



2021
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Together, we can be
a wave of change.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mahalo (thank you) to our volunteers, partners, supporters, and the organizations that enable our work. Because of you, we've accomplished so much since our start and we had an impactful 2021. Since our first day as an organization in 2016 I have been so impressed by the hard work and determination of our volunteers, interns and staff who devote themselves to the conservation, stewardship, and recovery of Hawaii's protected marine animals and the ocean. In 2021, the difficulties and uncertainties of the global COVID-19 pandemic that impacted our operations in 2020 continued to present many new challenges and I was very inspired by how our team persevered through these difficult times, with unwavering commitment to our mission.

I am so proud to be a part of HMAR, and I hope you will share my appreciation for what this incredible group of people accomplished in 2021. Our team members continued to volunteer and work overtime manning hotlines, conducting field response and rescue operations, providing critical education and outreach, marine debris removal, marine operations, and other HMAR actions to ensure that we amplified our impact where and where it was needed most. As always, though the challenges and threats we address are daunting, we will not passively accept the continued destructive impacts of human activities on our oceans and the animals that call it home. We embrace our *kuleana* (responsibility) to the natural world and will continue to take action and work even harder because we are not just helping marine protected animals and the ocean – we're protecting our shared future.

As we complete our first six years of service, our mission still stands: to undertake substantial actions that result in the preservation, recovery, and stewardship of Hawaii's marine protected species and the ocean ecosystem we share. With your support we've been able to develop integrated programs, key partnerships, and strong community support to successfully embrace this mission and produce dramatic accomplishments. And it's all made possible by our volunteers, our partners, and supporters like you.

As we move forward into 2022, we will continue to strive toward making our vision of Hawaii's ocean ecosystem shared in sustainable harmony a reality. We look forward to working with you and rising to this challenge together throughout 2022 and beyond.

Aloha,

Jon Gelman
President of the Board of Directors

ABOUT HAWAII MARINE ANIMAL RESPONSE

Established in 2016, Hawaii Marine Animal Response (HMAR) is the largest Hawaii-based marine animal response and conservation organization. HMAR is the field operations arm of Hawaii Marine Mammal Alliance, a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. We are deeply committed to advancing marine protected species* and ocean conservation in Hawaii.

Our primary goal is the reduction of human-caused threats to Hawaii's protected marine life and our ocean ecosystem. We work to achieve this goal by focusing on three primary objectives: (1) Educating our community to grow support for the animals and the ecosystem, (2) Mitigating threats to manage and recover protected species and the ocean, and (3) saving animals that need help.

We focus on marine species that are likely to be the most severely affected by human activity, such as endangered Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, seabirds, dolphins, and whales. Through our outreach, education, field response, interventions, rescues, and stranding support activities, we work every day to move towards our shared vision of Hawaii's ocean ecosystem thriving in sustainable harmony between humans and marine animals.

* Marine protected species are animals that are afforded special status and protections under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the Migratory Bird Treaties Act (MBTA) and other laws.



OUR STORY

HMAR began in 2016 as a response and outreach organization that focused solely on the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. What started as a mission to educate beach-goers about one at-risk species and inspire environmental stewardship has evolved into a multi-faceted organization committed to comprehensive recovery of multiple protected species and the ocean ecosystem.

Over the years, we've expanded to include additional species and programs. In 2021, we continued to engage in multiple programs and activities that positively impact dozens of protected species.

While the issues we address are complex, we are determined to tackle them on all fronts and have demonstrated the ability to stand-up and manage impactful programs to address the threats to these animals and the ocean.

“The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Pacific Islands Coastal Program (PICP) considers HMAR an integral partner for response and protection of marine species on Oahu and elsewhere in the main Hawaiian Islands.” *

Sheldon Plentovich Ph.D.
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Islands Coastal Program

* This and other statements of support from government agencies are contained in documents submitted into the public record for State of Hawaii and federal funding requests.

OUR MOTIVATION & VISION

Our oceans, the origin and foundation of life on our planet, are in trouble. No matter where we live, humans are deeply connected with the ocean through the air we breathe, the food we eat, the climate we live in, and the choices we make. In no other place in the U.S. are the threats greater. Hawaii is known as the extinction capital of the United States, and impacts from human activities are the primary threats to our marine environment and the protected species that call it home. Loss of any of these keystone species would have cascading effects on the rest of the marine ecosystem, putting our entire ocean support system at risk.

