

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Volunteers Count Whales in Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

Over 500 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 58 sites statewide. A total of 165 whales were seen during the 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. time period, the most of any time period throughout today’s count (57 sites reported data). Weather conditions varied throughout the state. Many sites experienced calm ocean conditions in the morning before heavy rain and thunderstorms reached different parts of the islands, forcing some sites to cancel the count early.

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 2014 Sanctuary Ocean Count project. For more information on becoming a Sanctuary Ocean Count volunteer in 2015 visit <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov> or <http://sanctuaryoceancount.org>.

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/>