

Fisherman's Lookout



Photo by John Johnson | www.onebreathphoto.com

In years long past, Pu'u Maili'ili, the small mountain that towers over the Health Center's clinics and walking trails, was known as an excellent fisherman's lookout. Before dawn, spotters would hike up to a high point and wait patiently for the sun to rise and light up the blue ocean mist. They would look for two clues – flocks of seabirds circling overhead and the sure sign of churning whitewater created by thousands of fish schooling on the surface. The spotters would then signal to the waiting canoes down on the beach and point them in the direction where the schools of fish were located. This assured an abundant catch to feed the people of the village.

While fishermen no longer use this low-tech (but extremely effective) technique, this Fisherman's Lookout still offers a perfect viewing platform to scan the ocean for clues of the teeming life below its surface.



KOHOLĀ KUAPI'O

Thanks to an international ban on commercial whaling and protections under the Endangered Species Act and other laws, the population of North Pacific humpback whales (koholā kuapi'o) has increased to an estimated 21,000. Approximately 10,000 migrate to Hawai'i from their feeding grounds in Alaska to mate and give birth in Hawai'i's warmer waters. Watch for tail splashes and their massive 50-ton bodies landing with an audible splash after they leap into the air.



NAI'A

Hawai'i's warm waters are home to 13 species of nai'a (dolphin or porpoise) with the most common the Hawaiian spinner, spotted, bottlenose and rough-toothed dolphins. Hawai'i fishermen prefer the name "porpoise" because "dolphin" is used to refer to the mahi mahi (dolphin fish). Hawaiian spinner dolphins are often spotted in the nearshore waters along the Wai'anae coastline as they break the surface with their high spinning leaps.