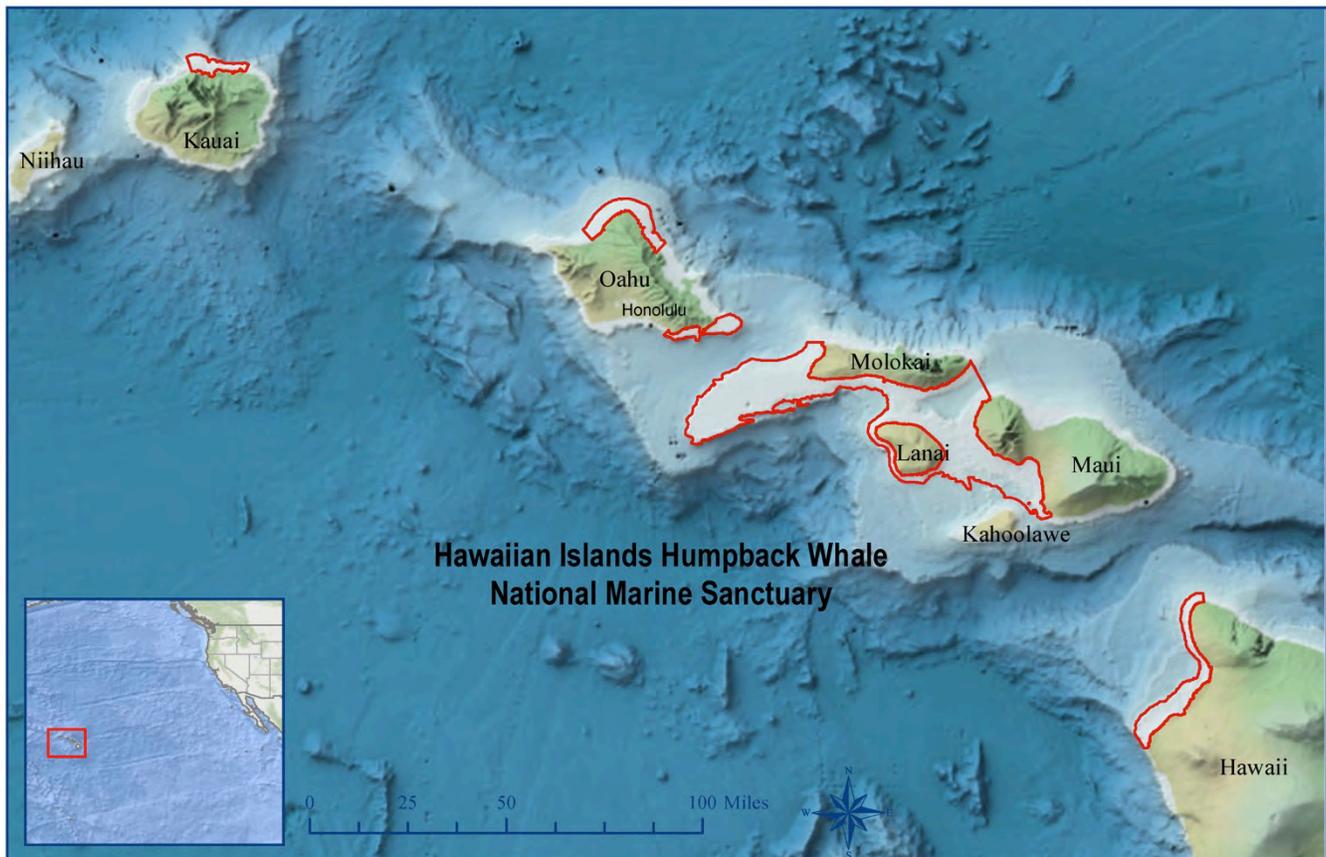


## FY17 Accomplishments



### BACKGROUND

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1992 to protect and preserve humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i. Surrounded by soft sediments of the continental shelf seafloor, the sanctuary is located from the shoreline to the 100-fathom isobath (600 ft. depth) in the four island area of Maui; Penguin Bank; and off the north shore of Kaua'i, the north and south shores of O'ahu, and the north Kona and Kohala coast of Hawai'i Island.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is part of the National Marine Sanctuary

System, which is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries are managed for the conservation of their natural and cultural resources, while supporting sustainable recreation, tourism and compatible commercial activities. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.



Photo: © TripExpert

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was awarded the 2017 Experts' Choice Award and Best of Hawaii by TripExpert.

### International recognition as a tourist destination

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary received the *2017 Experts' Choice Award* from TripExpert. Based on reviews by widely recognized and go-to travel sources Lonely Planet, Travel + Leisure, and Fodor's, the sanctuary was showcased as one of the best attractions from around the globe. In addition, this "ideal spot for viewing the humpback whales that frequent the bay during winter" received Trip Expert's *Best of Hawaii* award for being one of the top visited attractions in Hawai'i.

### Listening to humpback whale songs

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is conducting acoustic research to better understand humpback whale abundance, habitat usage, and the acoustic environment. Researchers use sound recorders to gather whale songs and other sounds in the humpback whale habitat to examine annual trends in whale occurrence and noise levels contributed by both natural and human sources.



Photo: Jupiter Research Foundation

A moored listening station, a cetabuoy, will monitor the acoustic environment and protect humpback whales around Hawai'i.

### Rescuing humpback whales from entanglement

Removal of entangled derelict fishing gear and other marine debris from marine mammals is difficult and dangerous, especially when the patient weighs 45-tons and is located underwater. This past season, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary large whale entanglement response network removed more than 780 feet of coaxial cable from a humpback whale off Maui. While the sanctuary, and the network it coordinates, continue to free whales from life-threatening entanglements, their primary goal is to reduce future entanglement threats.



Photo: Tasia Blough/NOAA / HIHWNMS/MMHSRP permit #18786

The sanctuary response vessel, *Koholā*, assesses an entangled humpback whale off Maui, Hawai'i.

## Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Looking Ahead to FY18

- Dr. Marc Lammers begins as the research coordinator for the sanctuary. Dr. Lammers' expertise will help identify and implement necessary humpback whale research.
- Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, working with co-manager, the State of Hawai'i, will update the sanctuary's management plan for the protection of humpback whales and their habitat.
- Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary will work with the Kukui Grove Center to promote humpback whale awareness and conservation efforts at Kauai's largest shopping center.