



NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



March 25, 2015

Contact: Malia.Chow@noaa.gov

NOAA proposes expanding focus, boundaries of Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

Agency asks for public comments through June 19

Following extensive collaboration with partners including non-governmental organizations, businesses, scientists, and other members of the community, NOAA today has announced its proposed rule for expanding the size and the focus of [Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary](#) to include multiple marine species.

Members of the public are invited to submit comments to the agency on the proposed rule and draft environmental impact statement now through June 19.

“This proposal is the result of a multi-year collaborative effort that involved considerable input from all sectors of the local community,” said Malia Chow, sanctuary superintendent. “We welcome further public review and input into our proposed new management plan as we move forward with the important job of managing this special place which is critical to both the regional economy and communities in Hawai‘i.”

In 2012, during the process to review the sanctuary’s management plan, the sanctuary advisory council’s working groups determined that while humpback whales remain the centerpiece of sanctuary protection, there is an increased need and urgency to take a more integrated approach to marine resource management.

The ecosystem-based management approach, as proposed, is backed by science and is consistent with the traditional Hawaiian approach to managing natural and cultural resources. NOAA works closely with the state of Hawai‘i, local communities and various stakeholders to protect Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural resources.

The [proposed rule](#) also includes a boundary expansion that adds 235 square miles of state and federal waters around O‘ahu, Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau, bringing the total sanctuary area to 1,601 square miles, and provide the sanctuary with new opportunities to work closely with communities on priority resource protection issues.

Following this comment period, a final management plan and environmental impact statement will be prepared through a public process under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Several meetings are planned for the public to learn more about the proposal and submit comments. Meetings are scheduled for:

- April 27, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Sunset Beach Recreation Center, 59-540 Kamehameha Highway, Hale‘iwa
- April 28, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Honolulu Waldorf School, 350 Ulua Street, Honolulu
- April 29, 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.: Kīhei Youth Center, 131 S. Kīhei Road, Kīhei
- April 30, 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.: Kaunoa Senior Center, 788 Pauoa St., Lahaina

- May 1, 4:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.: Lanikeha Community Center, 2200 Farrington Ave., Kaunakakai
- May 2, 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon: Lānaʻi High and Elementary School, 555 Fraser Avenue, Lānaʻi City
- May 4, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Kīlauea Elementary School Cafeteria, 2440 Kolo Road, Kīlauea
- May 5, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.: *For people residing on and landowners of Niʻihau Island* Niʻihau School Cafeteria, Puuwai Village, Niʻihau
- May 6, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: King Kaumualiʻi Elementary School Cafeteria, 4380 Hanamaʻulu Road, Lihuʻe
- May 7, 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.: Kealakehe High School Cafeteria, 74-5000 Puohuluhuli Street, Kailua-Kona

Comments may also be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NOS-2015-0028>. Submit electronic comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal with Docket Number NOAA-NOS-2015-0028
- Mail: Malia Chow, Sanctuary Superintendent; 1845 Wasp Blvd; Building 176; Honolulu, HI 96818.

For more information on the proposal, visit the sanctuary's website at http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/management/management_plan_review.html.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is administered by a partnership of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the state of Hawai'i through the Department of Land and Natural Resources. The sanctuary, which lies within the shallow—less than 600 feet—and warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands, constitutes one of the world's most important humpback whale habitats. Join us on [Facebook](#).

DLNR's mission is to enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of visitors and the people of Hawai'i. Join us on [Facebook](#).

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

###

MEDIA: For photos and map of expansion areas, go to <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/press/hi-draft-mgmt-plan-review>.