

# Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

*Protecting Hawaii's humpback  
whales and their environment*

*Malia Chow, Sanctuary Superintendent*



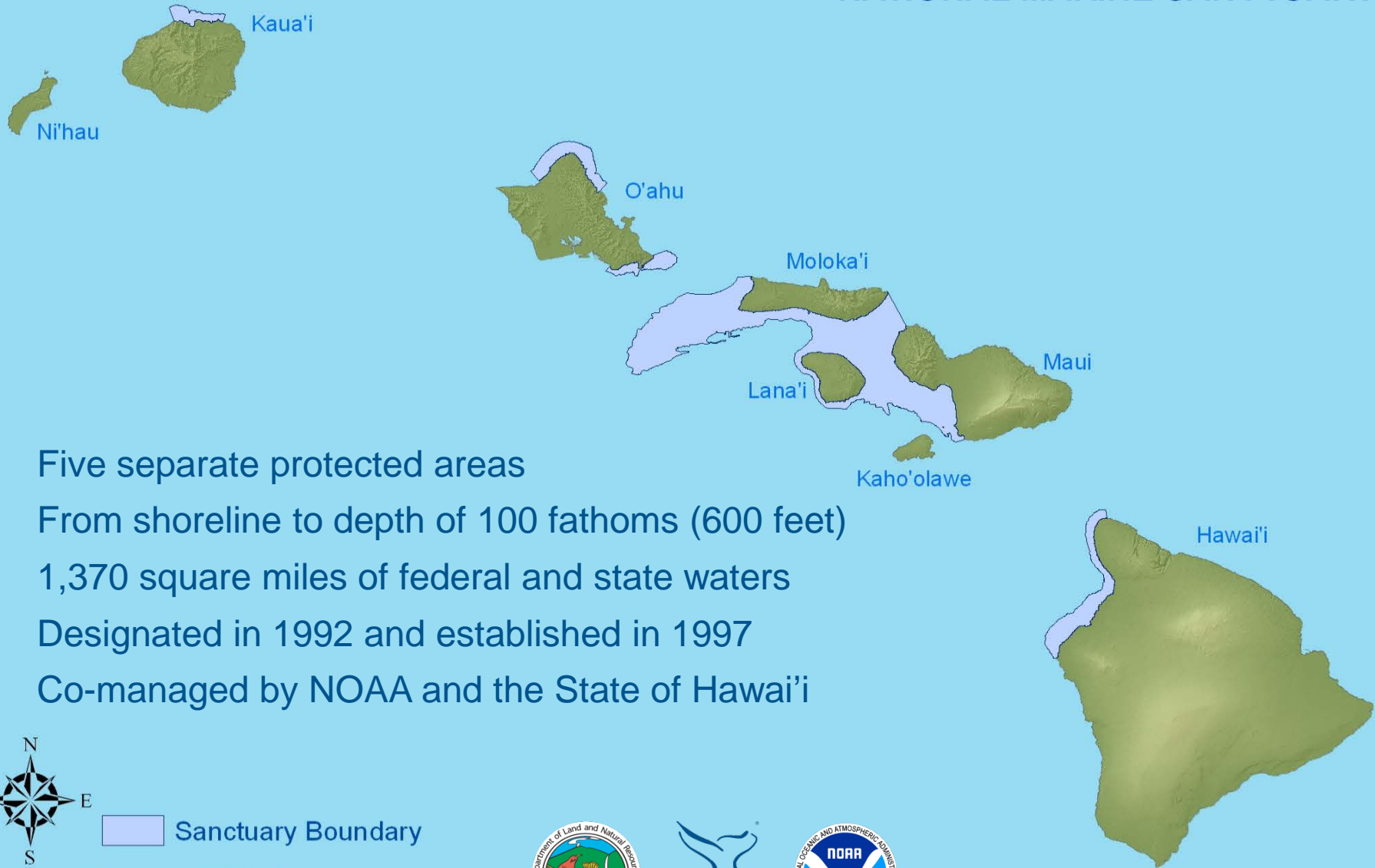
# National Marine Sanctuary System



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

# Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale

## NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



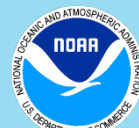
- Five separate protected areas
- From shoreline to depth of 100 fathoms (600 feet)
- 1,370 square miles of federal and state waters
- Designated in 1992 and established in 1997
- Co-managed by NOAA and the State of Hawai'i



