



Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine
Sanctuary Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES

77th Meeting

Tuesday, March 19, 2019 8:30 am – 3:30 pm
Interisland Terminal 1 Conference Room #3 - 'iliahi
Daniel K. Inouye International Airport

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Commercial Shipping

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Conservation

Judith Lemus
Education

Myrick (Rick) Gaffney
Fishing

Steve Turner
Hawai'i Island

Maxx Phillips
Oahu Island

Nina Monasevitch
Kaua'i Island

Solomon Pili Kaho'ohalahala
Lāna'i Island

Robin Newbold
Maui Island

Vacant
Moloka'i Island

Vacant
Native Hawaiian

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Ocean Recreation

Mark Deakos
Research

Vacant
Tourism

Tara Leota
Whale Watching

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Cameron Black
DBEDT Renewable Energy

Vacant
Division of Aquatic Resources

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Sandra Rossetter
DOT – Harbors

Keola Lindsey
OHA (Voting)

Nancy Daschbach
Hawaiian Islands
Humpback Whale NMS

Athline Clark
Papahānaumokuākea MNM

Jeffrey Pollack
NOAA OLE

Jeff Walters
NOAA Fisheries PIRO

Eric Kingma
WESPAC (Voting)

Tunis McElwain
US Army Corps of Engineers

Eric Roberts
US Coast Guard

Janice Fukawa
US Navy

Purpose

Councilmembers will meet to get Sanctuary updates on several different topics followed by breakout group sessions to discuss various Sanctuary management directives.

Welcome

- Vice-Chair Maka'ala Kaaumoana called the meeting to order at 9:05 am and Sabra Kauka performed opening pule.
- Attendance by Cindy Among-Serrao

*present via conference line

Primary SAC council members present: Business - Thorne Abbott, Conservation - Maka'ala Kaaumoana, Education - Judy Lemus*, Fishing - Rick Gaffney, Hawai'i Island - Steve Turner, Kaua'i Island- Nina Monasevitch, Lāna'i Island - Sol Kaho'ohalahala, Maui Island - Robin Newbold, O'ahu Island - Maxx Phillips, Ocean Recreation - James Coon, Research – Mark Deakos, Whale Watching – Tara Leota, Energy Office – Cameron Black, State of Hawai'i DLNR/DAR – Earl Miyamoto, NOAA NMFS PIRO - Jeffrey Walters*, PMNM - Athline Clark, U.S. Navy - Janice Fukawa*, U.S. Coast Guard - Eric Roberts, HIHWNMS Sanctuary Superintendent – Nancy Daschbach, ONMS PIR Director – Allen Tom

Alternate SAC council members present: Business/commerce – Kevin Kelly*, Commercial Shipping – James Kelleher, Conservation - Hoku Cody*, Native Hawaiian - Sabra Kauka, Tourism – Magen Schifiliti

ONMS Staff: Cindy Among-Serrao, Jean Souza, Paul Wong, Ed Lyman, Kalani Quiocho Nicole Evans, and Alan Lum

Council Business

- Overview and approval of agenda
 - Motion to accept by Jim Coons, seconded Rick Gaffney. Approved by all.
- Review and approval of October 30, 2018 Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to accept Robin, seconded Rick Gaffney. Approved unanimously.

Superintendent Update

- Hiring of new superintendent (Allen)
 - Without a sanctuary superintendent for 2 years; a number of acting superintendents have filled the role. In the first hiring process, the selection was thrown out due to NOAA hiring contractor not doing things properly. In the second hiring process, an offer was made and then withdrawn. Another hiring process will occur but the timeline is unknown since it will be in the queue with all other NOAA hiring. In order for applicants to make the lists for review they need to meet the criteria in the job announcement. Primarily we



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are looking for a good manager to manage offices, staff, and projects, not necessarily someone with experience with humpback whales.

