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Renovated Sanctuary Visitor Center Blessed at NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary's Visitor Center in Kīhei, Maui, was blessed during a brief ceremony yesterday. Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D, under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator, participated in the ceremony that included a blessing by sanctuary staff member Ka'au Abraham.

Home to the sanctuary since 1994, the Kīhei property has undergone a variety of improvements over the last few years. The latest renovation of the property's historic building takes advantage of the stunning oceanfront location that provides an ideal place for all ages to learn about Hawai'i's spectacular marine environment.

Future visitor center exhibits will highlight the work of NOAA and others in protecting the sanctuary and the marine environment, including humpback whales, Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and coral reefs. Outside, interpretive signs will highlight stories of the historic Hawaiian fishpond adjacent to the property. Intertwined throughout will be displays on how native Hawaiians lived in concert with the land and sea.

Temporary exhibits will be on display while permanent exhibits are being planned and developed. Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sanctuary Visitor Center, open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. A variety of special lectures and other events are held on site. All activities are free of charge. For a complete listing of events visit the sanctuary's [website](#).

Financial support for new exhibits is still being sought. Donations are being accepted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. Visit the sanctuary online to find out more about supporting this project.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is administered jointly by a partnership of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. The sanctuary works to protect humpback whales through research, education, conservation and stewardship.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

On the Web:

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