



PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA Marine National Monument

NEWS RELEASE

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Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Honors Clarence “Aku” Hauanio with 2015 Umu Kai Award

(Hilo, HI) On August 4, the 2015 Papahānaumokuākea Umu Kai Award was presented to Clarence “Aku” Hauanio for a lifetime of conservation management and education of Hawaii’s keiki (children) and adults in traditional Hawaiian fishing techniques. The award, established by NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Pacific Islands Region, is presented to a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner who invokes the spirit of traditional fishing practices and management while adapting to modern fishing environments.

The presentation, made at an evening reception at the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo, coincided with the 23rd Annual Hawai’i Conservation Conference entitled “Hanohano Hawai’i Kuauli – Celebrating Collaboration and Wisdom across Hawaii’s Ecosystems.”

“It is an honor to present Uncle Aku with this special award,” said Athline Clark, NOAA superintendent for Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

The award, named after the traditional Hawaiian practice of enhancing fish habitat, honors the legacy of the late Uncle Eddie Kaanaana, a Native Hawaiian cultural treasure who was the first recipient of the award in 2006. Other recipients include Hawaiian Navigator and former Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Kamehameha Schools Nainoa Thompson, former Department of Land and Natural Resources Chair William ‘Ailā, and Uncle Mac Poepoe, a fisherman and community leader on the Island of Moloka’i.

A fisherman, educator and natural resource manager, Uncle Aku has inspired generations of fishers and natural resource managers throughout Hawai’i. Over the years, he has educated people on the perpetuation of customary fishing techniques including Kau Lā’au, a traditional Hawaiian ulua (trevally) fishing practice. In 2014, Uncle Aku retired after 29 years of service to Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park, where he worked to recover and protect endangered species including the endangered nēnē (Hawaiian goose) and the ‘ua’u (Hawaiian petrel).

“A lifelong educator, Aku has shared his knowledge about the ocean’s vast resources with scientists and community members alike,” said Nākoa Goo, Mokupāpapa Discovery Center Program Coordinator. “Aku is a phenomenal waterman and a highly respected fisherman who practices and perpetuates the traditional wisdom and values, as Uncle Eddie did.”

Papahānaumokuākea staff presented Uncle Aku with the 2014 Umu Kai Award for his outstanding efforts in marine conservation and played a 10-minute congratulatory video featuring friends, family, conservation leaders and students who have been touched by his efforts.

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. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as the first mixed (natural and cultural) UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States in July 2010. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov.

