

WE ARE OCEAN PEOPLE: INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN MARINE CONSERVATION
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Huli 'ia: Every place has a story ... Let's listen

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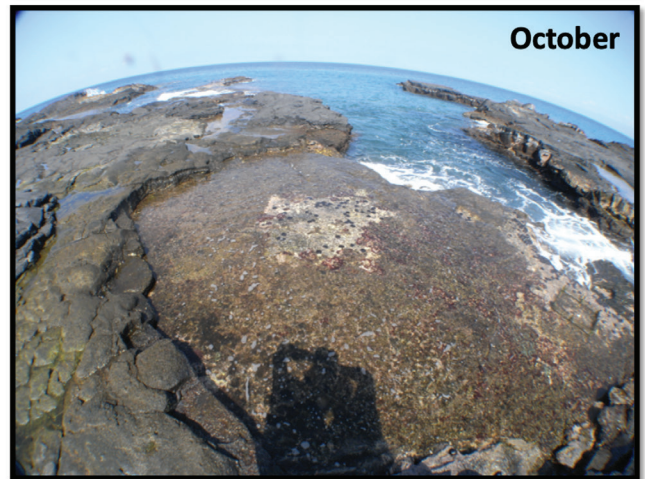
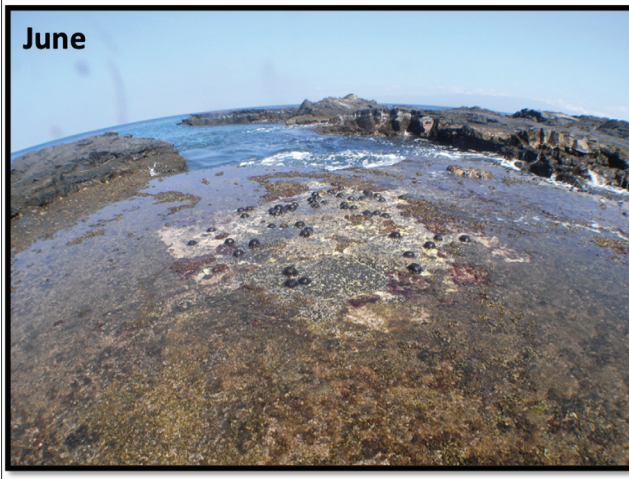
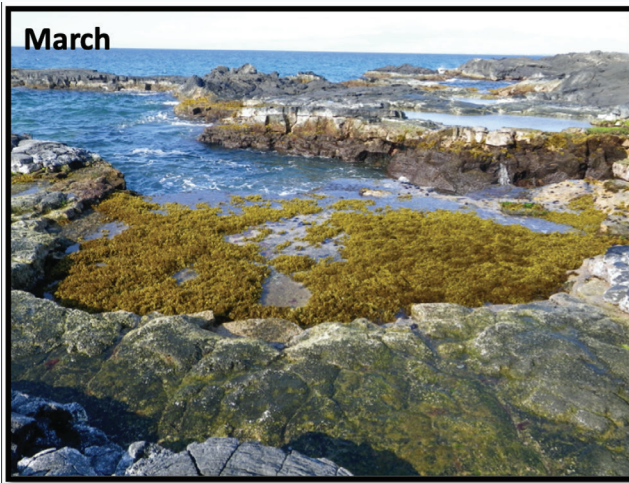
Every place has moods and characteristics that change throughout the year and seasons. Understanding these characteristics is a critical step in strengthening relationships to our places, ensuring that our places can care for us into the future. This is a collective journey of health based on the natural and social environment and the co-dependent relationship needed for both to thrive. From its creation to now, the Hawaiian Islands are shaped by winds, rains, waves, and the seasonal changes of the environment, and so too are the kānaka 'ōiwi (Native Hawaiians), who are genealogically connected to these islands. We descend from a millennium of knowledge systems, experiences, and memories passed down from our ancestors. Today, we support the gathering and building of our communities to re-remember how to listen to the needs of our places, and to engage in what we keenly observe through engaging our senses and building our collective memory base. Our traditional practices are a reflection of the intimate knowledge tied to understanding what our communities and places need to thrive. Huli 'ia is a way for us to re-engage in the seen and unseen, the smells, the sounds, the tastes, and all senses encompassed in the intricacies of 'āina. Today, we perpetuate these knowledge systems to adjust our behaviors to support their natural rhythms and innovate best management practices.