- Nancy Daschbach will be the acting superintendent. She was previously the sanctuary superintendent for Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Beginning in 1988, she was the first superintendent for the sanctuary in American Samoa. For the past 12 years, she has been doing administrative work for the Pacific Islands Region Office of ONMS and HIHWNMS at the Kihei office in Maui.
- Impacts on the Sanctuary and its research/events due to the shutdown - Nancy Daschbach, Acting Sanctuary Superintendent
 - The furlough lasted 35 days and there was only one staff on site at the Kihei office. This was the NOAA Corp officer who was able to work and monitor the facilities and vessel.
 - The visitor center and offices in Kihei were closed during the height of humpback whale season.
 - Federal staff were not allowed to work. Some of the NOAA contractors were able to work from home.
 - All education and outreach activities during the peak season had to be cancelled.
 - Ocean Count was allowed to go forward with the assistance of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and their staff.
 - Humpback whale research had to be postponed during the peak humpback whale season. The opportunity to collect research data was lost and could not be made up.
 - Ed Lyman was able to respond to humpback whale incidents. There was one response to a stranded humpback whale.

*Question: What was the cost of the shutdown? Can we quantify the programs and activities that were lost.

- Sanctuary highlights since last meeting are included in the folders for all SAC members in the document titled: Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Agency Report to the Sanctuary Advisory Council October, 2018 - March 2019.

State of Hawai'i-DAR Update - Earl Miyamoto

- Brian Neilson, acting DAR, at the legislative session as we speak.
- Update on co-manager search. No qualified applicants on state cert list. Thorne asked for a description of the position. It is a civil service position funded by federal funds provided to state year to year. Funding only for one-year at a time. When will the position be advertised and where. Open announcement until filled, but looking to change position description. Looking to change description from a planner to include a marine biologist.
- Earl's plate is full. Brian will determine who the liaison, point of contact will be.

Kauai Update – Jean Souza, Program Specialist

- Due to the loss of PMNM staff the Kauai office is being evaluated. Transform the office into a discovery center. Looking to move office to a high traffic area. Jean on detail to Region to do PMNM and HIHWNMS work. The options include closing

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current office and moving the position to Oahu or Maui. This is a critical point and we are looking at a space in Kukui Grove Shopping Center as an outreach facility.

- One mechanism for doing this is through the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. Currently pay rent at a business center in Lihue. The SAC needs to weigh in on this since ONMS HQ needs to be convinced that NMSF needs to develop an agreement with the shopping center. Refer to the 91-page visitor center proposal in Kauai. This proposal if successful can be replicated on other islands, Kona, similar to what is done in Hilo with Mokupapapa. This will have PMNM, HIHWNMS, and partner displays.
- Allen Tom said the SAC should develop a resolution. Cindy will help Judy prepare a resolution for the SAC.
- Tremendous amount of research on Kauai done by Navy. They might be a good partner in outreach- Mark D.
- Opined that sanctuary programs should be in the sanctuary – Makaala K..
 - North Shore of Kauai is very expensive. Kukui Grove is an older shopping center that has been upgraded, many vacancies that are being filled and their are increased community opportunities. Good safe place and close to schools. Proposal to develop resolution that SAC supports this effort to do outreach and education at Kukui Grove Shopping Center. She has a duty to provide connections to culture and environment.
 - There is nothing on Kauai for families and visitors. Can the foundation ask for donations to support this center. (Tara L.)
- Use the points that Jean made in her presentation for the resolution. This includes reasons for the relocation, reaching more people, a demonstrated purpose, and dedicated.
- Aligns with overall sentiment to make sanctuary more accessible to public and aligns with RAC/ SAC ideas of a joint discovery center. This aligns with previous discussions from the RAC and SAC and education working group.
- Up to 1 million visitors per year that go through the shopping center. Easily accessible to school groups. (Sabra K.)
- Concur with all points that have been made. People wonder where they can learn more about wildlife. Tourists and keiki. Need to bring in donations and gift shop retail. (Nina M.)
- Supports a similar venue for Kauai, as the Kihei visitor center gets a lot of visitation. (Robin N.)
- The Kihei visitor center creates a lot of foot traffic. (Thorne A.)
- Supports a visitor center in Kaua‘i. Has worked with two different groups in Kona that are interested in developing community centers due to new tax reductions afforded to investors. NELHA and Honokohau Harbor. The Kona museum that he is involved in will include all ocean activities including canoe racing. (Rick G.)
- Retail sales alone should be able to support facility. (Jim C.)

