

Seattle Aquarium Hawaii research

Why?

To document trends in the diversity and abundance of fish species, as well as large invertebrates like corals. The Seattle Aquarium then shares this information with the state of Hawaii.



How?

Teams of scuba divers swim a transect line at each site, taking video along the way. The GPS coordinates of each site are recorded so that we can be as consistent as possible in returning to the same locations from year to year. The divers swim 50 meters in one direction (measured by a marked line that is deployed as they go), then return along the same path, while reeling in the line. Once they reach their starting point they repeat the procedure, swimming another 50 meters in the opposite direction and back again. These transect dives take roughly 45 minutes. Back on land, it takes another hour to view the footage and record the species seen.

Where?

These annual surveys take place at eight sites along the west coast of Hawaii ("the Big Island"). Some of the sites are located within marine protected areas; others are in non-protected areas.

