

## Japanese High School Students Visit IPRC and Learn about IPRC's Tsunami and Marine Debris Model

In March, the International Pacific Research Center once again welcomed 21 Japanese high school students and their 3 teachers. They were from Morioka Daisan High School. The purpose of their trip to Hawaii was exposure to spoken English in an academic environment with a science focus.

Morioka, the capital of Iwate Prefecture, suffered much devastation in the March 2011 tsunami. The students thus listened attentively to the 90-minute powerpoint talk by IPRC's Jan Hafner about the IPRC tsunami and marine debris model, and how the model was able to track the travels of the debris across the ocean to the North Pacific Coast, and some of it into the Great Garbage Patch and finally onto the north-east facing shores of Hawaii.

They were overwhelmed to see and touch tsunami debris that Hafner had on display: the refrigerator door (from C. Berg, Kauai Surfrider Foundation), a sample of a piece of one of the wood beams and one of the many oyster buoys that had drifted up on our island shores. They were also amazed by the huge number of little plastic pieces that wash up as general marine debris and accumulate on our beaches.

Fascinated, they asked questions about the way the tsunami debris moved and how science could help to solve the general problem of marine debris.