Updates from the Humpback Whale Researchers Meeting & Stranding & Disentanglement Reports - Ed Lyman, Natural Resources Management Specialist

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- Trends in Humpback Whale Abundance, Distribution, and Health in Hawaii and Alaska workshop was sponsored by NOAA Fisheries and HIHWNMS to bring humpback whale researchers together to better understand the observed decline in abundance in the past couple of years. The humpback whale tour industry was one of the first to see this trend, followed by observations by various researchers in Alaska, Hawaii, Mexico and other areas. There have been lower number of sightings of adults and calves humpback whales. One of the questions was was there a change in habitat use and whales not coming to Hawaii. The purpose of the workshop was to identify hypotheses for the lower number of sightings and determine knowledge gaps for understanding why this may this be occurring. This would include looking at other species and environmental conditions. Declines in sightings were first seen in 2013 to 2014, which coincides with some environmental changes including the Blob (ocean warming of the west coast), the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) and El Nino patterns.
- The outcomes to date from the trends meeting include extra effort and partnerships for humpback whale research such as combining efforts, coordinated surveys, collaborative acoustic monitoring, increasing scope of efforts, and discussions across management agencies on how to address the issue.
- Current data from surveys, observations, and acoustic monitoring, show a decline in sightings over the past several years and preliminarily some rebound this year. The sanctuary has been doing opportunistic transects. Glacier Bay National Park has been doing long-term monitoring that shows a 60% percent decline in the sightings of humpback whales, especially calves. Feeding ground observations include seeing emaciated whales, less calves.
- So far this year the sanctuary has recorded – 3 dead humpback whales, 5 whale vessel contacts, 9 confirmed entanglement reports. Entanglement reports for Hawaii and Alaska. Younger whales get entangled more frequently. Gear from British Columbia are showing up on a larger number of entanglements. Humpback whales that have been foraging nearshore in Alaska for salmon fry will run into different gear types. Accomplishments to date include 28 whales have had significant gear cut free. Last season one of the busiest; this season 9 confirmed reports of entangled whales in Hawaii.

Maritime Heritage Program Update on Humpback whales - Hans VanTilburg, ONMS Maritime Heritage Coordinator

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA):
 - Section 106 requires consideration of negative impacts by federal agencies to historic properties.
 - Section 110 requires federal agencies to establish a preservation program and inventory historic properties.
- Historic properties in addition to shipwrecks, downed planes, and other military assets can include shore infrastructure such as landings, locations with cultural significance, or sacred area. This broader net is maritime heritage.
- The Maritime Heritage Program (MHP) within ONMS was established in 2002.

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- NOAA is a resource management agency
- Develop best management practices
- Specific MHP strategic priorities
- Engagement with tribes and native groups
- Maritime Cultural Landscape
- MHP developed guidance for understanding Hawaiian cultural landscapes with Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) funding. The work was done by Honua Consulting Inc. who also contracted to do the cultural viewsheds analyses; offshore wind farms need to consider view shed impacts.
- MHP has done an assessment of submerged properties in the Hawaiian Islands, which includes ~ 2,100 entries. Within Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary there are ~ 76 military aircraft, sunken ships, and landing craft.
- **Questions:**
 - What is the site off of Kauai? One is Cleopatra's Barge and the other is a report of another sunken vessel.
 - What if a site is on the historic properties list and is in the sanctuary? NHPA and Sunken Military Craft Act regulations would still apply as elsewhere in Hawaii.

