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Training promotes responsible use of Oahu's marine and coastal resources

*Jennifer Barrett
Reader Submitted*

Marine conservation organizations on Oahu have joined together to offer a special Ocean Awareness Training in Waikiki next month. The training will provide multi-disciplinary knowledge of Hawaii's unique marine environment. Participants will also learn about current ocean conservation efforts and how to get involved.

The program is recommended for those employed or volunteering in the fields of marine education or recreation, and anyone who just wants to learn more about Hawaii's ocean environment. Instructors include university scientists, government agency staff, environmental educators, and conservation practitioners.

Ocean Awareness Training is modeled on a program that launched in Maui back in 2006. The first Oahu program was hosted in Hawaii Kai by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary in November of 2008. Christine Brammer, Oahu Programs Coordinator for the Sanctuary shared, "The response was overwhelming. We registered 50 people within two days and had a waiting list of over 150, so we're aiming for a class size closer to 100 in March."

"We're really excited to bring the training to Waikiki through the support of Kyo-ya Hotels and Resorts," said Jennifer Barrett of the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program. "The Sheraton Waikiki is a great venue and we'll be able to increase the class considerably."

Training topics will include sea turtles, humpback whales, coral reef ecology, marine life identification, marine debris, and water quality. Registration for the 5-day class is \$20 and includes training materials, refreshments, and parking. Those who complete all the training sessions and a field experience will receive a C.O.R.A.L Card (Care of our Culture, Ocean, Reefs and Animal Life) that demonstrates their ocean knowledge.

"We're really grateful to our many partner organizations. This has been a collaborative effort and the representation from so many island organizations really creates an exceptional experience for the training participants. They get a chance to meet many of the individuals out there on the front lines working in natural resource management and conservation and hear about their experiences directly."

Program Details:

- Advance registration is required
- Schedule: March 7, 14, 21, 28 from 8:15-11:45 a.m. at Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, plus a special evening at the Waikiki Aquarium.
- To register: Please email oceantraining@gmail.com or call 397-2651 ext. 249. (Emails will likely elicit a faster reply.)