



Contact: Christine Brammer
808-397-2651 x 249

MEDIA STATEMENT
March 30, 2013

**Volunteers Count Whales in Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
National Marine Sanctuary during the Final 2013 Sanctuary Ocean Count**

Approximately 600 volunteers gathered data from the shores of O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i Island during today's annual Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Ocean Count. The count is a yearly shore-based census that provides snapshot data on humpback whales. Participants tally humpback whale sightings and document the animals' surface behavior during the survey.

Volunteers collected data from 60 sites statewide. A total of 194 whales were seen during the 8:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. time period, the most of any time period throughout today's count (58 sites reported data). The day began with excellent viewing conditions at most locations but rain eventually cancelled quite a few sites.

Preliminary data detailing whale sightings by site location is available at: <http://www.sanctuaryoceancount.org/resources/>

Today's count was the last event of the 2013 Sanctuary Ocean Count project. For information on becoming a Sanctuary Ocean Count volunteer in 2014, visit sanctuaryoceancount.org or hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov.

The sanctuary which 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 (DLNR), protects humpback whales and their habitat in Hawaiian waters where they migrate each winter to mate, calve, and nurse their young.

On the Web:

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary: <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources: <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/>