

# Kohola' Mana Ohana

P.O. Box 1723 • Kapaa, Hawaii 96746

(808) 337-9977

KoholaManaOhana@yahoo.com



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Dear Friends in the Sanctuary,

Kohola Mana Ohana is a marine mammal protection group on the island of Kaua'i. We are a sub group of the Ocean Mammal Institute.

## **EXPANSION OF THE SANCTUARY TO INCLUDE TURTLES, DOLPHINS, ETC.:**

If the sanctuary was able to show that it has a successful record with what it already supposed to protect, then this would be a good idea. The fact is though, that the sanctuary cannot provide any evidence that it has had an impact on the increase in the whale population. Can it be shown that the percent yearly population increase since the onset of the sanctuary is a larger number than the percent population increase in the years before? Apparently not. Once this is accomplished, or some other measure of success is met, then and only then would it be appropriate to discuss expansion. Until there are some regulations to protect whales, it makes no sense to expand to other species.

## **REVISED MISSION STATEMENT**

The plan should begin with a revised mission statement for the sanctuary that reflects the responsibilities of the sanctuary as stated in the legislation (16 U.S.C. 1431 et Seq. and subtitle C, title 11, Pub. L. 102-587, 106 stat 5005.) The plan should then describe each area of responsibility, and also describe how the sanctuary plans to fulfill its mission.

## **EDUCATION CENTER ON KAUAI**

An education center with a rehabilitation center is needed on Kauai. This management plan should include a task force to document all steps necessary to undertake this endeavor, and create an implementation plan for creating this facility including the projected costs involved.

## **NHINM**

The Sanctuary should also investigate measures necessary to protect whales in the Northwest Hawai'ian Islands National Monument (NHINM). The management plan should include research on this topic and result in recommendations and a way forward for protecting humpback whales and associated species in Papahānaumokuā'kea.

## **HABITAT DEGRADATION AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

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This management plan should include development and implementation of a strategy to create a Marine Protected Area (MPA) on Kauai or Ni'ihau, with the objective of preparing a formal proposal for an MPA within the timeframe of this management cycle.

Ocean acidification represents a threat to biological diversity that is, likely, as severe as global warming. Reefs are dying from pollution & over nutrification. Fish are disappearing from pollution and over fishing. It is proven that Marine Protected Conservation Areas are very effective in re-establishing healthy reefs and fish populations. Scientists recommend a minimum of 20% of inshore waters be reserved as conservation districts to maintain healthy reefs and fish populations. These marine reserves have proven to be highly effective in re-establishing healthy fish populations. The conservation areas in Hawaii amount to less than 1 % of entire coastline. These protected areas have been proven worldwide to re-establish healthy fish populations and reef habitat. It involves TEMPORARY "no take" of specific areas, which in a matter of 18 months BENEFIT fishermen and all marine life. There are no Marine Conservation Areas on Kauai. The sanctuary should help protect reef habitat and establish "No Take" Marine Conservation Areas on Kauai. All the other Islands have this.

## **REGULATORY COLLABORATION BETWEEN LAND AND OCEAN USES, ESP. REGARDING POLLUTION**

There must be more regulatory collaboration between land and ocean uses, especially regarding pollution, that would affect the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary must take a leading role in fostering this collaboration. The management plan should include an investigation of these issues and a plan to implement closer collaboration between the Sanctuary and other users.

## **SANCTUARY BOUNDARIES AND ENFORCEMENT**

Presently on Kauai only a small area on the North shore is designated as sanctuary. This needs to be expanded to Ni'ihau and West Kaua'i as well as the southern shore. Less than 1 % of the sanctuary budget is spent on enforcement. Currently there is practically no enforcement of existing laws (Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act). It is clear we need the sanctuary to be a steward playing a strong role in protecting the whales and their ocean habitat.

