

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary



Photo: HIHWNMS, NOAA Fisheries Permit #782-1438

The sanctuary constitutes one of the **world's most important humpback whale** habitats.



Photo: Ed Lyman, NOAA

The sanctuary recognizes the importance of Native Hawaiian cultural traditions and their relationship to the long-term health of **Hawai'i's oceans**.



Photo: James Watt, NOAA

The main Hawaiian Islands are surrounded by small, fringing reefs.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) was designated to protect the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) **and its habitat in Hawai'i**. The sanctuary enables citizens and government to work collectively on safeguarding humpback whale breeding, calving, and nursing grounds in waters around the main Hawaiian Islands, an area that supports more than half of the North Pacific humpback whale population. Encompassing 1,370 square miles of federal and state waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands, the sanctuary extends from the shoreline to the 100 fathom isobath (183 meter or 600 foot depth contour) and is composed of five separate marine protected areas accessible from six of the eight main Hawaiian Islands.

Research and Monitoring

Research and long-term monitoring are **essential to achieve the sanctuary's primary** goal to protect humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i. Although past research efforts have made significant advancements in characterizing and monitoring humpback whales and their habitat, many unanswered questions and unknowns remain, including habitat requirements, population size,

distribution and dynamics, threats and impacts, and other important biological and ecological parameters.

Research funded or coordinated by the sanctuary focuses on the sanctuary and its surrounding area as well as other areas in the Pacific. The sanctuary also collaborates with scientists working in other parts of the **humpback whale's range around the world**.

Education and Outreach

Outreach and education programs and projects are conducted to foster awareness of sanctuary resources and to promote ocean **stewardship among Hawai'i's residents and visitors**. Information about humpback whales **and their habitat in Hawai'i is made available** to the public through educator and student workshops, community lectures, shore-based whale watches, volunteer and naturalist training sessions, and sanctuary publications. **On Maui, the Sanctuary Visitor Center in Kihei** is a beachfront facility with year-round exhibits. **The sanctuary's signature project, the Sanctuary Ocean Count**, is a great way to get involved. Volunteers count whales and record their behaviors from over 60 designated shore **sites on the islands of O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i**.



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Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

Location

Shoreline to a 600 foot depth contour around the four main Hawaiian Islands

Protected Area

1,366 square miles

Designation

May 1992

Habitats

Coral reefs
Humpback whale breeding, calving, and nursing grounds
Sandy substrate
Seagrass beds

Key Species

Coral
False killer whale
Hawaiian monk seal
Humpback whale
Reef fish
Sea turtles
Sharks and rays
Spinner dolphin



Find Us

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On the Web

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www.facebook.com/hawaiihumpbackwhale
 Twitter: @Hihumpbackwhale

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Network of marine protected areas
 Encompasses more than 600,000 square miles
 Established October 1972

On the Web

sanctuaries.noaa.gov
www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarineSanctuaries
 Instagram: @noaasanctuaries
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Photo: NOAA

Sanctuary Ocean Count offers the community a chance to monitor humpback whales from the shore.

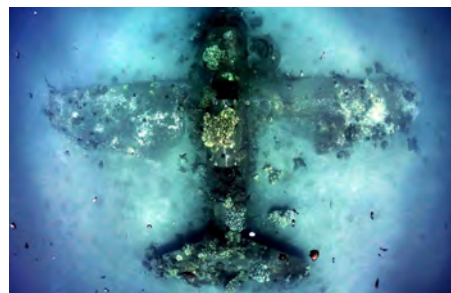


Photo: Hans Van Tilberg, NOAA

A World War II aircraft lies on the sanctuary's seafloor.



Photo: HIHWNMS, NOAA Fisheries Permit #782-1719

The main Hawaiian Islands may contain the world's largest seasonal population of North Pacific humpbacks.

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