



**Contact: Christine Brammer**  
808-397-2651 x 249

**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
March 12, 2013

## **Humpback Whale Freed of Life-threatening Entanglement in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary**

On Monday, March 11, 2013, a response effort to free an entangled male humpback whale was mounted and the animal was successfully disentangled. The animal was found and reported by the tour vessel, Man-of-War, last Friday near Lahaina. The entanglement involved several wraps of small gauge line around the animal's tail, which was already cutting into the animal, making the entanglement life threatening. An immediate response was launched, and while the response team was not able to remove all the gear by the end of the day, they did cut free approximately 40 feet of trailing line. In order to continue the effort, a satellite tag buoy was attached to the animal. On Monday, when conditions allowed, the team relocated the animal between Kaho'olawe and Lana'i and all entangling gear was removed.

The effort was lead by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary), working closely with NOAA Fisheries; however, many people and organizations were involved. The response effort, working under NOAA's Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program, involved the sanctuary, NOAA Fisheries, the US Coast Guard, the NOAA Corps, Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, the West Maui Rapid Response team, MacGillivray Freeman Films (currently filming an IMAX film on humpback whales), researchers, several tour and charter boat companies, and many others.

Only three humpback whales have been reported and confirmed entangled this season – a third of what is typically reported by this time of the season. Monday's efforts of various government agencies and ocean users working together represents the first successful response of the 2012-2013 whale season – one that everyone should be very proud of. Entanglement continues to be one of the primary threats to humpback whales and other cetaceans worldwide.

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.

*Photos and video available upon request.*

### **On the Web:**

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary: <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>  
State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources: <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/>