



HAMER NEWSLETTER

YEAR 2024

AT A GLANCE

a year of impact and innovation

Protecting Hawaii's Ocean, One Wave at a Time.

In 2024, HAMER made waves of progress—from expanding our statewide manta ray and Hawksbill sea turtle catalogs to securing four new Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) for Hawaii's gentle giants. Our turtle rescue efforts led to countless successful disentanglements, while beach and reef cleanups cleared over 44,617 feet of fishing line and thousands of pounds of debris. We also reached a groundbreaking milestone with the completion of the Living Building Challenge home concept design, proving that sustainability and community resilience go hand in hand. Every success is a testament to our dedicated volunteers, researchers, and supporters who continue to protect Hawaii's marine ecosystems. Together, we're shaping a healthier ocean and a brighter future!

support us





LIVING BUILDINGS



As we welcome 2025, we're thrilled to celebrate an incredible milestone: the conceptual designs for our Living Building Challenge affordable home project for a Lahaina fire survivor are complete!

This project, a collaborative effort with Regen Maui, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, MASON, Ridge to Reefs, the International Living Future Institute, Maui County, and the Lahaina Community Land Trust, is a testament to what we can achieve together.

THE LAHAINA LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE HOME

BUILDING THE FUTURE

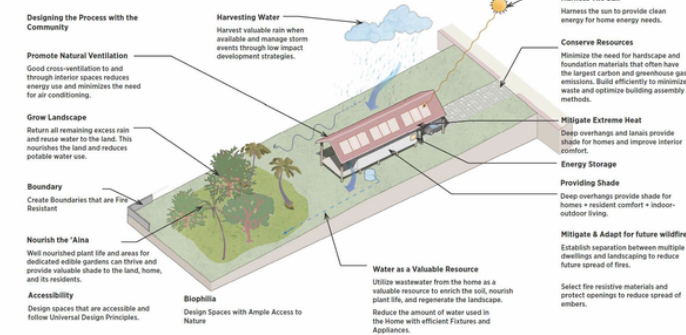
These homes are not just buildings—they're a vision of hope and resilience for the Lahaina community. Designed to be resilient, affordable, and in harmony with nature, they represent a brighter future for a Lahaina fire survivor and their family.

This prototype home is a beacon of regeneration, designed to offset carbon, generate its own energy, treat and reuse wastewater on-site, eliminate toxic materials, and inspire a new way of building.



LIVING IN BALANCE WITH THE 'ĀINA

Create a more resilient and affordable home
Home characteristics emerge from local heritage and climate





LIVING BUILDINGS



WHY IT MATTERS

The August 8 Lahaina fires underscored the need for homes that are not just safe but healing—this project sets a new standard for affordable, sustainable living.

SHARED MISSION

The Lahaina Community Land Trust and the Lahaina Living Building Affordable Housing Team are united by their commitment to creating affordable, sustainable housing while fostering strong connections between people and the land.



PROGRESS MILESTONE

The conceptual design phase for the Lokia Street property has been successfully completed, incorporating community input, regenerative materials, and biophilic design principles.

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

“We hope this project will show that we can create affordable, sustainable homes for local families without compromising our environment.” – Autumn Ness, Executive Director, LCLT





MANTA RAYS



A FAMILY TREE LIKE NO OTHER!

WE are diving deep—into DNA! With funding support from the Manta Pacific Research Foundation, genetic data is being analyzed for 85 manta rays to uncover family ties along the Kona coast.

By identifying full and half-sibling relationships, we are hoping to crack the code on manta social structures and reproductive strategies.

The goal? To inform conservation efforts with insights into how these gentle giants pass on their legacy. Think 23andMe, but for mantas!

OUR STATEWIDE MANTA CATALOG

HAMER's statewide manta catalog reached 794 individuals.

Fifteen new mantas were added, with notable contributions from Kauai, Maui, and Oahu.

If you have a sighting you want to contribute, please reach out and share the word!