Supporting healthy and bioculturally diverse natural ecosystems requires the recognition and inclusivity of people in our multi-generational goals towards 'Āina Momona, abundant and productive social-ecological ecosystems. We know these ecosystems as our 'āina bases—our lands, oceans, and communities that feed and nourish our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. In our world today, many of us have lost the ability to listen to our places. Without being able to understand what our places need to thrive, we often find ourselves facing management challenges that can protect the resource, but splinter the community for generations to come. Our places have a story and we need to re-remember how to listen. How can we understand a place so intimately that whatever we do and however we choose to live, we do it with minimal impact supporting the overall health and productivity of our places?

Developed by the non-profit organization Nā Maka Onaona, Huli 'ia is an 'ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) observational process documenting seasonal changes and shifts across entire landscapes, ma uka i kai (from the mountains to the sea), identifying dominant correlating cycles to guide resource management and best practices that support a productive and thriving

community, 'Āina Momona. It is an observational process documenting natural changes over time, identifies dominant cycles within certain species or occurrences (flowering, fruiting, presence/absence of flora/fauna, cloud formations, spawning, or recruiting of fish species, etc.) and assists in identifying correlations between species and/or occurrences as indicators of the other. When one thing happens (a flower species blooms en masse), it indicates that another occurrence (a fish is spawning en masse) is happening. It allows natural cycles to support and guide our management practices, allowing the flexibility needed to ensure the best times to rest areas or species from cultivation and harvest—or vice versa. Huli 'ia stems from traditional management systems driven by an intimate understanding of the natural environment and the ability of communities to adjust and adapt their activities as best management practices to support these systems of nature.

Huli 'ia grows our ability to be conscious of the world around us. It's about being present, paying attention, and consciously observing and immersing ourselves in a place until it becomes an unconscious behavior. It honors the breadth and depth of diverse perspectives grown through experiences that each



▲ Huli 'ia is an 'ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) observational process documenting seasonal changes and shifts across entire landscapes. PHOTO CREDIT

person comes from. Through sharing observations from life experiences within our communities, we are able to see what others see and grow our collective memory. For those who come from different hālau (schools of traditional knowledge systems and practices) of fishermen, farmers, weavers, hula dancers, woodcarvers, navigators, and many more, each person develops an intimate relationship to the resources they tend to and that feeds them. Our ancestors understood how to tend to spaces like 'olonā and maile patches, fishponds, and limu (algae) beds to increase productivity and health through an intimate understanding of what these resources need to thrive and feed our communities in perpetuity.

Another layer of Huli 'ia is being inclusive of multi-generational perspectives, recognizing that kūpuna (elders), mākua (parents), 'ōpio (youth), and keiki

(children) view the world differently. Huli 'ia also helps our ability to remember. We encourage the documentation process to be a group activity where individuals in the group reflect on and share the dominant characteristics of their observations in the past two weeks. This trains and challenges every person to depend on and strengthen their memory. The only written part is one person recording the discussion. The group discussion is one of the most valuable pieces of this process. The written product of Huli 'ia is part of the process, but it is not the end goal.

Paired with monthly documenting activities, Huli 'ia can provide each community with consistent data throughout the year, as well as support and deepen relationships to place. The compiled cycles provide us with a timeline of place and a well-documented resource to guide discussions and best practices that

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will support the natural rhythms of place. This allows the flexibility needed to ensure the best times to implement management actions, like resting areas or species and/or allowing access to harvest resources.

Huli 'ia has been instrumental in shaping the direction and evolution of more than a decade of intertidal research focusing on the role of habitat and environment on the carrying capacity of 'opihi (endemic Hawaiian limpets) as part of sustainable harvesting and adaptive community-driven management strategies. Huli 'ia illuminates areas to better understand important components to manage, not only intertidal fisheries in general, but also particularly the Community-based Subsistence Fishing Area in Hā'ena and the Ka'ūpūlehu Try Wait Area. These are a few examples of how Huli 'ia is applied to management to account for the needs of our places to be productive. Place-based knowledge can tailor the solutions and care needed to benefit all people and places.