Humpback Whale Aerial Survey Updates - Joe Mobley, University of Hawaii

- Follow on to marine mammals surveys of the waters around the main Hawaiian Islands done 16 years ago from 1993 to 2003 also done by Joe Mobley. First idea for these types of surveys by humpback whale researcher Lou Hermann. An accepted method of estimating animal abundance is distance sampling using transects and estimating distance to sightings. Using distance from sightings, we can model densities, which can be interpreted as animals per square kilometer.
- Other methods are mark recapture, based on bird banding studies. For humpback whales, mark and recapture is using fluke ID by photographing them and identifying matching sightings. This method was used in the SPLASH humpback whale research project. There is limited utility of non-scientific methods, such as citizen science observations; the issues include weather and difference in effort across regions and years.
- Timeline of activities related to Hawaii humpback whales:
 - 2006 - SPLASH used mark recapture to get an estimate of abundance.
 - 2016 - NOAA removes most humpback whales from endangered species list.
 - 2018 - Experts meet in Hawaii to understand decline of sightings of humpback whales.
 - 2018 - Gabriele shows significantly fewer whales sightings in Glacier Bay National Park.
 - 2018 - Cartwright shows decreased sightings in Hawaii.
 - 2019 - Mobley and others are able to get funding within one month through crowdsourcing.
- Preliminary info from 2019-20 survey:
 - Survey only in the Maui Nui and Penguin Banks area from February 8 to March 19, 2019.

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- Survey area was 7 miles past 1,000 fathom limit contour, 14 nm spaced lines, N to S.
- 71 % of sightings are inside 100 fathom contour.
- Different aggregations of humpback whales seen in channels then previously observed in 1993-2003 surveys.
- Relatively few animals seen on Penguin Banks
- Small sample size
- Population should of doubled in fourteen years based on 7% increase per year
- Only looking at a small area, Maui Nui/Penguin Banks, and not whole breeding ground as in 1993-2003 surveys when all the main Hawaiian Islands were done.
- Has funds from Whale Trust to repeat Maui Nui/Penguin Banks area next season (~\$15K; to do the whole state (MHI) would cost about \$85K)
- **Conclusions:**
 - Data analysis so far is preliminary pending result of more definitive distance analysis
 - Based on encounter rates whales counts are comparable to 2003 levels
 - Calf rate based on three surveys appears to be consistent to 1993 to 2003
 - However without surveying all eight main Hawaiian islands difficult to determine the status of population
- Funds are needed to support the surveys. Funding sources for previous survey were from Navy (ATOC, LFA) and Scripps.
- Distribution changes of humpback whales around the islands over the years can show impacts.

Update from the Navy - Marc Deakos, research contractor for the Navy

- This is a summary of some of the U.S. Navy funded marine mammal monitoring in Hawaii provided by Marc Deakos who is a research contractor for the Navy. Julie Rivers, who was previously the Navy's Marine Resources Program Manager is now based in Italy. Janice Fukawa, the Navy's SAC representative is on the phone and can help clarify any of the presentation.
- Navy is aware of the concern of their impacts on marine mammals from sonar and explosives.
- Navy applies for permits with NOAA Fisheries.
- Hawaii Range Complex
- Annual report is published every year on advances in research - <https://navysustainability.dodlive.mil/environment/lmr/>
- Some of the questions Navy marine mammal research is trying to address:
 - What are the critical habitats?
 - What is there exposure?
 - How do they respond?
 - How does this impact them as a population?
- Overview of current projects
 - Navy funding to NOAA for HICEAS surveys of ceataceans.
 - Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Hawaii Ocean Sound Monitoring
 - Humpback whale tracking vial long term satellite tags
 - Behavioral response of Marine Mammals to Navy activities at PMRF

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- Long term trend marine mammal abundance PMRF
- Cetacean Satellite Tagging Studies On PMRF
- PMRF since there are Navy activities including submarine training course
- Monitoring Before, during and after
- University of Hawaii for Cetacean Stranding Response
- Humpback Whale Tagging
- Bee lings to BC and Aleutians
- Some of tagging work of Kauai shows alot visiting Niihau and seamounts. Unknown if there is feeding going on.
- Sightings of humpback whale from all Navy funding area and vessels surveys
 - Public reporting 0 More info, annual reports
- Promote all activities including Navy marine mammal research. (Makaala K.)
 - Ensure it is understandable – Abstracts are available.

