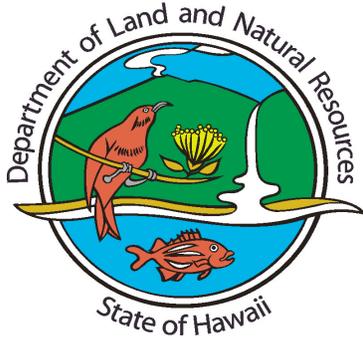




MAUI OCEAN CENTER

THE HAWAIIAN AQUARIUM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Maui Ocean Center and Department of Land and Natural Resources
working on Coral Recovery and Mitigation Effort**

September 4, 2013, Ma'alaea, Maui, HI – In a collaborative effort, Maui Ocean Center is participating with the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR), and Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) on the removal and transport of live coral at several small boat harbors throughout Maui County. Projects are currently underway at the Lahaina Small Boat Harbor, Kaunakakai Harbor, Ma'alaea Small Boat Harbor, and Manele Small Boat Harbor.

In April of last year, American Marine Corporation (AMC) marine contractor began project work including the removal of concrete pilings and performing maintenance dredging work at the Lahaina Small Boat Harbor on the island of Maui.

Coral transplantation was completed to minimize the effects on corals at the project site at Lahaina Small Boat Harbor. Transplantation was performed by Maui Ocean Center staff under the supervision of DLNR-DAR. Corals were relocated either to other areas outside of the harbor or taken to Maui Ocean Center to be housed and cared for until they are transferred back to the site. The coral colonies include cauliflower coral *Pocillopora meandrina*, lobe coral *Porites lobata* and two types of rice coral *Montipora capitata* and *Montipora patula*.

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“We are excited to watch the progress of the coral both at the harbor and here at Maui Ocean Center,” stated John Gorman, Head Curator at Maui Ocean Center. “We have successfully maintained live coral at the Aquarium for over 15 years so working on effective recovery in the open ocean is a phenomenal project for everyone involved.”

Amid the successful results of the Lahaina project, coral transplantation took place in August of last year when repair work by Hawaiian Dredging Construction Company (HDCC) at Kaunakakai Harbor on the island of Moloka'i required the removal of corals from pilings. Coral transplantation again took place in June of this year with the removal of corals from six (6) posts and two (2) beams at Ma'alaea Small Boat Harbor on Maui to prepare for a Ferry Pier improvement project.

Corals were again transplanted either to other areas outside of the harbors or taken to Maui Ocean Center to be housed and cared for until they are transferred back to the site. The coral colonies at Kaunakakai Harbor include corrugated coral *Pavona varians* and rice coral *Montipora capitata*. The coral colonies at Ma'alaea Harbor include rice coral *Montipora capitata* and *Montipora patula*, lace coral *Pocillopora damicornis*, and lobe coral *Porites lobata*.

In August of this year, corals at Manele Small Boat Harbor were transplanted to other areas of the harbor to prepare for work to repair tsunami damage including two (2) rock groins, two (2) public loading docks, a boat ramp loading dock and installation of a 150' long temporary floating dock. AMC is schedule to begin work on the project in September of this year.

The immediate accomplishments of the efforts between DLNR (DOBOR, DAR) and Maui Ocean Center include saving over 460 individual coral fragments at Lahaina Small Boat Harbor, Kaunakakai Harbor, and Ma'alaea Small Boat Harbor. These colonies were growing on the pier pilings and would have been damaged or destroyed when the pilings were removed. Upon the completion of AMC's and HDCC's project work the corals housed at the Aquarium will be transplanted back to nearby reefs from which they were rescued where they may continue to thrive, help minimize impacts from harbor improvement projects, and help maintain the ocean's ecosystem.

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“Maui Ocean Center’s expertise and experience with Hawaiian corals helped to streamline critical and essential harbor improvement projects through the challenging in-water permit process. It allowed the removal of a shallow shoal in the entrance channel and an abandoned pier at the Lahaina Small Boat Harbor that posed a danger to vessels and their passengers. It also allowed the construction of new hard stand to strengthen the existing pier to accommodate cargo coming into and leaving Kaunakakai Harbor” stated DLNR Chairperson William Aila.

Each removal and transplant project involved four (4) Maui Ocean Center Curatorial team members eight (8) to ten hours each with the involvement of DLNR staff. The remainder of the team then helped to move the corals into the lab, establish the coral, identify and tag, take measurements, document, and maintain.

Upkeep, which includes algae control, cleaning tanks and pumps, vacuuming sediment, and feeding corals, requires at least one hour per project per day. Additional time needed for quarterly measurements and documentation is over 40 hours total for all three (3) projects.

“It has been wonderful working with DLNR and DAR on these important projects”, stated Kate Zolezzi, General Manager at Maui Ocean Center. “Our staff is well trained for this and we have the facilities in place. The results of this new venture will provide a benchmark that can be widely used.”

The corals will not be on public display. Visit www.mauioceancenter.com for information on upcoming talks and events that will include updates on the coral. For more information on the improvement at the harbors or coral transplantation contact the Department of Land and Natural Resources at 808-587-0320 or visit <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/>.

Department of Land and Natural Resources/Department of Aquatic Resources

The Department and Land and Natural Resources mission: Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii’s unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current

and future generations of visitors and the people of Hawaii nei in partnership with others from the public and private sectors. The Division of Aquatic Resources manages the State's marine and freshwater resources through programs in commercial fisheries and aquaculture; aquatic resources protection, enhancement and education; and recreational fisheries. Major program areas include projects to maximize commercial fishery and aquaculture productivity, protecting native and resident aquatic species and their habitat, providing facilities and opportunities for recreational fishing consistent with the interests of the State and issuing fishing licenses. For more information visit <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/>.

Maui Ocean Center

Maui Ocean Center displays live coral and Hawaiian marine life in over 60 vibrant exhibits. Twenty-five percent of the animals found at Maui Ocean Center are endemic, meaning they are found nowhere else in the world. In addition to daily marine life presentations given by ocean naturalists, Maui Ocean Center highlights specific marine species with enhanced presentations, special guest talks, hands-on activities, upgradeable behind the scenes tours and more each month. Each July, Maui Ocean Center will host Night at the Reef: Incredible Corals. Explore the mysterious world of coral reproduction and get a chance to witness live coral spawning during this highly anticipated summer aquarium event that takes place under the light of a new moon. More information and program details can be found at www.mauioceancenter.com.

The mission of Maui Ocean Center is to foster understanding, wonder and respect for Hawaii's marine life. Maui Ocean Center was named "Top 25 Best Aquariums in the U.S." and inducted into "Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame 2015" by TripAdvisor, "Top-Rated Attraction in Hawaii" by Zagat Survey US Family Travel Guide, "Leader In Responsible Tourism" on the Top 100 Blue List by Islands Magazine, and "Best Land Activity" in 2008, 2009, 2011 by the readers of The Maui News. Open daily from 9 to 5, and from 9 to 6 in July and August. For more information please contact the Maui Ocean Center: 192 Ma'alaea Road; Ma'alaea, HI 96793; telephone (808) 270-7000, facsimile (808) 270-7070, e-mail info@mauioceancenter.com or visit www.mauioceancenter.com.

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