We work towards an environment where humans, marine protected species, and the ocean ecosystem can sustainably coexist and support one another. All of HMAR's programs work synergistically to move us closer to being a community of stewards that will support healthy oceans through the decisions we make in our daily lives. For HMAR, we see it as our *kuleana* (responsibility) to take a proactive role in our community to care for the ocean and its inhabitants, just as we would our own *ohana* (family). By protecting the sea and its animals, we are protecting ourselves and our collective future.

HMAR is committed to establishing a legacy of facing complex challenges to our environment by providing comprehensive solutions when and where they're needed most.

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Seiglina Meyer

Active volunteer in Field Support & Outreach Program
and Rescue & Stranding Response Program.

“I’ve been with HMAR about a year and I joined HMAR because I had the desire to be a part of something bigger than myself. HMAR gives me that opportunity to give back to this beautiful island I call home.”

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OUR GROWTH & EVOLUTION

2017

- Added HMAR operating name
- NOAA cooperative agreement for sea turtle program executed
- Start of sea turtle rescue & stranding response project
- Start of Rescue & Stranding Response Program
- Start of Education & Engagement Program
- Start of Marine Operations Program
- Maintained GuideStar platinum rating for a 2nd year

2019

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service seabird rescue permit received
- Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR) seabird rescue permit received
- Additional DLNR agreements signed
- Start of Marine Debris Program
- NOAA Stranding Agreement finalized
- To date, over 200,000 people reached with outreach & education
- To date, over 12,000 field support activities conducted
- To date, over 700 rescues & interventions conducted
- GuideStar platinum rating maintained for 4th consecutive year

2021

- To date, have conducted over 21,000 field support activities
- To date, have performed over 1,600 rescues, interventions, stranding responses, and escalated field actions
- To date, have reached more than 266,000 people with outreach and education
- To date, have removed 2,500 underwater entanglement and hooking hazards
- To date, have surveyed or cleaned about 200 acres of underwater habitat
- Added a new and advanced marine support, rescue and stranding response vessel to enhance our on-water capabilities
- GuideStar platinum rating maintained for 6th consecutive year

2016

- Organization formed
- NOAA cooperative agreement for Hawaiian monk seal program executed
- Start of Hawaiian monk seal conservation and stranding support
- Start of Field Support & Outreach Program
- Start of Dispatch & Reporting Program
- Achieved GuideStar platinum rating

2018

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service cooperative agreement (multiple species) executed
- Start of sea turtle outreach & monitoring project
- Start of seabird outreach, monitoring & rescue project
- To date, nearly 150,000 people reached with outreach & education
- To date, over 7,000 field support actions conducted
- To date, nearly 400 rescues and interventions conducted
- GuideStar platinum rating maintained for 3rd consecutive year

2020

- Federal and State of Hawaii sea turtle rehabilitation permits received
- Start of seabird nesting habitat monitoring projects
- To date, over 17,500 field support activities conducted
- To date, nearly 1,200 rescues, interventions, and escalated field actions conducted
- To date, over 227,000 people reached with face-to-face outreach and education
- To date, nearly 1,000 in-water animal entanglement and hooking hazards removed
- To date, about 100 acres of underwater habitat cleaned and surveyed
- GuideStar platinum rating maintained for 5th consecutive year

THE KEY THREATS WE ADDRESS



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“Since HMAR started in 2016, they have demonstrated a strong ability to develop and run effective conservation programs that aid in the preservation of Hawaiian monk seals, marine turtles, seabirds and the nearshore marine ecosystem.”

Brian Neilson
 Administrator
 State of Hawaii, Department of Land & Natural Resources
 Division of Aquatic Resources

KEY THREATS



Fishery interactions and marine debris are some of the most significant threats to marine protected species and cause severe injury and death. Entanglements and ingestion caused by materials and marine debris left behind such as hooks, netting and fishing line are an ever-looming danger for our native marine life.

Key threats to the marine animals we work with are primarily anthropogenic, or resulting from human activity or inaction. Each of our programs addresses these problems in unique and focused ways.

Many of the threats to marine life are connected to one another, which is why HMAR’s programs, and our approach to conservation, are integrated. The growing presence and impacts of these threats is driving a critical need for increased actions to support our ocean and the protected species that call it home.

