility) and increase local capacity to mālama (care for) our island home.

#### **Traditional Hawaiian values and resource management approaches**


The sanctuary will highlight traditional Hawaiian values as a fundamental concept in the pursuit of its mission to conserve and protect natural and cultural resources in Hawai'i. The sanctuary honors and respects indigenous Native Hawaiians as important stakeholders and will actively reach out to the Native Hawaiian community to pursue place-based knowledge in the appropriate implementation of traditional approaches to community-based natural resource management.

At this time, the sanctuary is asking the public to comment on how to most effectively achieve a collective vision to protect and conserve the oceans and coastal areas of Hawai'i for our children, their children and generations beyond. What steps can we take now to build towards that future?

#### **Questions:**

1. Should the sanctuary expand its scope to protect additional species/ecosystems?
2. What role could the sanctuary play in protecting cultural heritage resources in the future?
3. How might this affect sanctuary boundaries?
4. Will there need to be regulatory changes?
5. What new management strategies will need to be developed?
6. What types of research, education and outreach programs will be needed to enhance resource protection?
7. Who are the key user groups and stakeholders that should be involved in this process?
8. Are there other resources that the sanctuary should consider adding?
9. What role should the sanctuary have in addressing the emerging topics?

#### **We are asking the public for their input!**

The sanctuary will use the input received during the public scoping period to develop a list of priority issues to address during the management plan review. This information will be used to build upon this proposed vision and to develop management strategies for achieving that vision. 





Barbara Billand

## How Will the Public Be Involved?

The public will have numerous opportunities to participate in management plan review, beginning with the scoping meetings and continuing through the development of the draft and final management plans.

At this time, all interested members of the public are encouraged to participate and provide comment during public scoping.

During the 90-day public scoping period, which runs from July 14th to October 16th, public meetings will be held in communities across the state. The meetings are not decision-making meetings – instead, all comments received will help to identify programmatic needs and issues to address during the management plan review.

Throughout the 90-day scoping period, individuals or organizations can mail, e-mail or fax written comments directly to the management plan review coordinator at:

Management Plan Review Coordinator  
Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary  
6600 Kalaniana'ole Highway, Suite 301  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96825  
Phone: 1-888-55-WHALE, ext. 267  
E-mail: [hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov](mailto:hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov)  
Fax: 808-397-2650

## Next Steps in the Management Plan Review

**Action Plans:** After the public scoping period, sanctuary staff will review all comments and work with the sanctuary advisory council and the public to identify a list of priority issues to be addressed during the management plan review. Additional workshops may be conducted to develop action plans that address priority issues. These action plans will form the foundation of the draft management plan.

**Draft Management Plan:** The draft management plan will contain action plans that address resource protection issues and will outline management of the sanctuary. Additionally, it may also propose regulatory changes. The sanctuary will provide additional opportunities for the public to comment on the draft management plan.

**Environmental Assessment:** Federal and state agencies will conduct a full environmental assessment, as required by law, to address any potential environmental impacts resulting from the proposed actions in the draft management plan.

**Final Management Plan:** Following a second public comment period, NOAA will make any necessary changes prior to issuing the final management plan. The proposed management plan, regulations and any recommendations concerning the addition of other marine resources in the sanctuary must receive final approval from the governor of Hawai'i prior to implementation in state waters.



## Where Can I Get More Information?

Find out more online at <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov> or contact the sanctuary office at 1-888-55-WHALE. Also, visit us online to subscribe to the management plan review listserv to receive e-updates about the process.



# STATEWIDE SCOPING MEETING SCHEDULE

6 pm to 9 pm unless otherwise noted below



## **Hilo, Hawai'i**

Tuesday, August 10  
Mokupāpapa Discovery Center  
308 Kamehameha Avenue, Suite 109  
Hilo, HI 96720

## **Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i**

Wednesday, August 11  
Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort  
78-6740 Ali'i Drive  
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

## **Honolulu, O'ahu**

Thursday, August 12 (5:30 pm to 8:30 pm)  
Central Union Church  
1660 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96826

## **Līhu'e, Kaua'i**

Saturday, August 14 (9 am to 12 pm)  
Chiefess Kamakāhelei Middle School Cafeteria  
4431 Nuhou Street  
Līhu'e, HI 96766

## **Kīlauea, Kaua'i**

Saturday, August 14 (4 pm to 7 pm)  
Kīlauea Neighborhood Center  
2460 Keneke Street  
Kīlauea, HI 96754

## **Kīhei, Maui**

Monday, August 16  
Lokelani Middle School  
1401 Liloa Drive  
Kīhei, HI 96753

## **Lahaina, Maui**

Tuesday, August 17  
Lahaina Civic Center  
1840 Honoapi'ilani Highway  
Lahaina, HI 96761

## **Kaunakakai, Moloka'i**

Wednesday, August 18  
Mitchell Pauole Center  
90 Ainoa Street  
Kaunakakai, HI 96748

## **Hale'iwa, O'ahu**

Monday, August 23  
Sunset Beach Elementary School  
59-360 Kamehameha Highway  
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

## **Lāna'i City, Lāna'i**

Thursday, August 26  
Lāna'i High and Elementary School  
555 Fraser Avenue  
Lāna'i City, HI 96763

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Gary Locke, Secretary

National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., Administrator  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans  
and Atmosphere

National Ocean Service  
David Kennedy, Acting Assistant Administrator

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
Daniel J. Basta, Director

National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
SSMC4, N/ORM62  
1305 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-713-3125  
<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

State of Hawai'i Department of Land and  
Natural Resources  
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 330  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
808-587-0437  
<http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr>







**Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale  
National Marine Sanctuary**

6600 Kalaniana'ole Hwy. Suite 301  
Honolulu, HI 96825

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Doug Perrine/HWRF/Seapics.com



HIHWNMS/NOAA Fisheries Permit # 782-1438



Doug Perrine/HWRF/Seapics.com/NOAA Fisheries Permit # 882

## About the Sanctuary

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary lies within the shallow, warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands and constitutes one of the world's most important humpback whale habitats. Through education, research and resource protection activities, the sanctuary strives to protect humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i.

## Get Involved in Management Plan Review

Find out more online at <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>, or contact the sanctuary office at 1-888-55-WHALE. Also, visit us online to subscribe to the management plan review listserve to receive e-updates about the process.

## Koholā Connection Is Available Online

*Koholā Connection* is available on the sanctuary's Web site, [hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov](http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov). Help us "go green" by registering to receive future editions online.

## How to Subscribe

To subscribe to *Koholā Connection* and to receive periodic updates and announcements from the sanctuary electronically, please send an e-mail to [requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov](mailto:requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov) with the following in the e-mail subject line: **subscribe hihumpbackwhale**