Have you seen me?

HELP US PHOTOGRAPH AND IDENTIFY MANTA RAYS
HAWAII ASSOCIATION FOR MARINE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

HAMER

Their unique spot pattern let's us identify & track individuals over time

How you can help:

- Take clear **video** or **pictures** of manta ray bellies
- Include the **date, time,** and **location** of your sightings

SEND YOUR PHOTOS AND INFORMATION TO
REPORTAMANTA@HAMERINHAWAII.ORG
WWW.HAMERINHAWAII.ORG

MANTA PROJECT
HAMER

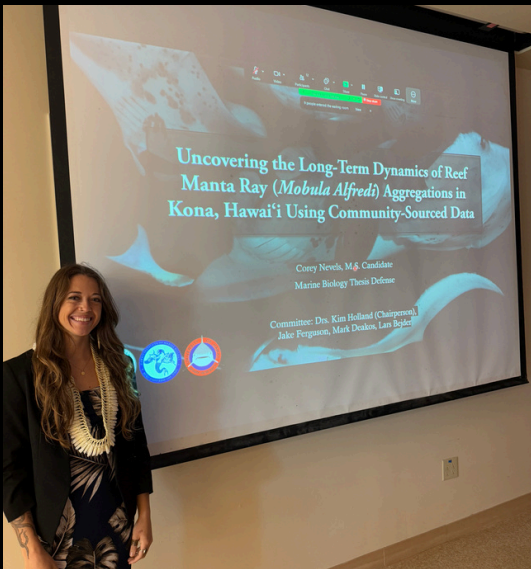
[submit a manta encounter](#)



MANTA RAYS

PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING COREY!

HAMER's Oahu Manta Project Manager, Corey Nevels, earned her Master of Science in Marine Biology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa examining manta ray aggregation patterns in Kona.



A WIN FOR MANTA CONSERVATION

Four critical manta ray habitats in Hawaii—**Pupukea, Kahe Point, Olowalu, and South Maui**—have been officially designated as Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)!

While these designations don't add new legal protections, they shine an international spotlight on Hawaii's manta rays, recognizing these areas as vital for feeding, cleaning, and socializing.

Translation? Conservationists now have more leverage to advocate for responsible management and habitat protection. Plus, the mantas get some well-deserved recognition—about time!

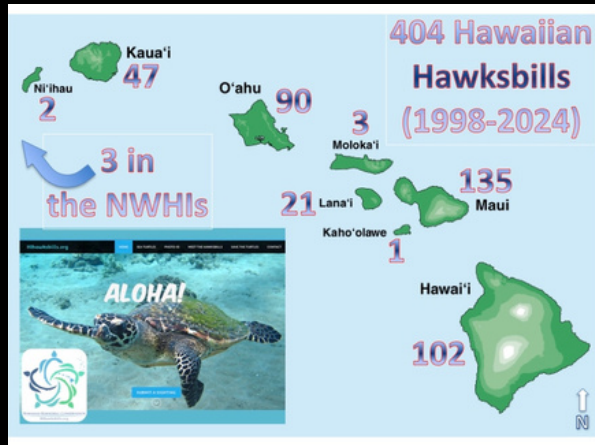
Her thesis, “Uncovering the **Long-Term**

Dynamics of Reef Manta Ray (*Mobula alfredi*) Aggregations in Kona, Hawai'i Using Community-Sourced Data,” sheds light on how manta rays use key aggregation sites, their residency patterns, and the role of prey availability. By analyzing 13 years of citizen science data—including over 23,000 manta sightings provided by Manta Pacific Research Foundation—Corey has uncovered critical insights for manta conservation in Hawai'i.

Her work highlights the power of community-driven research and reinforces how collaboration can help protect these gentle giants of the sea. Corey's dedication, curiosity, and passion for ocean conservation inspire us all, and we can't wait to see where her journey takes her next!