 Sanctuary Boundary

0 50 100 Kilometers

0 50 100 Miles



# Purpose and Mission



Protect North Pacific humpbacks and their habitat in the Hawaiian Islands through:

- Education & Outreach
- Science and Research
- Resource Protection
- Community Engagement
- Management



Doug Perrine/HWRF/Seapics.com/NOAA Fisheries Permit #882

# Education & Outreach



- Sanctuary takes lead role in increasing awareness
- Recognized that an informed and engaged community is important (foster stewardship)
- Includes Hawaiian culture
- Focus on general public to the users that are most likely to interact with the animals



# Outreach Materials



- From general to targeted audiences and topics
- Examples:
  - Brochures
  - Signage
  - PSAs and articles
  - Mailings



# Not just boaters



- Kite Surfers
- Sailboarders
- Paddle Boarders
- Kayakers
- Canoers



# Outreach Programs



Focused on safe, legal viewing/interacting with whales and other marine animals

- OAT (Ocean Awareness Training) and OPACA (Ocean Protection and Cultural Awareness training) target public and commercial users
- Boater workshops (ocean user etiquette workshops)





# Potential threats and Impacts



- Intentional approach (harassment)
- Habitat degradation/competition for resources
- Whale-vessel contact (ship strikes)
- Entanglement



MMHSRP permit 932-1489

# Research Program



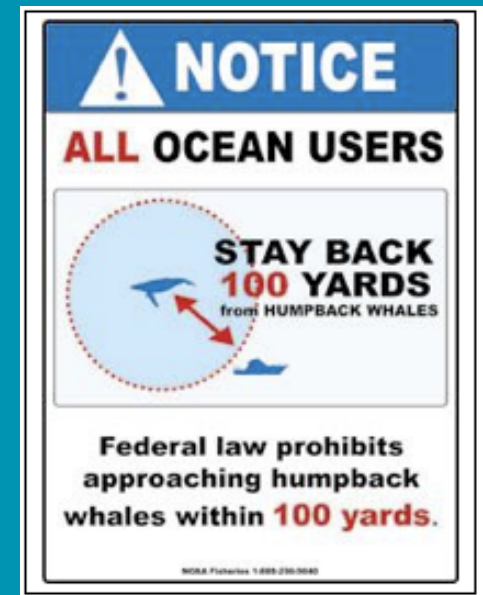
- Began in 2003
- Focus on the impact of entanglements, vessel collisions and other human activities affecting humpback whales and their habitat.
- Work with partners



# Management



- Guidelines
- Regulatory measures:
  - **Endangered Species Act** (NOAA Fisheries) - prohibits unauthorized “take” of endangered and threatened species.
  - **Marine Mammal Protection Act** (NOAA Fisheries) - prohibits “take” of marine mammals.
  - **National Marine Sanctuary Act** (NOAA NOS) - protects humpback whales as a sanctuary resource.
  - **State Laws and Rules** (Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources) - protects wildlife, manages ocean use, safe boating, etc.



