Environmental Hero Helps Sanctuary

Fresh from his appearance as a symbol of the environment at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, Jean-Michel Cousteau thrilled fifth-graders at Alamanu Elementary School with a visit to their Honolulu classroom.

The famed ocean explorer commended the school children for winning the Sanctuary Slogan Contest. The prize words: See a Tail, Save a Whale. “It makes sense, it has alliteration, it’s easy to remember, it’s the right thing to do,” the children explained in their well-rehearsed presentation. Cousteau graciously answered the kids’ questions about whales, often drawing on his own eyewitness accounts from his own boyhood spent sailing around the world aboard the research vessel Calypso with his ocean pioneer father Jacques Cousteau.

Alamanu fifth grade teacher Laura Fukumoto said Cousteau’s presence capped off a year of environmental education, which she calls “extremely important” for her students, many of whom are military dependents from nearby Naval housing. “They will be leaving Hawai’i soon, but they will take with them lessons about caring for a beautiful environment and they will always remember meeting a true environmental hero,” said Fukumoto.

Jean-Michel Cousteau also stirred a wave of interest from teachers and others on Kaua’i, where his appearance at the annual Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Family Ocean Fair included a presentation at the fair’s marine-themed educator’s workshop. Amid 1,500 fairgoers that streamed into the Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge overlooking sanctuary waters, Cousteau promoted ocean stewardship by screening one of his original video productions. He also helped get the word out about the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, a new non-profit organization created to support sanctuary education programs.

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GET HOOKED... on solving the marine debris problem affecting humpbacks and all ocean creatures.

CHECK OUT... the recommendations of the International Marine Debris Conference. This call to action is now posted on the sanctuary website along with the complete conference proceedings.

COMING SOON... a chance to share your own ideas on marine debris. Please visit www.hiwmms.noaa.gov

PUBLIC REVIEWS SANCTUARY PLAN

Humpback calves born when the sanctuary was designated five years ago are now adults. Will this be the “comeback generation” of the endangered humpback species? Under a newly revised management plan, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary would continue to work at making this a reality. While no changes to the sanctuary’s original boundaries or regulations are being proposed, the revamped plan calls for implementing activities in five key program areas including research, education, resource protection, cultural enhancement and administration. For the first time, performance measures would be used to evaluate the activities as they relate to the sanctuary’s progress in supporting the recovery of humpbacks in the North Pacific.

The original plan that put Hawai’i’s humpback sanctuary on the map in 1997, the updated version is intended to serve as a blueprint for the next five years of sanctuary operations. Sanctuary staff and members of the Sanctuary Advisory Council collaborated on drafting the new plan, which was released to the public on March 19.

The revised management plan was the focus of public meetings held by the sanctuary on each island during May. Comments elicited in roundtable discussions ranged from the pragmatic to the philosophical. Some who turned out at the meetings came to express specific requests: post more
Public Reviews... Cont. from page 1

At public meetings, citizens help to chart sanctuary’s future.

Management Plan Coordinator Anne Reeseriy; (on right) reads comments.

Signs or produce more educational material; others came with ideas on how they believed whales and other marine life could be better protected. Frequently, the need to expand the sanctuary’s mission to include other species was suggested. A copy of the revised management plan and all comments, including written ones submitted before May 24, may be viewed on the sanctuary website at www.hihwnms.nos.noaa.gov.

Citizen input on the revised management plan plays an important role. The National Marine Sanctuary Program will prioritize the strongest concerns and address them when it prepares a final version of the new plan. This will be sent in August for final approval to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of Hawai‘i—management partners of Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

As one of 13 sites worldwide in the National Marine Sanctuary Program, Hawai‘i’s sanctuary is required to have a management plan that demonstrates the ability to serve the public interest in protecting natural resources. The national program also requires sanctuaries to update plans periodically to ensure that new developments both in the ocean and in coastal communities are being addressed.