SEA TURTLES



HEROES OF THE SEA: LIFESAVING WORK WITH MAUI'S TURTLE RESCUE TEAM

In 2023, the Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute (MOCMI) achieved a significant milestone by rescuing its 1,000th sea turtle on Maui since its inception in 2019. The collaborative efforts of this skilled staff and volunteer team (which HAMER is a part of) have been instrumental in responding to constant reports of turtles in trouble and facilitating rehabilitation at MOCMI. The sea turtles are so lucky to have such an awesome team of passionate individuals!

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY CONSERVATION PROJECT

The Hawaiian hawksbill sea turtle in-water catalog (1998 - present) now boasts 404 individuals after adding 19 new unique individuals in 2024! Each hawksbill is showcased on www.hihawksbills.org and new individuals are posted on social: @hihawksbills. Mahalo to all who have contributed sightings to this project for two and a half decades!





SEA TURTLES

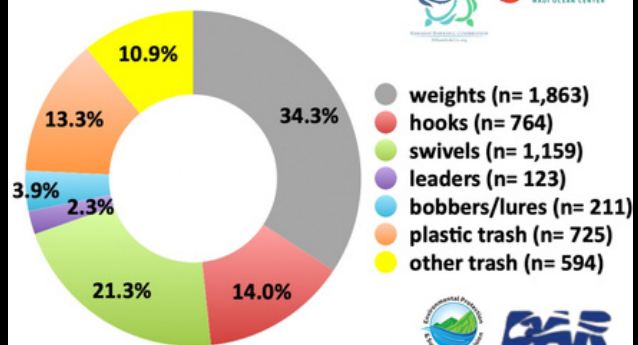


NATURE'S RESILIENCE: FROM SEAWALL TO SANCTUARY

In a remarkable turn of events, Maui County's removal of a failing seawall at Kapalua Bay led to the restoration of a native sand dune, transforming the area back to a natural coastal ecosystem. In 2023, this rejuvenated habitat welcomed its first known hawksbill turtle nesting site, boasting an impressive 98% hatching success rate. The HAMER team played a crucial role by assisting the Hawai'i Wildlife Fund with monitoring this beach for nesting and hatching turtles. This success story underscores the resilience of protected species when natural habitats are restored, and human-made obstacles are removed.

REEF CLEANUPS: TURNING THE TIDE OF TRASH

Results from 159 Maui Reef Cleanups from Jan-Dec 2024:
5,439 items plus 44,617 feet of fishing line/rope (820 pounds total)



Our Turtle Team isn't just about rescuing turtles—they're also skilled in reef cleanups, tackling the hidden dangers lurking beneath the waves. In 2024, in collaboration with MOCMI and funding support from Maui County's Division of Aquatic Resources and the Division of Environmental Protection & Sustainability, our dedicated volunteers removed 5,439 debris items and an astonishing 44,617 feet (that's ~8.5 miles!) of fishing line and rope—weighing a total of 820 pounds! Nearly 35% of the debris consisted of lead weights, followed closely by swivels, plastic trash, and hooks. A cleaner ocean isn't a one-time effort—it's an ongoing mission!



BEACH CLEANUPS



Maui No Ka Oi Magazine

KA'EHU CLEANUPS: TURNING THE TIDE ON TRASH

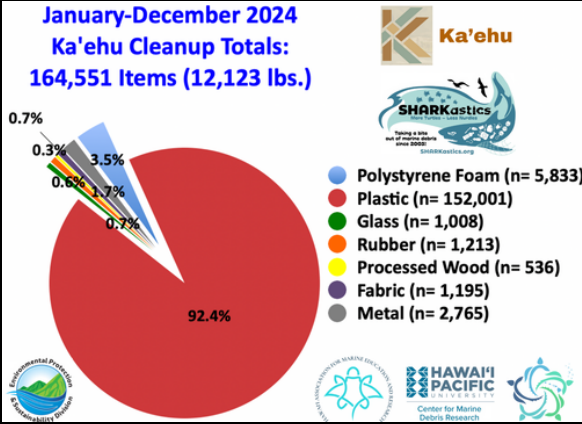
HAMER volunteers removed 164,551 pieces of marine debris weighing over 12,123 pounds in 2024 alone! Our 4th Sunday of every month Ka'ehu Cleanups are not only a wonderful way to get some outdoor exercise and give back to our beautiful island- these efforts are making a true difference by removing this deadly debris (mostly plastic) from our environments where our cherished marine life need all the help they can to flourish.