## **USE OF THE TERM "EMERGING" VS. "IMPERATIVE" IN REGARDS TO:**

### **1. SONAR AND ACOUSTIC IMPACTS**

### **2. SPEED**

### **3. FISHING NETS**

### **4. POLLUTION** The current iteration of the Sanctuary management plan describes "emerging" issues that need further study. We strongly disagree that all of these

issues are "emerging". Many of those presented are well-known issues that include regulatory policy solutions in other locations. Instead, these issues should be marked as imperative, and the management plan needs to state a way forward for the Sanctuary, not recommend further studies. The following are identified as imperative (not emerging) policies that already cover existing regulatory issues.

1. Navy sonar kills whales. It is a very painful death, and threatens all cetacean (whale & dolphin) populations. Acoustic disturbance in addition to sonar, including; shipping, underwater explosives, boat engine noise, commercial air guns & seismic surveys have all been documented to cause behavioral impacts, strandings, alters communication, causes deafness and death in whales. The sanctuary has done nothing to protect whales from sonar or acoustic disturbance. The Sanctuary should limit all sonar activity during whale season and to comply with NOAA noise policies to prevent or mitigate acoustic impacts to whales
2. Areas within the Hawaiian sanctuary must include speed limits with enforcement. Vessel strikes with whales have increased by nearly 500% in Hawaiian waters since 1975. Scientific research proves that boat speed is clearly a factor in the incidence of collisions. Scientists have advised that speed regulations should be
3. put in place, with adequate monitoring and enforcement. The sanctuary has done nothing to protect the whales from vessel collisions. Other sanctuaries have speed limits, but not this sanctuary.
4. Net entanglement is a huge threat to all marine mammals. Gillnets are invisible walls catching EVERYTHING, entire schools of fish are removed, juveniles, turtles, marine mammals, unwanted inedible fish—all by catch are thrown back dead or dying. Fish populations are dwindling dramatically. To the sanctuary's credit, they have started a dis-entanglement program for whales. This is good, but not enough. There needs to be regulation and legal consequences of discarded fisher's nets. The Sanctuary should work on strong laws to have all nets identifiable and hold fishers' liable for derelict nets, and a reward for boaters who collect stray nets.
5. Chemicals & pollution create pathogen friendly environments in Hawaii's waters and cause algae blooms, which smother the reefs and are toxic to marine mammals. Pesticides, PCDD.s, PCDF's, dioxin- like PCB's, PBDE's have been found in marine mammals. From a June 2010 report; cadmium, aluminum, chromium, lead, silver, mercury and titanium together are at the highest levels ever found in marine mammals. For every one-pound of plankton living in the Pacific Ocean there are 6 pounds of plastic. The ocean has become a toxic soup. There are increasing numbers of whales dying from fatal ingestion of garbage. Plastic bags, plastic of various kinds, discarded fishing nets, etc. have been found in their stomachs. Our reefs are being smothered and killed by sediment and runoff from construction, fertilizer, pesticides and sewage. All of this eventually makes it to the ocean via ground water. Fertilizers are fertilizing the ocean causing algae blooms, this smothers the reefs and keeps them from getting sunlight. Algae grows faster than coral. Fibropapillomatosis is a tumorous disease that has reached epidemic proportions among Hawaii's Green sea turtle population. On the West coast of Maui 75 % of resident turtles are infected with

this virus. Currently Maui puts 15 billion gallons of waste a year into coastal waters. The Sanctuary has taken no action to protect our waters from water pollution. The Sanctuary should fund water quality monitoring and strict laws to stop sewage dumping, pesticide and chemical runoff.

### **ADVISORY BOARD TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY**

The Advisory Board for the sanctuary must be representative of the entire community. The Advisory Board should create enforceable policies and rules while also ensuring that funding for the Sanctuary includes effective regulatory oversight. The sanctuary must have a transparent budget and be accountable for all spending and funding decisions.

**The management plan should include a description of the formal role of the Advisory Board, and a strategy for implementing and enforcing policies and responsibilities of the Sanctuary.**

### **NEED TO RE-ORGANIZE AND RE-DIRECT PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES**

Based on the responsibilities stated in the Mission Statement, and the tasks described above, the Sanctuary Management Plan must also address re-organization and re-direction of personnel and resources to create an operational management structure that can fulfill its duties for all the Hawaiian Island sanctuaries.

For the Whales,



Nina Monasevitch