INFO WAVES

- Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs on March 20th voted to endorse the reauthorization of the sanctuary. The action followed two presentations where sanctuary staff described a commitment to perpetuating traditional Hawaiian cultural practices within sanctuary boundaries.
- Staff also told trustees about the sanctuary’s future plans aimed at enhancing public understanding of the Native Hawaiian approach to ocean stewardship.
- With the help of a $5,000 grant from Maui County, native vegetation will be used to stabilize beach erosion affecting the picturesque site of sanctuary headquarters in Kīhei, Maui. The new shorefront fix includes the latest beachfront restoration technology and will help reduce the risk of flooding and other erosion-related problems, exacerbated by the coastal area’s high wind and wave action.
- Huge humpbacks made a big impression on Kaua‘i’s smallest citizens at the 15th Annual Mahelona Hospital Petting Zoo. A throng of 850 pre-schoolers and kindergartners had fun making humpback whale buttons (imprinted with the sanctuary’s website). Kaua‘i Sanctuary Liaison Jean Souza, who organized the craft activity, reports that teachers present carted off sanctuary educator packets, full of games and ideas for engaging youngsters’ continued interest in marine mammals.

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SANTUARY DATEBOOK

Sanctuary Lecture Series
Tuesday, June 11, 7:00 p.m.
Sanctuary headquarters on Maui
270 South Kīhei Road in Kīhei
SAYING MAU‘U’S BEACHES
Dr. John Rooney, University of Hawai‘i Coastal Geology Group, looks at the causes and cure for erosion problems affecting Maui’s shores. Contact: 879-2818

Sanctuary Advisory Council Meeting
Thursday, June 13, 10 a.m.
Honolulu Airport Conference Room
Agenda includes presentation by John Reghi of NOAA Fisheries Enforcement. Contact: 397-2655

Set Your Sights on Summer Coral Spawning! Variable locations and dates
Many Hawaiian coral reefs are found nowhere else in the world. Their reproductive activities are highly visual. Observe the magic of coral spawning as it unfolds in Hawaiian waters.

For information and summer dates, contact State Division of Aquatic Resources. Call 587-0318 and ask for a copy of Reef Renewal: Hawai‘i’s Unique Coral Spawning Events

At sanctuary headquarters, fishermen are drawn to waters surrounded by stones of ancient Hawaiian fishpond (seen in background).

The evenly tailored fit of the stones encircling the sanctuary’s beachfront headquarters in Kīhei is your best clue that this is not just nature’s handshake but the remains of Kō‘ue‘e Loko Fa, a fishpond in an important aquaculture system constructed several centuries ago by the Native Hawaiians who first inhabited these shores.

Since opening its doors at this site in 1995, the sanctuary has supported community groups in an effort to restore Kō‘ue‘e Loko Fa to its former glory. Now a new project is helping to rebuild the fishpond’s cultural value. Under a three year federal grant, the American Pacific Foundation is using the site as a living classroom to demonstrate how Native Hawaiians balanced the use and protection of precious fish stocks.

Herb Lee, founder of the American Pacific Foundation, has developed a fishpond-based curriculum for the project, known as Kīhele Loko, which means “call of the fishpond” – a metaphor he takes to heart. “Fishponds not only symbolize a unique feat of ancient Hawaiian engineering, they are a place to learn about components of marine science such as the chain of life that exists at the microscopic level in a ecosystem,” says Lee.

The sanctuary’s Hawaiian Cultural Educator Iolynn Oliveira encouraged Lee to bring Kīhele Loko to Kō‘ue‘e Loko Fa – one of the few relatively intact ancient fishponds on the Maui coastline. Lee took up Oliveira’s invitation to visit the sanctuary and was impressed with what he found.

Of the six different types of fishponds around Hawaiian shores, Lee says the one at the sanctuary is a lo‘ko kuapa– it was designed to create a brackish mixture of ocean and fresh water. He notes: “Native Hawaiians had a real taste for fish from this type of environment, so they built the fishpond walls with sluice gates. The juvenile fish would come inside to feed but, as they grew, they couldn’t get out. This also protected the stock from outside predators. Lee wants youngsters to take pride in this old-time ingenuity of their ancestors. “By learning about fishponds, they will not only discover the past, they will go forward and build something for the future,” he says.