GUARDIANS OF THE BEACH: HAMER'S CHERYL KING LEADS THE CHARGE AGAINST MARINE DEBRIS

Maui Nō Ka 'Oi magazine spotlighted Cheryl King, HAMER staff member and SHARKastics founder, for her dedication to marine debris removal. Since 2012, she has led monthly cleanups at Ka'ehu Bay, a debris hotspot due to ocean currents. Volunteers not only remove plastic waste and fishing gear but also collect valuable pollution data, helping to identify major sources. This work highlights how community action can drive real environmental change.

MAKAMAKA'OLE: THE HIDDEN GEM OF CLEANUPS

Since 2020, HAMER has led 12 major cleanups along this remote coastline, removing over 7.5 tons of debris. Due to the difficulties in accessing this area, we have to fly the debris out by helicopter (mahalo to the County of Maui for funding these needs)! Check out www.sharkastics.org to join our next cleanup!





CALL TO ACTION

JOIN THE WAVE OF CHANGE

HAMER's 2024 achievements were just the beginning. From rescuing turtles to clearing debris and pioneering sustainable housing, every step forward was powered by people like you—our supporters, volunteers, and advocates. Now, it's time to ride the wave into 2025 and beyond.

2025 KA'EHU CLEANUPS:

HOME ABOUT **EVENTS** RESEARCH
EDUCATION ART GALLERIES CONTACT

www.SHARKastics.org

KA'EHU BEACH CLEANUP MAUI

SHARKastics has been spearheading cleanups at Ka'ehu on the 4th Sunday of every month since July, 2012. This bay and coastline are important for many species! More and more debris is always washing ashore, so we need your help. So far, we've removed over 37 tons of marine debris. It's heaps of fun!

*Please RSVP in advance so we can share our entry and safety protocols: sharkastics@gmail.com

Map to Ka'ehu

2025 CLEANUPS (9AM-NOON):
 January 26 * February 23 * March 23 * April 27 * May 25 * June 22 * July 27 *
 August 24 * September 28 * October 26 * November 23 * December 28

JOIN US!

DONATE

Help fund our research, cleanups, and sustainability projects. Every contribution makes an impact! Make a donation to help fund the construction of our LBC home!

[support us](#)

VOLUNTEER

Get hands-on with beach cleanups, turtle monitoring, and manta research. No experience needed – just passion! Volunteer to support Phase II.

[volunteer](#)

SHARE

Follow us on social media and share your HAMER experience using #ProtectOurOceans. Together, we can amplify our impact! Learn more and join us at:





YEAR 2025



YOUR SUPPORT IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

Please consider supporting our work to protect and preserve Hawaii's precious marine resources. Let's make 2025 a year of progress, community, and hope. Mahalo nui loa for being part of this journey!

MAHALO!

support us



SCAN ME

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Complete construction documents and start the build of our LBC affordable home

Complete the analysis of the Kona Manta Ray Parentage (family tree) study

Continue to broaden HAMER's statewide manta ray citizen science program with a strong focus on Maui, Oahu, and Kauai

Continue with critically endangered hawksbill sea turtle monitoring

Ongoing reef and coastal marine debris cleanups

Continue to address fishing line entanglement threats in collaboration with state and county regulators and other stakeholders

Continue sea turtle disentanglement response

Draft manuscripts for Pupukeya's manta rays and for Kona's feeding aggregation patterns

Initiate the "Search for Tala" program to springboard Maui's manta ray research

See you all on the water!