One example of deepening relationships to place is growing a collective consciousness of the animals, plants, and natural rhythms of our places, and letting these collective observations allow a place to tell its story. Our ancestors and our communities today celebrate wahi pana (storied places) in a massive repository of oral histories and Traditional Knowledge systems and practices passed down today. "Wahi" means place and "pana" means heartbeat. The heartbeat of our places represent the famous moods and characteristics of our places. This can include the particular presence/growth of plants, animals, weather patterns, limu on the shoreline, smells in the air, etc., recognized through an intimate understanding of dominant characteristics and moods of our places. Huli 'ia allows these stories to come through today. It's not just about the one flower that grows there or the one-time event, but rather about looking at the dominant

patterns that compose the moods and characteristics of each place. Through these monitoring efforts, the data are compiled into a seasonal calendar as a powerful visual describing the dominant natural cycles and their correlations. A facilitated discussion component of Huli 'ia includes observations of:

- Fish spawning, recruiting, and migrating;
- Flowering, seeding, and fruiting of plants;
- Seasonal presence and absence, such as whales, kōlea (Pacific golden plover), limu, etc.;
- Natural growth and dieback of plants and animals;
- Weather and climate activity, such as temperature shifts, cloud formations, windy seasons, rain/drought, etc.; and
- Celestial movement and characteristics, such as colors during sunset and sunrise, starline presence, sun movement to the North and South.

These compiled cycles are then compared or correlated to each other as indicators of activities that occur together or in sequence, providing us with a natural timeline of each community and a well-documented resource to guide discussions and implementation of best practices in support of these cycles, and ultimately, their productivity. Over time, the amount of observations shared within the community groups grows as the months and years pass and as more people participate and contribute to the discussion. This represents the re-remembering, where people pay attention to dominant patterns of plants, animals, weather, etc. that they never noticed until listening in on these discussions over time. These calendars also include perpetuating Traditional Knowledge systems through the creation of 'ōlelo no'ēau (Hawaiian proverbs). These wise sayings are the ancestral vessels transferring knowledge through time. Based on the dominant patterns that arise from each place,



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from malnutrition and heat exposure. Shearwaters are beginning their breeding season and noio (noddy tern) are increasing in numbers. As we transition into kauwela (summer), ‘ewa‘ewa are swarming and kolea (Pacific golden-plover) and ‘akekeke are getting ready to depart, noted by their change in plumage.

Hū a‘e ka wehi o kēia kau e uhi ‘ia ka ‘āina i ke ola.

Adornments overflow in this season covering the land in life. March and April are overflowing with life. With winter surf and winter rains keeping the shorelines wet through the majority of ho‘oilō (wet/rainy season), the water is constantly flowing throughout the tidepools, supporting limu growth and a healthy nursery environment for pua i‘a (baby fish).

He Mauiili ka wana kau lani ma ka piko o Wakea.

The equinox is marked by a streak of light in the heavens on the summit of Mauna Kea.

Ihona ‘o Kanehoalani, Kahe ka ha‘ae i ke kai monamona.

As the sun descends and heads south, the mouth waters for delicacies of the ocean. The hā‘uke‘uke (helmet urchins) grow fat and are ready to harvest.

Pua ehu akula ka moana, huahua ka ‘opihi.

The ocean spray flies, and the ‘opihi are prolific and fat with eggs. Through observation and tracking reproductive activity, we know that this is the time of the year when ‘opihi (limpets) and hā‘uke‘uke release their eggs and produce the next generation. In the following months, we see an influx of recruits on the rocks. Large surf and rain events are correlated with the timing of their reproductive events.

Ho‘oilō i ka ‘ulawena o ke kakahiaka.

Ho‘oilō, the season of radiant sunrises. At the beginning of the rainy season the ocean is relatively calm and the shoreline remains dry, with little growth high on

the rocks. Once winter swells arrive, the open ocean is no longer accessible but the shoreline becomes a place rich in growth and prosperity. The combination of ocean water and fresh water from more consistent rains support the growth of a multitude of i‘a (marine life) on the shoreline. Tidepools fill with life. ‘Opihi are beginning to spawn and ‘ama‘ama (mullet) are spawning from November to April.

Ke pi‘i nā nalu ‘ulupā pōhaku, pulu ka papa a ulu ka pahe‘e.

When the boulder crashing waves arrive, the shelf becomes wet and the pahee limu grows. During ho‘oilō, the shoreline rumbles with the power of the pounding waves. Boulders are dislodged from the cliff shelves and thrown up on the shoreline. It is important to know all characteristics and moods of a place. As destructive as this time may seem, the growth that results is a great reminder that all cycles have a role and impact on each other.