# Enforcement



- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
- US Coast Guard (Operation Kohola Guardian)
- State Department of Conservation and Enforcement



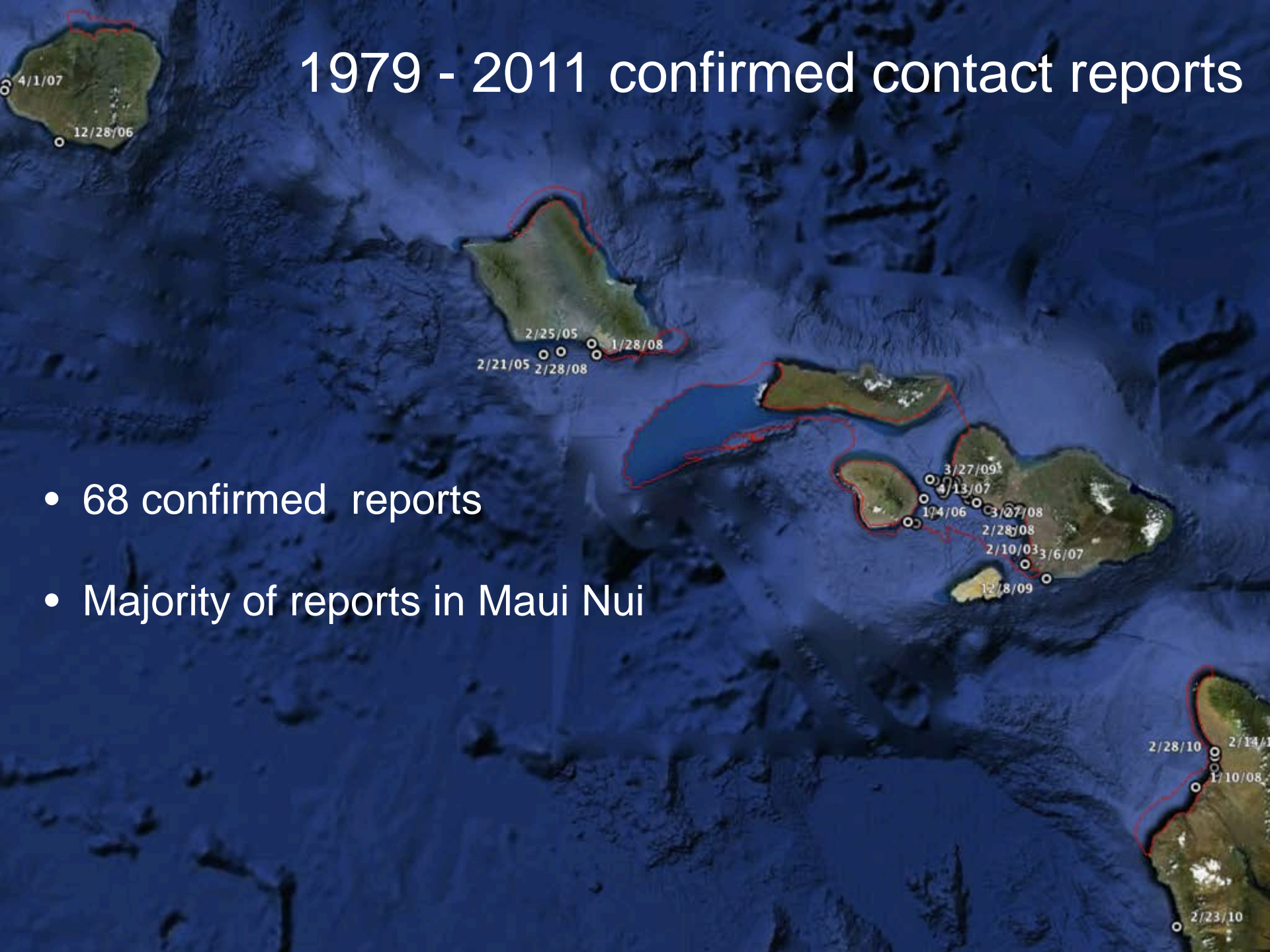
# Monitoring and Responding



- Relies on very users that may also be impacting animals- a balance....
- Much of the response effort is not so much about saving the animal, though we try, but about gaining information – back to research/ understanding Good data to make wise decisions.



# 1979 - 2011 confirmed contact reports



- 68 confirmed reports
- Majority of reports in Maui Nui

# Vessel-Whale Contacts

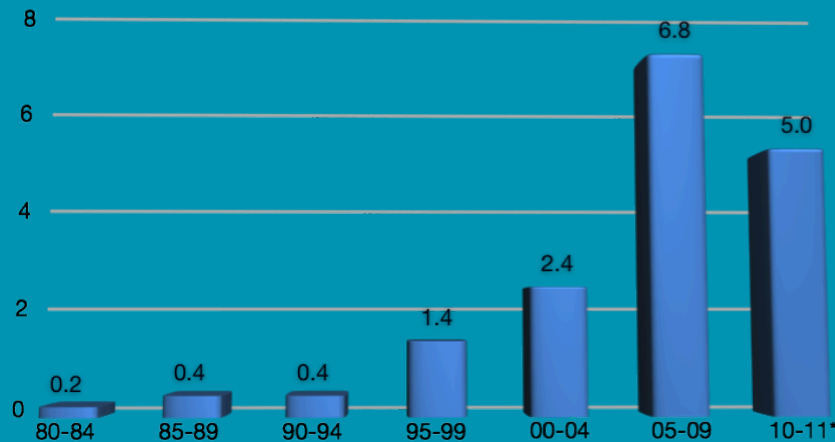
Hawaii: 1979-2012



- 70 confirmed reports (2 confirmed this past season)
- 68% (N=53) of known age class animals were calves or subadults
- Increase in reports over time



Photo Credit: Chris Nesbitt



Time (by 5-yr bins)

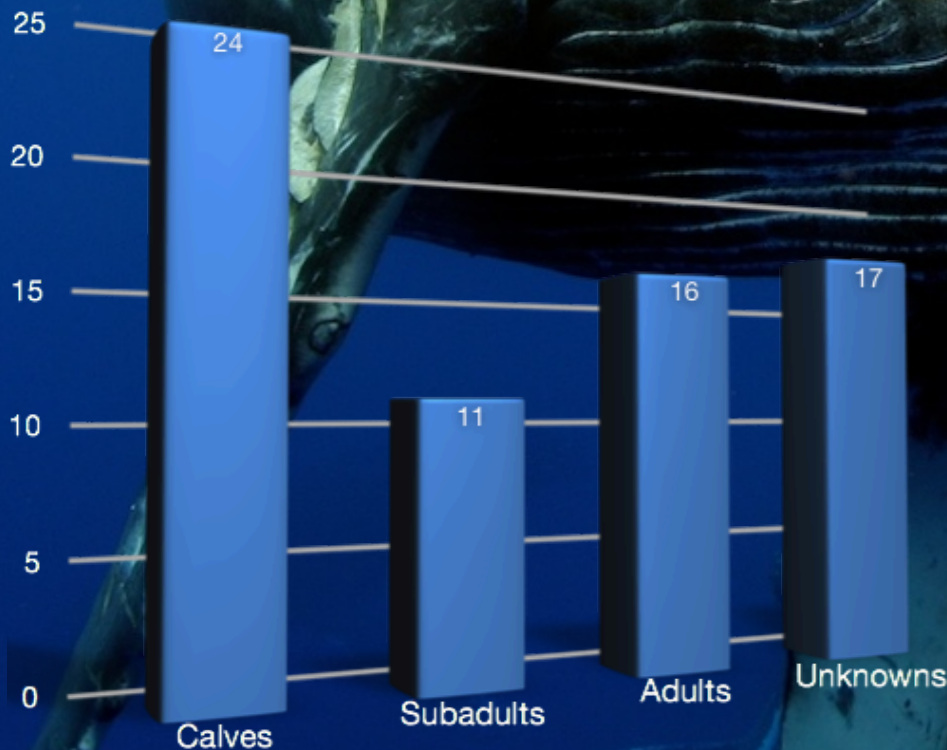
\* Represents only 2 years



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# Who impacted: Calves and juveniles at higher risk

Hawaii ship strike reports on humpbacks, 1979 - 2011



Calves and subadults represents 69% of known age class strike reports



# Entanglement Response Accomplishments 2002-present



- 95 confirmed reports, representing at least 60 different animals
- 3 out of 4 within sanctuary
- Mounted over 60 on-water responses
- Freed 16 animals from life-threatening entanglements
- Removed more than 6700 feet of gear
- 34 sets of gear removed or documented identified.

