

Appendix 8



Sharing Strategies from the Pacific Ocean to Build Marine Protected Area Compliance in The Bahamas

[Lahaina, Maui] (April 25, 2015) Marine protected area staff and community representatives from The Bahamas are currently visiting Hawaii to learn about local partnerships between communities, government agencies, conservation groups and law enforcement authorities that serve to enhance the effectiveness of marine law enforcement.

Hawaii is home to a number of innovative programs that provide community members with opportunities for direct involvement in the management of near-shore marine resources. “These are implemented in collaboration with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, with NGOs and community-based organizations”, explains Mr. Luna Kekoa, State Coordinator for the ‘Makai (“Ocean”) Watch’ Program, an initiative that builds voluntary compliance through outreach and helps document and report violations to authorities.

“Other programs in support of marine conservation in Hawaii include the Community Fisheries Enforcement Unit, Community Based Subsistence Fishing Area Program, and the Hawai’i Eyes on the Reef Network and Rapid Response Contingency Plan,” he added.

Two representatives from The Bahamas National Trust together with two representatives from the Abaco Association for Flying Fishing Guides are taking part in a series of meetings with the coordinators and volunteers who are running these programs, as well as with the fisheries management authority (Division of Aquatic Resources) and with the local natural resources law enforcement agency (Department of Conservation and Resources Enforcement). The visiting group is also participating in a volunteer training session hosted by the Ka’anapali Makai Watch group on Maui.

“Coastal and protected area managers around the world face common challenges from scarce financial and human resources for effective enforcement of regulations,” said Mr. David Knowles, Director of Parks for The Bahamas National Trust.

“On this visit we’re seeing first-hand how other conservation managers address similar issues,” he explained. “Sharing in the lessons learned by the Pacific region is invaluable as we step up to the challenges of protected areas management in The Bahamas.”

The visit is hosted by the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute with support from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and The Nature Conservancy's Reef Resilience Program. It was organized in conjunction with the Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC). For more information please contact emma.doyle@GCFI.org.



The Bahamas National Trust and Abaco Association of Fly Fishing Guides on learning exchange in Hawaii. Top left: Hanauma Bay Marine Life Conservation District on Oahu, Top Right: David Knowles, Bahamas National Trust, Below: meeting at the Division of Aquatic Resources (Photos: E. Doyle)