Huli ‘ia represents a collective journey addressing the need to repair and heal our relationships to place through a process grown from within our communities. It allows our places to tell their stories, removing our biases and opinions from one perspective to building a collective memory and repository of knowledge. The goal is to listen to the needs of place to improve natural resources through growing awareness and consciousness of participants and the community at large. Huli ‘ia honors our traditional practice of spending the majority of our energy observing to understand natural processes and productivity and the minority of our energy to complement these processes with appropriate and efficient actions like harvest. This mosaic of cultural relationships opens our consciousness, builds an intimate understanding of the world around us, and helps every participant recognize their contributions



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and roles in feeding a place in the same way it feeds the community. Huli 'ia provides a platform to share and contribute to the health of our communities of people and place. As we continue to gather around managing our resources, Huli 'ia provides a space for 'āina to guide research and management to support 'Āina Momona, productive and healthy communities of people and place. I ola 'oe, I ola kākou!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF CONTRIBUTORS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Kim Kanoē'ulalani Morishige, Pelika Andrade, Kehau Springer, Pat Springer, Makani Greg, Moani Pai and 'Ohana, Kahoane Aiona, Nakoa Goo, Pua'ala Pascua, Eva Schemmel, Niegel Rozet, Tyson Fukuyama, Trisha Soares, Nick Sagum, Amy Waishog, Uilani

Macabio, Iolani Kauhane, Cynthia Vanderlip, Naomi Worcester, Matt Saunter, Brad Wong, Maria Carnevale, Naalehu Anthony, Hoku Cody, Kaikea Nakachi, Hiilei Kawelo, Koa Matsuoka, Kurt Johnson, Tobze, and organizations/agencies: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 'Oiwī TV, Flickr Creative Commons, Marisla Foundation, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. Graphic Designer Mele McPherson.

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Citation for this article

Andrade, Pelika, and Kanoe Morishige. 2022. Huli'a: Every place has a story ... Let's listen. *Parks Stewardship Forum* 38(2): 310–316.

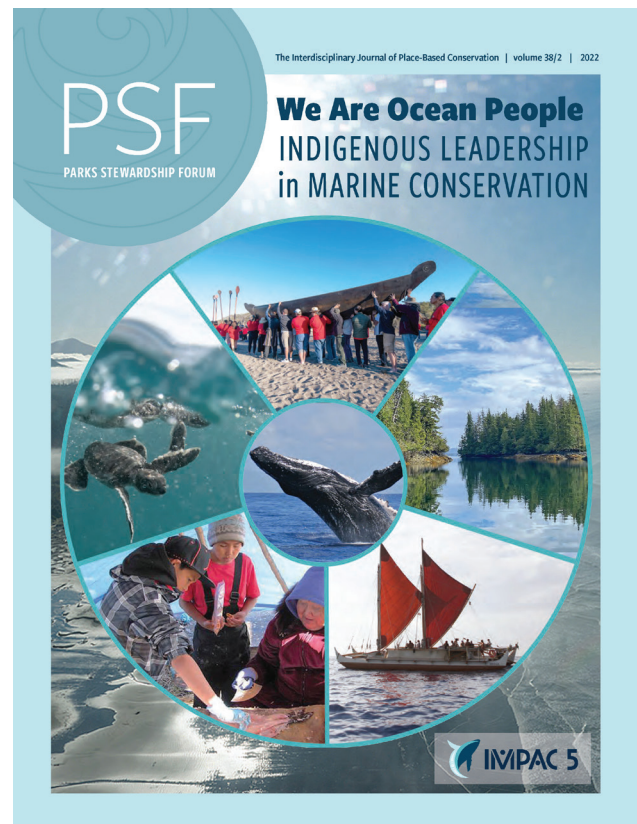
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The journal continues *The George Wright Forum*, published 1981–2018 by the George Wright Society.

PSF is designed by Laurie Frasier • lauriefrasier.com



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- CIRCLE DESIGN, clockwise from top:
- Northern Chumash ceremony | **ROBERT SCHWEMMER**
 - Haida Gwaii | **CINDY BOYKO**
 - The Polynesian Voyaging Society's voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a | **NOAA**
 - Elder teaching youths, northern Alaska | **US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**
 - Baby Honu (sea turtles), Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument | **NOAA**
 - Center: Humpback whale, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument | **NOAA**

Background: Pacific Rim National Park Reserve | **PARKS CANADA**