

At A Glance

- The sanctuary began its management plan review in Summer 2010.
- The process relies heavily on the community-based sanctuary advisory council and the public to assist in developing further management activities.
- In 2012, the sanctuary advisory council held open public meetings on January 17-18 and September 20.
- Council members voted in favor of forwarding all sanctuary advisory council recommendation reports and the Aloha 'Āina guidance document to sanctuary management.
- Sanctuary management will consider advisory council recommendations and continue consultations with the State of Hawai'i, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, subject matter experts, and other partners in developing an updated draft management plan and an associated environmental impact statement.
- The draft management plan and draft environmental impact statement are expected to be released to the public in fall 2013.



Council members participate in a two-day council meeting in January 2012.

Management Plan Review Status Update: May 2013

The sanctuary's management plan review began in 2010 and will take several years to complete. The process will result in a new management plan for the sanctuary. The draft management plan is being developed through an extensive public process. The target for a draft revised management plan is fall 2013 with the final target for completion in 2014.

Advisory Council Working Group Process

In 2011, Sanctuary Advisory Council (council) working groups developed management recommendations to address priority issues identified during public scoping. Working group reports were presented to the full council for their review and approval on January 17-18, 2012. Council members voted in favor of forwarding all working group reports to sanctuary management.

Recommendations include shifting to an ecosystem-based sanctuary and adding additional regulations such as special management areas and speed limits within sanctuary boundaries. All reports recommend that the sanctuary work closely with communities and increase coordination among agencies.

The working group reports supported by the council contain over 150 management recommendations including detailed rationale and justifications to support their findings.



Photo: HIHWNMS
Working group members collaborate to develop recommendations at the Humpback Whale Protections Workshop.

Members of the working groups conducted extensive public engagement to gather stakeholder input on their proposed recommendations.

The recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of the sanctuary, NOAA, or the State of Hawai'i.

Stakeholder Engagement

The sanctuary has reached out to a broad constituency to ensure a high level of public and stakeholder engagement throughout the sanctuary management plan review process thus far. Participants contributed 2,010 individual hours of service to the working group process. The sanctuary has maintained a high level of coordination with the State of Hawai'i and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service and will support their marine resource protection efforts through the new management plan. The sanctuary will continue to engage communities and stakeholder groups in the process as it continues.

Background

- The sanctuary was designated by an act of Congress in 1992. It was designed to be a single species sanctuary to protect humpback whales and their habitat.
- The sanctuary has initiated the process to review, evaluate, and update its management plan. This plan is a document specific to the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary that is used to guide management of the site.
- During the previous management plan review and revision process in 2002, numerous public comments were received requesting the sanctuary consider increasing its scope to include the conservation and management of additional resources. Former Hawai'i Governor Linda Lingle also expressed her support for the sanctuary's consideration of this concept.
- In the spring of 2010, 8 pre-scoping public meetings were held across the state to ensure that the public was aware of the upcoming opportunity to participate in the sanctuary public scoping process.
- A list of priority issues was identified from a 90-day public comment and scoping period initiated in summer of 2010, with 10 statewide public meetings and over 12,300 submissions received.
- The sanctuary advisory council established working groups to further examine priority issues and develop management recommendations. The working groups were made up of council members, community and user group representatives, and technical experts. Working group meetings were open to the public and facilitated public participation by gathering input from relevant constituent groups. Additionally, meeting agendas and minutes were posted on the sanctuary website.
- In January 2012, Governor Neil Abercrombie indicated his support of the current management plan review process and its consideration to broaden the focus of the sanctuary from the humpback whale and its habitat to the ecosystem as a whole, including historic and biocultural resources.
- During a public meeting in January 2012, the sanctuary advisory council voted to forward all working group recommendation reports to sanctuary management. The recommendations address priority issues such as offshore development, water quality, ecosystem protections, increase protections for humpback whales, enforcement, climate change, ocean literacy, Native Hawaiian cultural resources, and maritime heritage resources. The recommendations ranged from adding additional regulations such as zoning and speed limits within sanctuary boundaries to increasing partnerships and coordination with other agencies.
- During a public meeting in September 2012, the sanctuary advisory council voted to forward the Aloha 'Āina guidance document to sanctuary management which reflects outputs from a workshop that was proposed by the sanctuary advisory council in January 2012 as a result of recommendations by the Native Hawaiian and Ecosystem Protections working groups.
- There has been, and will continue to be, a high level of community engagement in the sanctuary management plan review process.



Photo: HIHWNMS

Sanctuary engages with stakeholder representatives at community workshops.



Photo: James Yamamoto

Sanctuary staff collaborates with community members on Kaua'i.



Photo: HIHWNMS

Stakeholders participate in the "Visioning the Future of Aquaculture in Hawai'i" Workshop.