



## NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

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NOAA

## Monk Seals

### KP2 update

KP2 continues to reside at University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) Long Marine Laboratory. He has completed the first phase of research which allowed scientists to determine his resting metabolic rate in water. KP2 was tested in water temperatures ranging from 5°C to 30°C. It was discovered that a preferred temperature for an immature Hawaiian monk seal is approximately above 15°C (or 59°F) degrees when in water. In the wild, seals of similar age would expend more energy in water temperatures below 15°C thus affecting how efficiently they dive and forage. This study will further our understanding of the environmental needs of this species. In the future, UCSC plans to conduct other metabolic measurements and hopes to collect data on adult monk seals.



### RI37's pup arrives still born

RI37 was born on Kauai in 2005 and recently pupped on Kauai's northeast shore. She may have had problems during her pregnancy or even complications while giving birth. On May 16, 2010 the pup was discovered dead and was fully sheathed in its amniotic sack with just the rear flippers protruding out. According to necropsy results, the pup never took a breath. The pup's heart was pumping post birth as evidenced by some bruising around the pup's neck. It is uncertain whether or not the bruising was caused by complications during or after birth.



# Hawaiian Monk Seals

## Big Island seals spotted together

Volunteer Jack Hoyt shot this rare photo of two Big Island seals hauled out together in North Kohala. On the left is RI05 a sub adult male and RW34, a juvenile female.

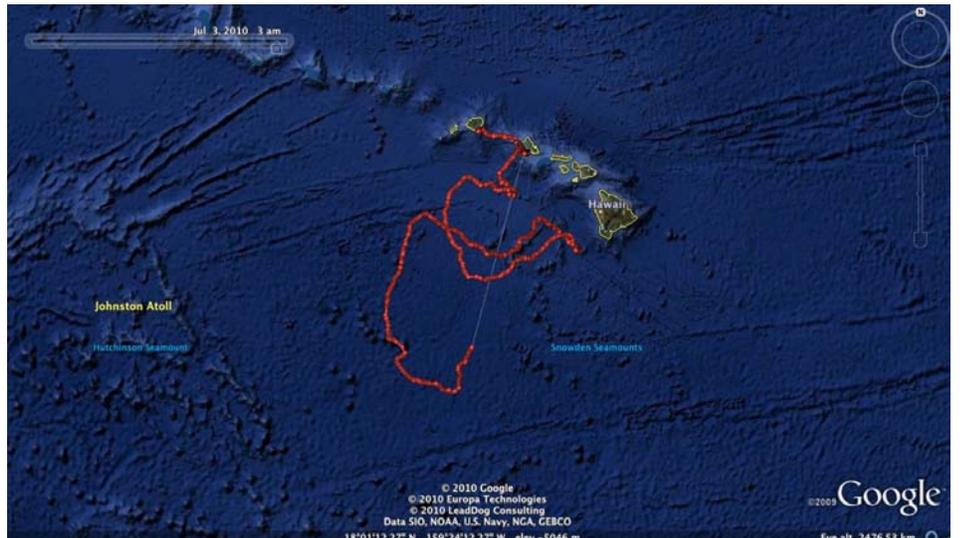


## R012 Update

R012 is an adult male who, for the last several months, has been outfitted with a cell phone tag. Recent analysis of the tag data by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center revealed that he spent most of the month of June on an oceanic voyage in the Pacific Ocean. The maximum distance he travelled from Honolulu was 470 miles, but the total the distance of his trip was approximately 2000 miles. Monk seals are benthic foragers and much of the ocean he was in was 5000+ meters deep. For most of the trip, R012 stayed towards the surface and consistently went on fairly shallow dives.

Shortly after returning from his voyage, NOAA Fisheries Service was notified that R012 had become entangled in some fishing gear. Response personnel arrived at Nimitz Beach to find a small hook (with the bait still attached) as well as a bird's nest of fishing line entangled over his cell phone tag. Volunteers also found that he was attached to three hundred feet of trailing line laying further down the beach.

Since R012 was sleeping soundly, response personnel opted to sneak up behind the seal using EMT scissors to carefully cut away pieces of the fishing line. The whole procedure lasted four minutes with the seal only waking as the responder left the area.



*Track of R012's oceanic voyage.*



*R012 becomes entangled in fishing line with the bait still attached.*



*David Schofield (NOAA Fisheries Service) stealthily removes the fishing line using EMT scissors.*



## Cetaceans

### Cetacean stranding update Response network training in Guam and CNMI

In August of 2010, Dr. Kristi West (Hawaii Pacific University) and Charles Potter (Smithsonian Institution) traveled to Guam to provide necropsy training to network volunteers in Guam and Saipan. Working with the Department of Agriculture in Guam and Valerie Brown (NOAA Fisheries Service), a frozen spotted dolphin calf retrieved in Guam last summer was necropsied. Saipan partners also travelled to Guam to participate. The goal was to teach local biologists the latest methods to gather helpful scientific information from stranded marine mammals. A full suite of samples were collected at the necropsy while providing hands on training. These samples will be

tested in effort to determine the cause of death for this calf and to generate information on spotted dolphin biology from this region of the Pacific.

During this trip, Charles Potter also led public talks on stranding response which was attended by a large number of community members including teachers, graduate students and agency representatives. Additionally, both Dr. West and Charles Potter worked with agency representatives to provide individualized training in response protocols and inventoried necropsy gear, restocked supplies and organized necropsy kits for future stranding response efforts.



