

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA



PRESS RELEASE

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“LOST ON A REEF” MARITIME HERITAGE EXHIBIT OPENS AT MOKUPAPAPA

A new NOAA exhibit commemorating the rich maritime heritage of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument opened today at Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo, Hawai‘i. “*Lost on a Reef*” focuses on shipwreck sites discovered over the past decade which represent the last 200 years of maritime history in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. It also highlights the work conducted by NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries maritime archaeologists to interpret and protect these sites.

The exhibit includes a display of ship artifacts dating to the 1800s, and several informational panels describing the maritime heritage legacy of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands from the whaling industry’s impact on the Hawaiian Islands in the early 19th century to contemporary exploration. During the distinctive whaling period, at least 10 vessels were reported lost in the low-lying atolls of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

“The exhibit will give visitors an opportunity to experience these fascinating maritime heritage sites and their stories up close and in a more personal way,” said Kelly Gleason, Monument maritime archaeologist, NOAA Maritime Heritage Program. “Interpretation of these shipwreck sites helps us understand the importance of remaining connected to this place, and why it is vital to protect Papahānaumokuākea’s natural and cultural resources for years to come.”

Foremost among the artifacts, are two ship bells both recovered from sites at Kure Atoll, the Monument’s northernmost atoll. One was recovered from the whaler *Parker* which wrecked in 1842 and the other from the *USS Saginaw*, a paddle wheel steam sailing sloop that also ran onto the reef at Kure Atoll in 1870. Both bells underwent extensive conservation at the Heritage Resources Conservation Laboratory at California State University at Chico. The exhibit also includes an 1800’s hard hat dive helmet on loan from the History of Diving Museum in Islamorada, Florida. A whaling harpoon and a sextant were provided by Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut.

The exhibit opening also marks the debut of the maritime themed film also titled, “*Lost on a Reef*.” The film chronicles Papahānaumokuākea’s maritime heritage, research and preservation efforts. It also includes interviews with the scientists and researchers who discovered many of the shipwrecks and collected the ship bells for display.

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Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees – the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai‘i – joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place, which is now being considered for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov