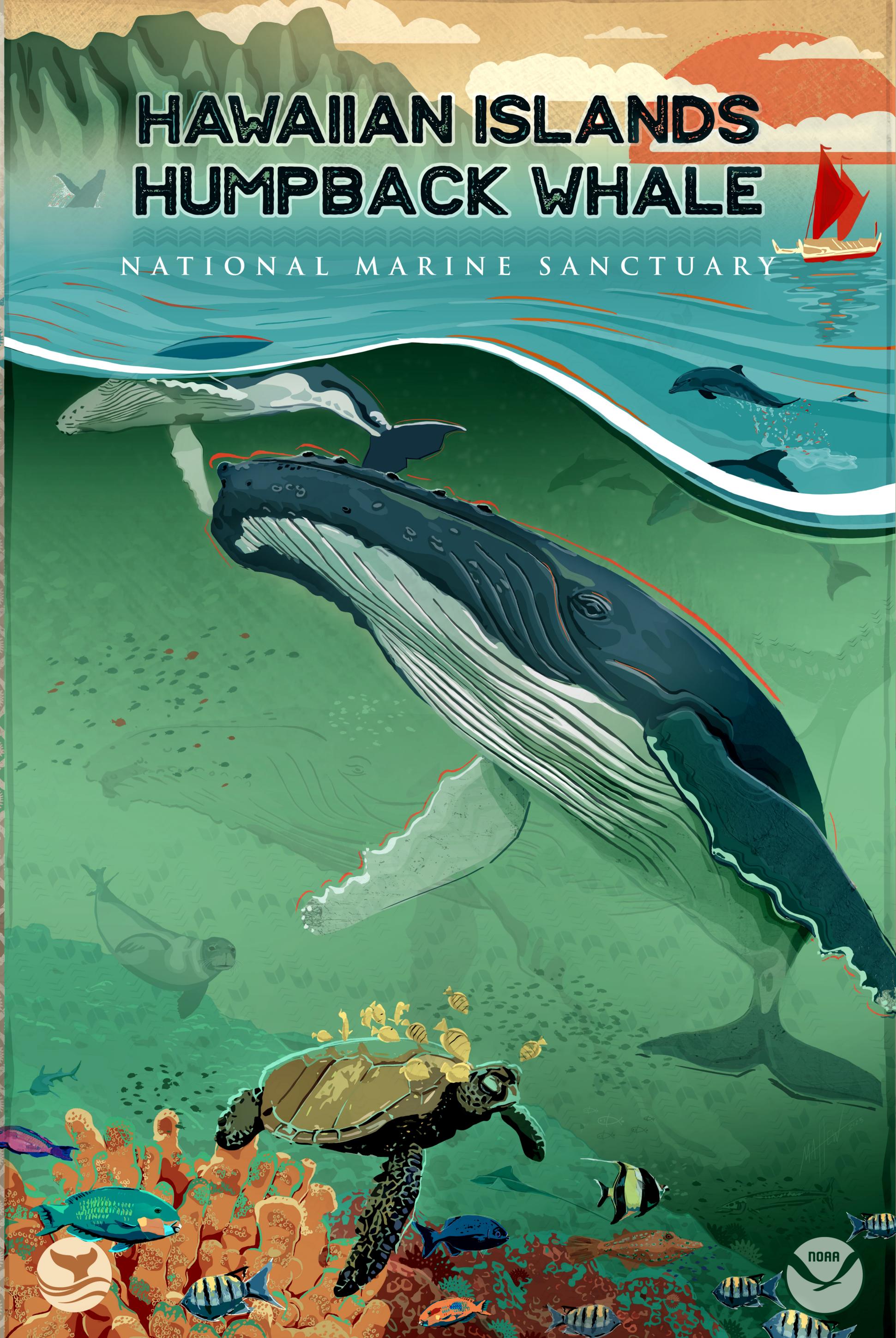


# HAWAIIAN ISLANDS HUMPBACK WHALE

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



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Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1992 to protect humpback whales (koholā) and their habitat in Hawai'i. The sanctuary safeguards koholā breeding, calving, and nursing grounds in waters around the main Hawaiian Islands. Encompassing 1,370 square miles of federal and state waters, the sanctuary extends from the shoreline to the 600 foot depth contour and is composed of five separate marine protected areas, accessible from six of the main Hawaiian Islands.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Hawaiians managed natural resources in ahupua'a, which are land divisions that run from the mountains to the sea. The sanctuary follows this traditional wisdom that recognizes what happens on the land (mauka) impacts the ocean (makai). Within the ocean, koholā serve as ambassadors for collaborative, holistic management to address local and global stressors and protect habitat mauka to makai across the Hawaiian Islands.



◀ **HUMPBACK WHALES** (*Hawaiian: koholā*)  
Every winter, thousands of humpback whales travel to the warm, shallow waters of Hawai'i to mate, give birth, and raise their young.

▶ **CORAL REEFS**  
The coral reefs of Hawai'i make up over 80% of all U.S. coral reefs and are home to several species found nowhere else in the world.



◀ **GREEN SEA TURTLES** (*Hawaiian: honu*)  
Hawai'i is one of the only places in the world where Hawaiian green sea turtles bask along the shore.

▶ **HAWAIIAN MONK SEALS** (*Hawaiian: 'īlio holo i ka uua*)  
Hawaiian monk seals are one of the most endangered seal species in the world, with an estimated population around 1,570 seals.

◀ **WHALE DISENTANGLEMENT**  
The sanctuary coordinates a community-based whale entanglement response network to free humpback whales from entanglement in marine debris.

▶ **ACOUSTIC MONITORING**  
Sanctuary researchers use sound recording technologies to track the occurrence and distribution of whales.



## QUICK FACTS



### LOCATION

Shoreline to 600 feet around six of the main Hawaiian Islands

### PROTECTED AREA

1,370 square miles

### DESIGNATION

May 1992

### HABITATS

Humpback whale breeding, calving, and nursing grounds  
Coral reefs  
Deep water  
Sandy substrate

### KEY SPECIES

Humpback whales  
Coral reefs  
False killer whales  
Hawaiian monk seals  
Reef fish  
Sea turtles  
Sharks and rays  
Spinner dolphins

(Front) Illustration: Matt McIntosh. (Back) Photos: (breaching humpback) J. Moore/NOAA, under NOAA permit #30211; (mother and calf) J. Moore/NOAA; (coral reef) G. McFall/NOAA; (turtles) N. Zachar/NOAA; (seal) M. Sullivan/NOAA, under NOAA permit #16632; (disentanglement) T. Blough/NOAA, under NOAA permit #18786; (monitoring) J. Moore/NOAA, under NOAA permit #18240; (below) Polynesian Voyaging Society

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary not only provides refuge for humpback whales, but it also supports centuries-old cultural traditions, including Hawaiian voyaging. In the early 1970s, the Polynesian Voyaging Society revived the ancient art of Polynesian wayfinding, using stars, wind, and waves to navigate throughout the Hawaiian Islands and across the global seas. Humpback whales, or koholā, have long had a place in Hawaiian culture. The koholā was revered as a manifestation of Kanaloa, the god of the ocean, and some believe they helped Polynesians find the Hawaiian Islands during early voyages.



## AMERICA'S UNDERWATER TREASURES

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: [sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov).



● National Marine Sanctuary  
▲ Marine National Monument  
■ Proposed National Marine Sanctuary  
Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.