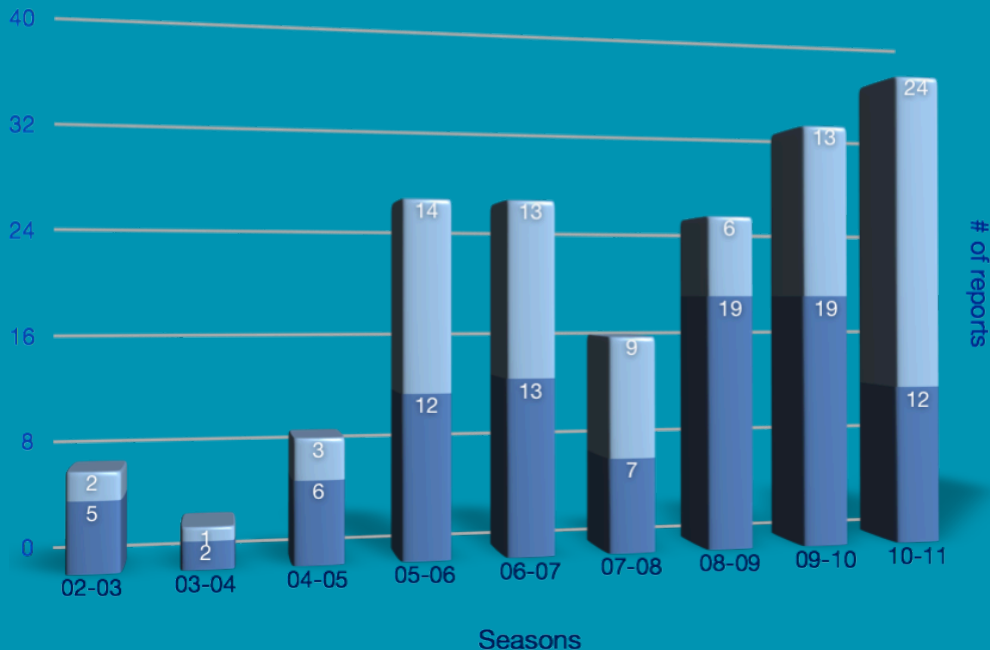


# Entanglement Threat

Hawaii: 1979-2012



- 95 confirmed reports
- 54% (N=25) of known-aged animals were subadults
- Increase in reports over time



HHWNMS/ MMHSRP #932-1489

# Management Plan Review



- Determine the future direction and scope of the sanctuary
- Address current and emerging issues
- Consider additional protection for marine and cultural resources of national significance



Noelle Shaughnessy



Ed Lyman



Patu Wong

# Mahalo!

- NOAA-Fisheries Office of Protected Resources
- NOAA Fisheries Protected Resources Divisions
- NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
- State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)
- NOAA Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary
- United States Coast Guard/ Auxiliary
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
- Network members (NGOs)
- Commercial tour operators
- Researchers
- Fishers and watermen
- Ocean users/ private citizens

# Sanctuary Advisory Council Selection Spring 2012



## Seats Available:

- Native Hawaiian
- Fishing
- Education
- Research (Primary)
- Honolulu County (Alternate)
- Kaua'i County
- Hawai'i County
- Maui County
- Youth Seat
- Commercial Shipping (Alternate)

**Deadline: June 30**



Application packages are available online: <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>