*Dr. Charles W. Potter, a noted zoologist with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C., gives network participants hands on necropsy training.*

### 5th Annual Marine Mammal Response Network Meeting

The 5th Annual Pacific Islands Region Marine Mammal Response Network meeting was hosted by the Hilo Marine Mammal Response Network. Over 120 volunteers and agency representatives participated in the meeting coming from all the main Hawaiian Islands as well as American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Presentations ranged from island reports, case studies and seminars on monk seals and cetacean management. Other presentations focused on Regional "Firsts" such as the first ever stranding of a Longman's beaked whale in Hawaii, the first successful hand rearing of a neonate Hawaiian monk seal, the first hearing test results on a pygmy killer whale and the detection of emerging diseases in Hawaii's marine mammals. Keith Matassa, the Director of the University of New England's student based Marine Mammal



*Volunteers from Kauai and Oahu talk story at a break. To the left is Kumu Sabra Kauka who is the unofficial lead cultural practitioner for marine mammal responses on the Island of Kauai.*

# Cetaceans

Care Center, provided the keynote message on his student based program and what UH Hilo can expect in the years to come. He discussed marine animal management, volunteer coordination, fundraising and how this program benefits the local community and the university.

A closed door session on day 3 allowed island coordinators and stakeholders' time to share information and discuss important topics and emerging issues. In addition, they received a three hour session on Hawaiian cultural sensitivities as they pertain to marine mammal response. The 6th annual meeting will be held on Kauai in 2011.



*Kapua imohala ikalani Stewart, is a marine science teacher and cultural practitioner, and has been consulting with UH Hilo's new dolphin hospital staff on Hawaiian cultural sensitivity. She provided the opening Oli.*



*UH Hilo students and community volunteers show off their new small cetacean hospital pool during a four hour Sunday afternoon "hands-on" session which included in pool dolphin care with a plastic dolphin, husbandry, record keeping and transport.*

## Hawaii's First Beaked Whale in Rehabilitation

On August 16th, a male sub-adult Blainville's beaked whale stranded in Kihei, Maui. The Maui Marine Mammal Response Network staff and volunteers stabilized the animal in shallow waters for seven hours before transporting it to UH Hilo's Hawaii Cetacean Rehabilitation Facility (HCRF) via U.S. Coast Guard C-130 aircraft.

This animal was HCRF's second patient since opening its doors earlier this year and is the first beaked whale in rehabilitation in the Pacific Island Region. Initial assessments and treatments centered on blood values that indicated compromised kidneys, diagnostic tests to evaluate the animal's hearing, as well as investigating worsening lung and gastrointestinal conditions. Rehabilitation quickly turned from this triage assessment to settling in for a long-term response, including 24 hour a day care, round the clock feedings, as well as medical evaluations and procedures. Volunteers of the Hilo Marine Mammal Response Network, the work force of the HCRF, responded en masse, with over 100 individuals working pool-side shifts to help care for this sick whale. Although the animal died after two weeks, the tireless efforts of the staff and volunteers gave this animal a fighting chance at survival.



*Dr. Jason Turner, director of the Hawaii Cetacean Rehabilitation Facility, attempting to transition the beaked whale from a squid formula to whole squid.*

The story of this whale was picked up by over two hundred newspapers around the world and HCRF received e-mails from across the country. This animal was an important case for scientists with the University of Hawaii, NOAA Fisheries Service and institutions throughout the world as we further investigate our impacts upon the oceans and the effects upon marine species.



*Maui Marine Mammal Response Network staff and volunteers carry the 1900lb Blainville's beaked whale to shore. The animal was loaded onto a flatbed truck and flown, via U.S. Coast Guard, to the Hawaii Cetacean Rehabilitation Facility.*



### Hale O Lona whale suggests a possible vessel collision.

A report of a dead forty-five foot humpback whale in west Molokai was called into NOAA Fisheries on February 21, 2010. An initial necropsy was performed and the carcass was monitored over the next several days. The animal shifted with the tide and revealed several injuries indicative of a possible vessel collision. The remaining bones were collected in March and May for further investigation by NOAA Fisheries. This animal was a prime example of the unexpected and valuable information we can learn from each stranding.



### Three new hires for the Pacific Islands Region Marine Mammal Response Network

**Dera Look** was born and raised on Oahu and attended the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Dera worked as a volunteer and, after graduating, a full time animal trainer and research technician at the University of Hawaii, Marine Mammal Research Program. During this time, she also volunteered for the Hawaiian Islands Stranding Response Group which responded to and rehabilitated stranded whales and dolphins. Dera now works for NOAA Fisheries Service as a Marine Mammal Response Specialist for the Pacific Islands Region.



**Nicole Davis** has a degree in Marine Biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz. She has lived and worked in the marine biology field on Maui for the last ten years. Since 2006, she's worked directly in marine mammal response. Nicole now works within the Protected Resources Division, of NOAA Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Regional Office, as the Marine Mammal Response Coordinator for Maui.



**Michele Bane** was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. She studied marine biology at Florida Institute of Technology, and graduated with honors in 2001. Since then, she has worked with a wide variety of marine species as a trainer, animal care specialist and response volunteer. Michele currently works for NOAA Fisheries Service as the Kauai Marine Mammal Response Program Coordinator, managing over 100 volunteers and providing education and outreach to Kauai's communities.



### What Can You Do to Help?



**To report a stranded or injured dolphin or whale, please call the NOAA Marine Mammal Emergency Hotline at 1-888-256-9840.**

Stranded dolphins and whales are generally sick or injured and require medical attention. **Do not approach, handle or push the animal back into the sea.** Coming to shore may be a way for the sick or injured animal to prevent drowning and also avoid predators. By calling the NOAA Hotline immediately, you will receive guidance on the best way to help the stranded animal.