HOW HMAR PROGRAMS ADDRESS KEY THREATS

| HMAR Program | Threats Addressed |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Field Support & Outreach | |
| Rescue & Stranding Response | |
| Marine Debris | |
| Marine Operations | |
| Education & Engagement | |
| Operations Support | |



Other growing threats, such as **trauma, disease, and boat strikes**, are directly caused by human activities. Our programs aim to educate, respond, and provide comprehensive action that decreases the impact of these threats.

THREATS

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Fishery Interactions | Disease |
| Death Caused by Human Activity or Inaction | Marine Debris |
| | Habitat Loss |



Habitat loss due to climate change and related impacts are population level threats to the marine animals we work with. Sea level rise threatens coastal nesting and pupping habitats, increasing storm surges destroy nests and critical coastal areas, and warming ocean temperatures threaten the health of the crucial coral reefs.



WHERE WE ARE



HMAR's comprehensive approach to achieving truly impactful conservation outcomes is based on engaging devoted volunteers, interns, partners, and communities across six integrated programs.

Field Support & Outreach Program

Our Field Support & Outreach Program conducts field response, monitoring, public outreach and data collection used in research and species management strategies. In 2021, we continued our significant Hawaiian monk seal activity while increasing our activities in support of vulnerable seabirds. To date, Field Support & Outreach team members have provided field support more than 21,000 times and have reached more than 266,000 people with face-to-face outreach.



Marine Operations Program

Our Marine Operations Program utilizes HMAR vessels, partner vessel resources, and highly trained crews to support on-water response, rescue, transportation of injured or stranded marine animals and other specialized missions such as habitat surveys. Since this program began in 2017, we've conducted over 130 on-water missions to support marine protected animals, and in 2021, we took delivery of a new, purpose-built marine support, rescue and stranding response vessel to further increase our capacity in this aspect of our operation.

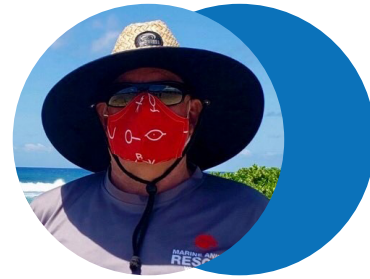
Education & Engagement Program

Through our Education & Engagement Program, team members attend community events, classrooms, and local businesses to connect with community members of all ages and inspire stewardship for Hawaii's marine life and the ocean we share. To date, we have participated in over 250 school or community events and reached tens of thousands of people through our Education & Engagement program.

Operations Support Program

Our Operations Support Program manages the hotlines that receive thousands of calls from the public every year and coordinates with HMAR resources as well as government agencies to ensure that we can mount the most appropriate field action needed. This program also records and shares data obtained in the field with research and species management partners to help conservation and recovery efforts. To date, this team has received over 46,000 hotline calls regarding protected marine animals that may need help.





Steve Depaoli

Volunteer in our Marine Debris Program, Rescue & Stranding Program, Marine Operations Program, and Field Support & Outreach Program.

“HMAR is one of the best organizations if you want to work with and learn about the wonderful marine animals we are blessed with in the Hawaiian islands. Their well-structured training programs allow you to reach your full potential with their mission.”

