



**Polanui Hiu**  
Community Managed Makai Area



## Summary of Findings 2017 Recreation and Creel Survey: Polanui, Maui

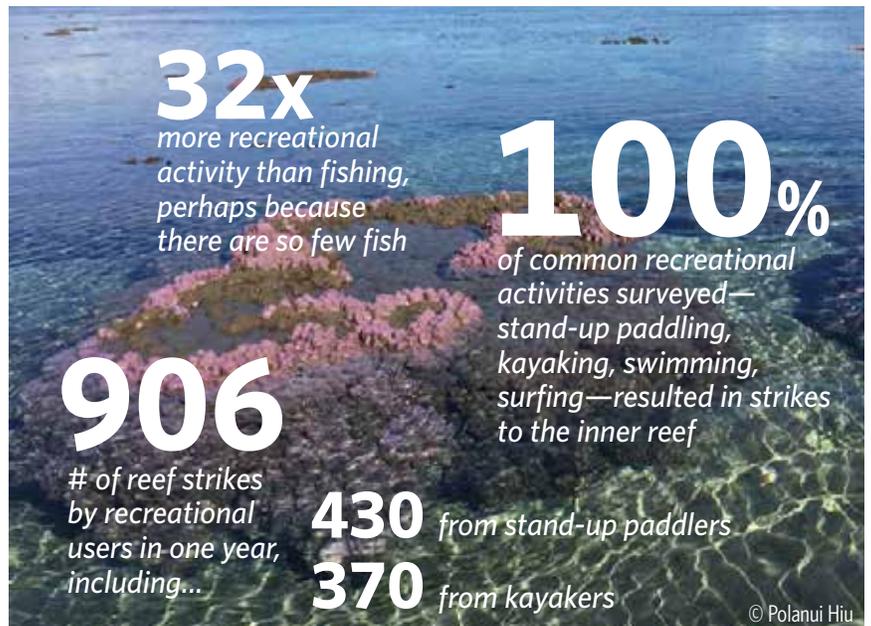
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Fed by fresh water streams and shoreline springs along Maui's Lāhaina coastline, Polanui's reef, called Nā Papalimu O Pi'ilani, was once known for its abundance of fish and edible limu (algae). But like other Hawaiian reefs adjacent to high population centers, it now shows signs of significant negative human impact associated with sediment, runoff, overharvest, and recreational overuse.

As a result, community members founded the Polanui Hiu Community Managed Marine Area in 2010 to improve management of the area in collaboration with the State.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) helped Polanui Hiu create a Community Action Plan to guide their efforts, then surveyed the reef's coral and fish from 2012-2014 to provide baseline data on their status. The surveys revealed that coral was severely degraded and that populations of highly prized food fish were among the lowest of 40 sites surveyed across the state.

To better understand the cause of these declines, TNC and Polanui Hiu conducted a Human Use and Creel Survey along a half-mile of shoreline in Polanui from November 2016 to October 2017 to determine whether and how fishing and recreational activities impacted coral and reef fish. The survey area was divided into three zones (shown at right) based on physical characteristics. The findings will inform management and restoration of the reef.



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### SURVEY FINDINGS



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### SURVEY AREA

## Actions to Restore Reef Health

The accumulated damage of 900+ reef strikes per year has significant negative impacts on coral health. Minimizing the number of collisions would likely improve reef conditions and lower stress on the corals at Polanui. Since most of the incidents happen in zone 2, where the majority of commercial tours and rentals takes place, identifying and marking vulnerable areas in this zone could be an effective approach to minimizing damage.

### *Pono Pathway*

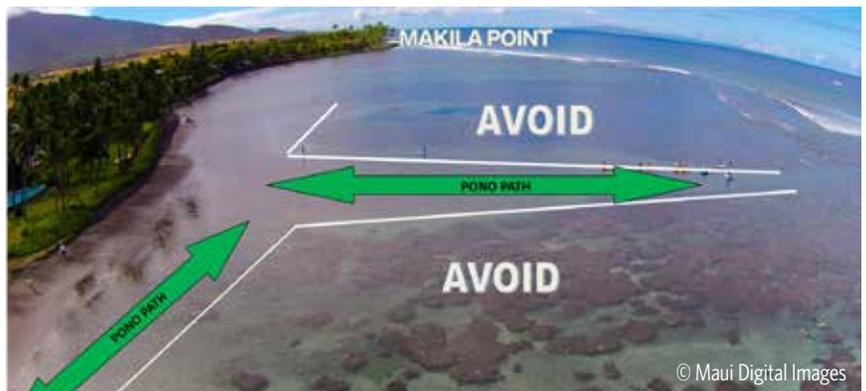
Polanui Hiu is working with the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation and neighboring ocean recreation businesses to address concerns and provide guidance on coral reef management in the area. The group is encouraging use of a *Pono Pathway* (image above) through sand channels to avoid coral reef areas, especially during the morning low tides.

### *Improved Fisheries Management*

While fishing effort and catch were lower than expected, fish size and abundance at Polanui remain severely depleted. To improve reef habitat and facilitate recovery of these vital fisheries resources, Polanui Hiu is working with the State Division of Aquatic Resources to design pono fishing rules and establish a Fisheries Management Area.

## For More Information on Survey

Contact Roxie Sylva, TNC Maui Marine Coordinator, at [rsylva@tnc.org](mailto:rsylva@tnc.org) or 808-856-7669.



## PONO PATHWAY

*Navigational aid developed by Polanui Hiu to help recreational and commercial ocean users reduce inner reef strikes, especially during low tide.*

## SUPPORT POLANUI HIU'S EFFORTS

Polanui Hiu is leading efforts to restore health and abundance to Nā Papalimu O Pi'ilani by actively monitoring Polanui's coral, fish, and coastal water quality, and by working with the State and local businesses and to ensure management actions reduce pressures on the reef. Their efforts include:

- Building an engaged community of volunteer citizen scientists to help monitor reef fish populations.
- Jointly monitoring coral bleaching and recovery with TNC.
- Joining forces with Hui O Ka Wai Ola, a citizen science network ([huiokawaiola.com](http://huiokawaiola.com)), to collect data on coastal water quality.
- Promoting behaviors that reduce reef damage, including use of a *Pono Pathway* to avoid reef strikes at low tide.

To learn more or get involved in the group's work, visit Polanui Hiu online ([polanuihiu.com](http://polanuihiu.com), [facebook.com/polanuihiucmma](https://www.facebook.com/polanuihiucmma), Instagram @polanuihiu) or contact Ekolu Lindsey ([polanuihiu@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:polanuihiu@hawaii.rr.com) or 808-276-5593) to join the group's monthly meeting, held the first Saturday of the month from 9:00am-noon.

## Suggested Citation

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