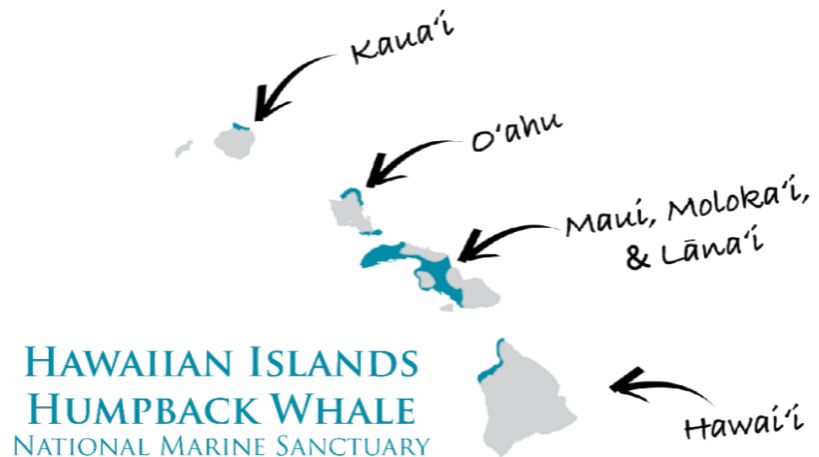


Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments Fiscal Year 2022

Every winter, thousands of humpback whales travel to the warm shallow waters of Hawai'i to mate, give birth, and raise their young. Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1992 to protect and preserve humpback whales and their habitat. The sanctuary encompasses 1,370 square miles around the islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i Kaho'olawe, and Hawai'i.

Visit hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov for more information.



Sanctuary Leads Acoustic Monitoring Efforts

In April 2022, the sanctuary completed four years of participation and leadership in the National Sanctuary Soundscape Monitoring project (SanctSound) that culminated in the release of the SanctSound data portal. The sanctuary also continued long-term efforts to acoustically monitor Hawai'i's humpback whale population acoustically, which led to a publication in the journal *Frontiers in Marine Science* titled "Male humpback whale chorusing in Hawai'i and its relationship with whale abundance and density." This work combined acoustic monitoring with visual surveys and was featured in a PBS documentary titled *Vanishing Whales*.



Sanctuary researchers deploy an acoustic monitoring array. Photo: NOAA

Busiest Response Season Ever

The sanctuary marked its 20th anniversary leading a community-based Large Whale Entanglement Response Network that has freed more than 40 whales, while garnering valuable information to help mitigate this global threat. The 20th season was the sanctuary's busiest, with staff removing more than 3,400 feet of entangling gear in 12 on-water responses benefiting six whales over two months. Sanctuary staff also completed their 18th seasonal detail, conducting 115 large whale entanglement response trainings in Alaska, the principal feeding ground for the same humpback whales that breed and calve in Hawai'i's sanctuary waters.



Sanctuary staff cut a humpback whale free of an entangling rope. Photo: NOAA

Visitor Centers Open Once Again

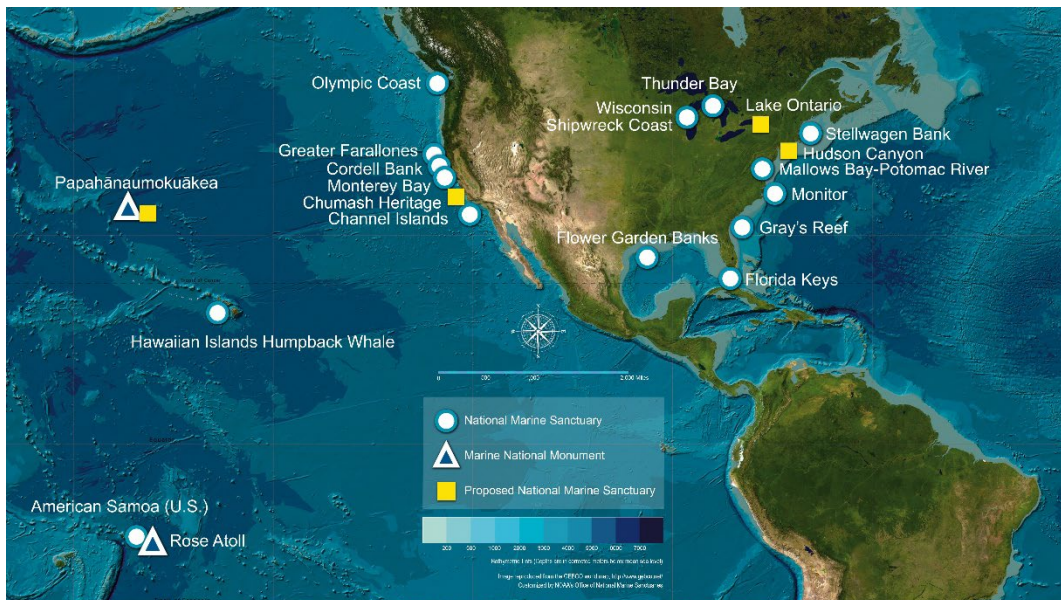
Sanctuary visitor centers on Maui and Kaua'i are open to the public and have held outreach events with partners on the islands of O'ahu, Hawai'i and Maui. Kaua'i has been distributing "Grab and Go" learning kits to students during school breaks, and school groups are back attending classes at the Maui Site. Team Ocean volunteers went back on the water to share best viewing practices with kayakers and stand up paddle boarders and Maui started a new citizen science "Turtle Patrol" program, sharing best practices for viewing turtles with our visitors.



The sanctuary visitor centers have reopened. Photo: NOAA

Looking Ahead

- The Sanctuary will support our State co-managers and local community partners as they launch the Holomua 30x30 Initiative to establish 30% of State waters in marine managed areas, many of which will likely be located within Sanctuary waters.
- The Sanctuary will open our refreshed Kihei visitor center and expand our outreach and education efforts to ensure residents and visitors on all islands understand the importance of humpback whales and their role in our nearshore ecosystems.
- The Sanctuary will work to improve the visitor experience and initiate a resilience strategy to adapt to climate change impacts at the Kihei facility.



The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.