

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Socioeconomics Factsheet



National marine sanctuaries in Hawai`i protect resources that are vital components of local economies and have economic value extending far beyond the water

 The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary remains a popular place to watch whales as the Hawaiian whale watching industry continues to grow. In 2008, approximately 50 operators statewide offered whale watching tours to an estimated 330,000 passengers during a relatively short 120 day season when the humpback whales are in Hawaiian waters. The whale watching industry plays a strong role in the state's economy as it contributes up to \$11 million in total revenues annually with a total economic impact of up to \$74 million per year.

 The Hawai`i tour boat industry has grown more than 300% between 1984 and 2004. Throughout the state there are approximately 500 boats in the commercial tour boat and charter fishing boat trades. In 2003, the Hawai`i tour boat industry supported more than 2000 jobs and generated approximately \$200 million in revenue annually. Total economic impact on the economy from the state tour boat industry is estimated at \$350 million.

 Midway Atoll, part of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, is a primary access point for visitors. The atoll receives hundreds of tour group visitors annually, mainly for the purposes of viewing wildlife, experiencing military history and participating in volunteer conservation efforts.

 Since 2005, over \$10 million dollars has been invested in a science-management partnership with the Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology for research in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. This direct investment leveraged over \$40 million dollars in matching funds to the University of Hawaii at Manoa, resulting in direct research support for more than 60 students, over 150 peer reviewed publications, internships and data used to support the site's successful bid for World Heritage designation in 2010.

 The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries operates the Mokuapāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo, Hawai`i where last year, over 60,000 visitors viewed exhibits and participated in interactive displays and education programs. The Discovery Center, with its location along Hilo's main street, is a community mainstay, and roughly half its annual visitors are returning local community members and students.

Many businesses throughout the State of Hawai`i educate their customers about humpback whales and their habitat, and benefit from the sanctuary's efforts to protect these resources. As an ocean recreation business owner with over 30 years of experience and 40 employees, I see our sanctuary as a place for our community to celebrate the return of the humpback whale each year.

-Teri Leicher

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