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

TOTAL PEOPLE REACHED WITH OUTREACH & EDUCATION



ANIMAL RESCUES, INTERVENTIONS & ESCALATED ACTIONS



INSTANCES OF FIELD SUPPORT ACTIVITY



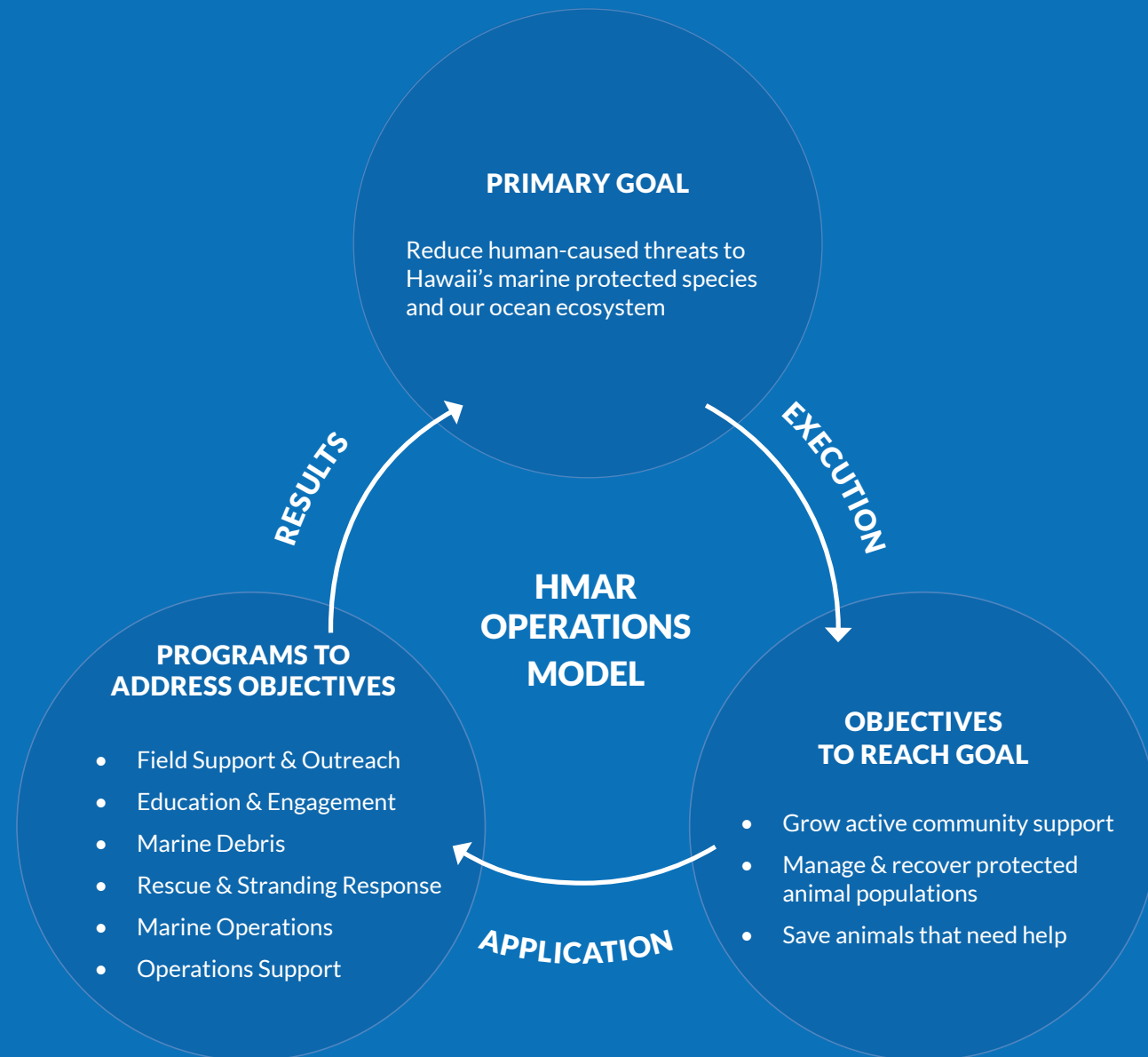
HOTLINE CALLS ANSWERED



* Some activities were affected by COVID-19 due to lockdowns, HMAR response protocols and CDC safety guidelines.