12:15 pm Public Comment – No public comment

12:30 – 1:15 pm Lunch

1:15 pm Breakout Sessions for the SAC Subcommittees to Discuss Various

**Due to low attendance of SAC members it was suggested to review each subcommittee workplan one by one*

Review of Native Hawaiian Subcommittee Work plan

- Two years ago, how could Native Hawaiian culture be integrated into HIHWNMS
- Kohola – How can the culture be integrated. The spouting of humpback whale could represent the Ha, the breath, from a Hawaiian cultural perspective.
- Kanaloa, is the god of the sea.
- The whale can go to the deepest depth and then penetrate the surface of the ocean to take flight. Trying to understand them in a way that cultural values can be integrated into the sanctuary.
- Many Hawaiian values that can be applied to the kohola.
- Ohana – family values; not just cultural values, but also dynamic values and looking forward.
- Sol's video should be used educationally. Need to credit images and videos. Cindy can share with all the SAC. Video need some narration.
- How do we treat wildlife at death? Brave young people leading discussion. How are we going to recommend what to do with whale remains.
- Single species mandate, but are connected through the Kumilipo to everything. Humpback whales are born here. Described in creation chant. The coral polyp to the kohola. The ocean to land and air.
- In the kumilipo we belong to the entire chain of creation. Not just confined to a single species, since everything is connected. The whale is connected to all things. There are ways to make sure we are connected and not in a vacuum.
- No one is locally based to speak for the whales
- More bilingual resources – brochures, videos, training modules, etc.
- Related to:
 - Conservation subcommittee - What is the importance of water quality to the kohola.
 - Education subcommittee

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- Develop sanctuary training module on humpback whales including cultural component.
- PMNM uses cultural briefing video as part of permit policy, guide (pua) program with experience in week long training for new staff in Papahānaumokuākea.
- PMNM Employee handbook can be shared.
- Aloha Aina framework is very rich document that should be used.
- Water quality is important to the coral polyp
- Paper on history of kohola in Hawaiian culture.
- Duality of kumulipo and Hawaiian chanting. Kumulipo stretches all across the Pacific not just in Hawaii.
- HIHWNMS intern did a brochure summarizing the kohola references in the Hawaiian language and use.
- One reason cultural component is missing is because not enough info is known, so there is a reluctance to muck it up.
- Puukohola NHP should be a partner, as well as Puuhonua O Honauanau.
- Recognize the humpback whales significance to other cultures where the humpback whale goes – Japan, Alaska, etc...
- We should complete our cultural story about humpback whales.
- Nothing is controversial and everyone should be learning it.
- Non Native Hawaiians can share cultural stories and values as long they are represented accurately.
- Culture and value in resource management. A younger generation that wants to engage. A single species that can inform on other things. Allow younger folks and exposing them early on brings good ideas to science. Use education to provide framework.
- Integrating Hawaiian culture in the hotel experience. Participated in Hookele program. What would happen if the humpback whale did not come how it would affect the Hawaiian culture.

RAC and SAC working group

- Prioritizing the things that can be taken up.
- Purpose: The purpose of the joint working group of the HIHWNM Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) and Northwest Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council (RAC) is to participate in common activities or pool resources to achieve common goals in advocacy, research, education and outreach or other services.

3:00 pm Public Comment – No public comment

3:30 Meeting Adjourned

“The opinions and findings of this letter/publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the sanctuary, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or the State of Hawai’i.”