THE HMAR OPERATIONS MODEL

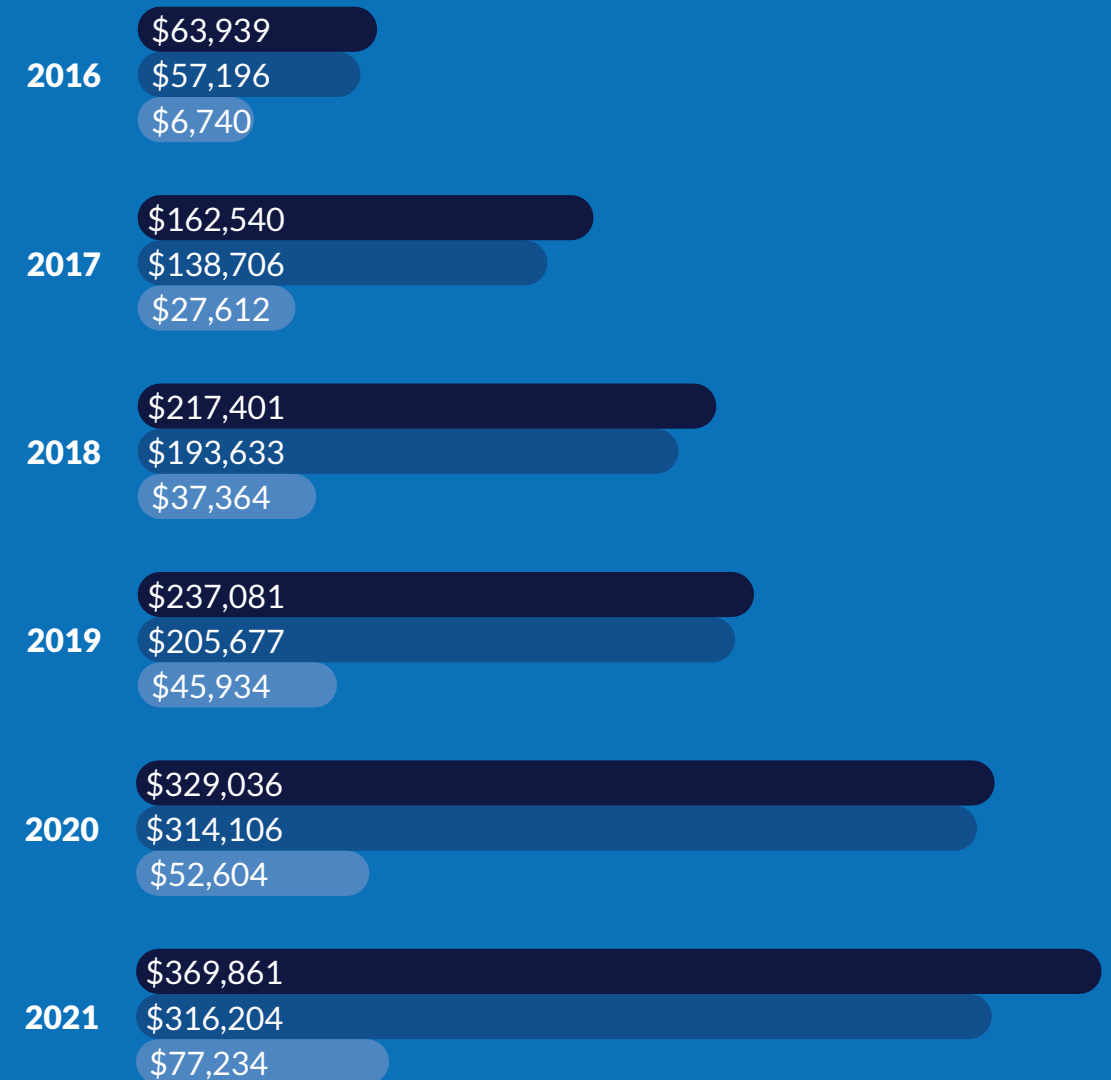
While HMAR is a non-profit organization, we strongly believe that we must be guided by a structured and rigorous application of principles used in successful for-profit businesses. This means strategically planning and tactically executing an operations model focused on specific goals, and objectives that will yield desired results. We also believe in carefully measuring activities and outcomes so that we can be sure we are making the most effective use of our financial and human resources. This operations model allows us to focus and refine our efforts and to generate significant results year after year.



HMAR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE

HMAR management understands that to achieve success as a non-profit organization, we need to embody the financial management and fiduciary discipline applied by the most successful for-profit companies. We work hard to ensure that income from donations, grants, contracts and in-kind contributions are used efficiently to advance our mission and to honor the intent of our donors, funders, and partners.

We closely monitor and manage spending and debt to ensure HMAR funding is used to maximize our positive impacts on Hawaii's ocean ecosystem and its marine protected species.



● Total Income ● Programs & Management Expense ● Net Fund Balance

ON THE HORIZON



In 2022, we will continue our impactful programs and continue to explore ways of strategically expanding our stewardship of the marine environment. Thanks to you, we are continuing to grow and expand our ability to achieve positive impacts and honor the many people who contribute to HMAR's success.

Here are our centers of focus for 2022.

Field Support & Outreach Program

Continuing focus on team expansion and retention, and adding a project to begin surveys of offshore islets for sea turtle nesting activity in cooperation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Rescue & Stranding Response Program

Continuing and adding a focus on expansion of the team and training.

Education & Engagement Program

Continuing and adding a focus on teaching apps and commercial operator training.

Operations Support Program

Continuing and adding a focus on development of a new field response ticketing system.

Marine Debris Program

Continuing in-water activity and adding a focus on increased deployment of fishing debris bins at busy fishing locations to divert dangerous fishing debris at the source before it enters the marine environment.

Marine Operations Program

Continuing with a focus on team training and mission readiness.

Hawaii Marine Animal Response (HMAR) Care Center

Continuing to develop opportunities to launch our planned rescue, wildlife hospital, and rehabilitation facility to create extraordinary opportunities for hands-on training, education, and community engagement.



Robin Vinson

Volunteer in our Education & Engagement Program and Field Support & Outreach Program.

“It has been a privilege to be able to empower children through outreach, awareness, and education. It is rewarding to see children want to actively make a difference for this planet, both land and sea, through acts of sustainability and stewardship.”

LEADERSHIP & STAFF

STAFF



Lauren Chamberlain
Marine Programs
Manager



Jon Gelman
President



Emily Greene
Education & Engagement
Manager



Michael Tillman
Operations Support
Manager



McKinley Walter
Field Support
Manager



Todd Yamashita
Molokai Operations
Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Whitney Beer-Kerr
Board Member, Corporate
Secretary, and Treasurer



Jon Gelman
President of the
Board of Directors



Megan Rycraft
Board
Member

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Patrick Ching, Matt Kerr, Dr. Gregg Levine, Sarah Pifer, and Rachel Sprague Ph.D.

WE WANT TO THANK YOU



We would not be where we are today without the generous and compassionate support from our amazing team of volunteers, corporate and private donors, and government partners. Your support makes everything we do possible. Together, we will continue to make significant positive impacts on Hawaii's protected marine animals, ocean ecosystem, and our collective future.

“HMAR has worked with NOAA under cooperative agreements to support protected marine animals, which for sea turtles, has included extensive field support to respond to stranded turtles. Our ability to collect scientific data to advance our knowledge of sea turtles is enhanced by our collaboration with HMAR and their efforts to strengthen sea turtle stranding response in Hawaii.”

Summer L. Martin, Ph.D.

Leader, Marine Turtle Biology & Assessment Program
Protected Species Division
NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our wonderful government and institutional partners that we have the good fortune to work with.



HAWAII TOURISM



Cover photo courtesy of Larry Hogan

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

2021 turned out to be a very productive year for HMAR, despite the myriad challenges shared by people and animals around the world.

We are beyond grateful for the dedication and extraordinary efforts of all of our volunteers and staff, and for the continued support of donors and funding partners that made it possible for HMAR to grow in 2021. The more we accomplish, the more aware we become of how much more needs to be done.

If you're ready to participate and make meaningful change possible through our organization, please consider supporting our important programs and activities by engaging in one of the following:

Donate

Your generous donation of funds, supplies, equipment, vehicles, and in-kind services are the fuel that keep our organization running. HMAR is a volunteer-driven organization, and your support will go directly towards the preservation and stewardship of Hawaii's marine protected species and our ocean.

[Learn more at h-mar.org/get-involved](https://h-mar.org/get-involved)

Volunteer

We're always looking for volunteers who are ready to make a lasting impact on the world around them and take action to save Hawaii's marine life and our shared ocean ecosystem.

[Learn more and apply to be a volunteer at h-mar.org/application](https://h-mar.org/application)

Sponsor

By becoming a corporate sponsor your company can support our efforts to help sick and injured marine animals and protect the ocean that we share with them. Our sponsors directly support conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered marine life and improved ocean ecosystem health, while enjoying well deserved recognition for their commitment to leaving a healthier and safer world for future generations.

[Learn more at h-mar.org/sponsor-programs](https://h-mar.org/sponsor-programs)



Nick Keffer

Volunteer & intern, in our Marine Debris Program, Marine Operation Program, Field Support & Outreach Program, and our Rescue & Stranding Response Program

“As part of the HMAR team, I love being immersed in nature and being able to bring people closer to such incredible species. *Mauka to makai*, Hawaii has so much to appreciate and conserve for later generations.”

Together, we can be
a wave of change.



Learn more at h-mar.org