

Kīpahulu

Kīpahulu District
Haleakalā National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Welcome to the Kīpahulu District of Haleakalā National Park, a land of mountain valleys, rainforest, waterfalls, and sweeping views of the surrounding Pacific Ocean. Upper Kīpahulu Valley, a sanctuary for native plants and animals, is a scientific reserve. The Kīpahulu coastal area, along scenic 'Ohe'o Stream, offers hiking, camping, and swimming in a primitive setting. From the parking area, trails lead upstream to the larger waterfalls and pools as well as down to the coastline and the lower falls. During good weather, the gentle, grassy slope at the end of the downstream trail (Kuloa Loop Trail) affords a pleasant place to rest, picnic, and enjoy the view of the ocean and the island of Hawai'i, 30 miles away.

When the first Europeans arrived, the picturesque lands of Hāna, Kīpahulu, and Kaupō were densely populated. Hawaiian nobility chose this productive land for their homesites. To preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the coastal area and upper Kīpahulu Valley, Congress added the Kīpahulu District to Haleakalā National Park in an addition of donated lands in 1969.

THE FOREST Most of the plants around you are not native to Hawai'i. They were brought to the islands by humans. The present coastal forest includes tropical almond and Java plum, native to the East Indies and Christmas berry, native to Brazil. Guava, native to tropical America, and mango, native to India, litter the roads and trails with large, rotting fruit.

Six-foot-tall elephant grass, native to Africa, lines the trail close to the parking area. So many aggressive, alien plants now dominate the landscape that native Hawaiian plants have a hard time competing for space.

THE NATIVE PLANTS Pūhala, a palm-like tree with curious aerial roots, can be found along the Kuloa Loop Trail. The fruit cluster ('āhui hala), is composed of many wedge-shaped fruits called "keys." Hawaiians use the pliable leaves to weave hats, mats, sails, baskets, and other items.

Naupaka kahakai (beach naupaka), is found throughout Polynesia. Its five-petaled flowers look as though they are ripped in half. Several ocean-side plants, including pūhala and naupaka kahakai, have buoyant fruits which allow them to spread to distant islands.

Kukui (candlenut) is a tree that the first Polynesian settlers probably brought with them to Hawai'i. Its large, light green leaves make it easy to spot on the hillsides above Waimoku Falls and elsewhere in the park. The oily nuts were strung and used as candles by the early Hawaiians. The fruits also yielded medicines and dye.

A number of native and Polynesian-introduced plants are labeled along the Kuloa Loop Trail.



Pūhala



Naupaka kahakai



Kukui

THE WILDLIFE As with the plants, most of the animals seen along the coast arrived recently. These aliens include such common birds as spotted and barred doves, cardinals, Japanese white-eyes, mynahs, and pheasants. Native sea birds such as the 'iwa (frigate bird), the koa'e kea (white-tailed tropic bird), and the noio (black noddy) can sometimes be seen along the coast. From August to May, the kolea (Pacific golden plover) can be found in grasslands. You can often see the native 'auku'u (night-heron) and 'ulili (wandering tattler) flitting around stream edges. It is unlikely that you will see any of Hawai'i's most famous native birds, the honeycreepers. Their lowland forest was destroyed before this area became a national park, and they succumbed to habitat loss, disease, and the ravages of alien predators.

Hawai'i's only two native land mammals, the monk seal and the hoary bat, are endemic (found nowhere else) and have both become endangered species. The mongoose, an alien weasel-like animal native to India but introduced here from Jamaica in 1883, preys on native birds and can often be seen crossing roadways. Feral pigs (escaped from domestication) inhabit the forests, and feral goats roam the ridges. Ongoing efforts to prevent the further destruction of native flora and fauna by these alien animals are given high priority in the park.

A primary reason for adding the Kīpahulu District to the park was to protect the rare native birds, plants, and insects that inhabit the valley rainforest. To accomplish this, the upper Kīpahulu Valley has been designated a Scientific Reserve and is **CLOSED TO PUBLIC ENTRY**.

THE STREAMS Four streams drain Kīpahulu Valley. The most accessible of these is 'Ohe'o. Twenty-four large pools and many small ones are found along its one-mile length and there are many waterfalls. As with most Hawaiian valleys, water erosion is responsible for the formation of Kīpahulu Valley. In the walls of its gorges the cross sections of a number of separate lava flows can be seen. The interior of each flow solidified into dense, solid rock, while the exposed outer surface cooled rapidly, forming loose clinkery layers. The clinker is easily eroded, undermining the overlying solid rock. Eventually the rock breaks under its own weight and tumbles down. Steep-sided walls develop parallel to the stream, and the terraces form waterfalls. Each waterfall carves a plunge pool at its base. Examples of this process can be seen in dozens of places on Maui's northeast coast along the road to Hāna and Kīpahulu.

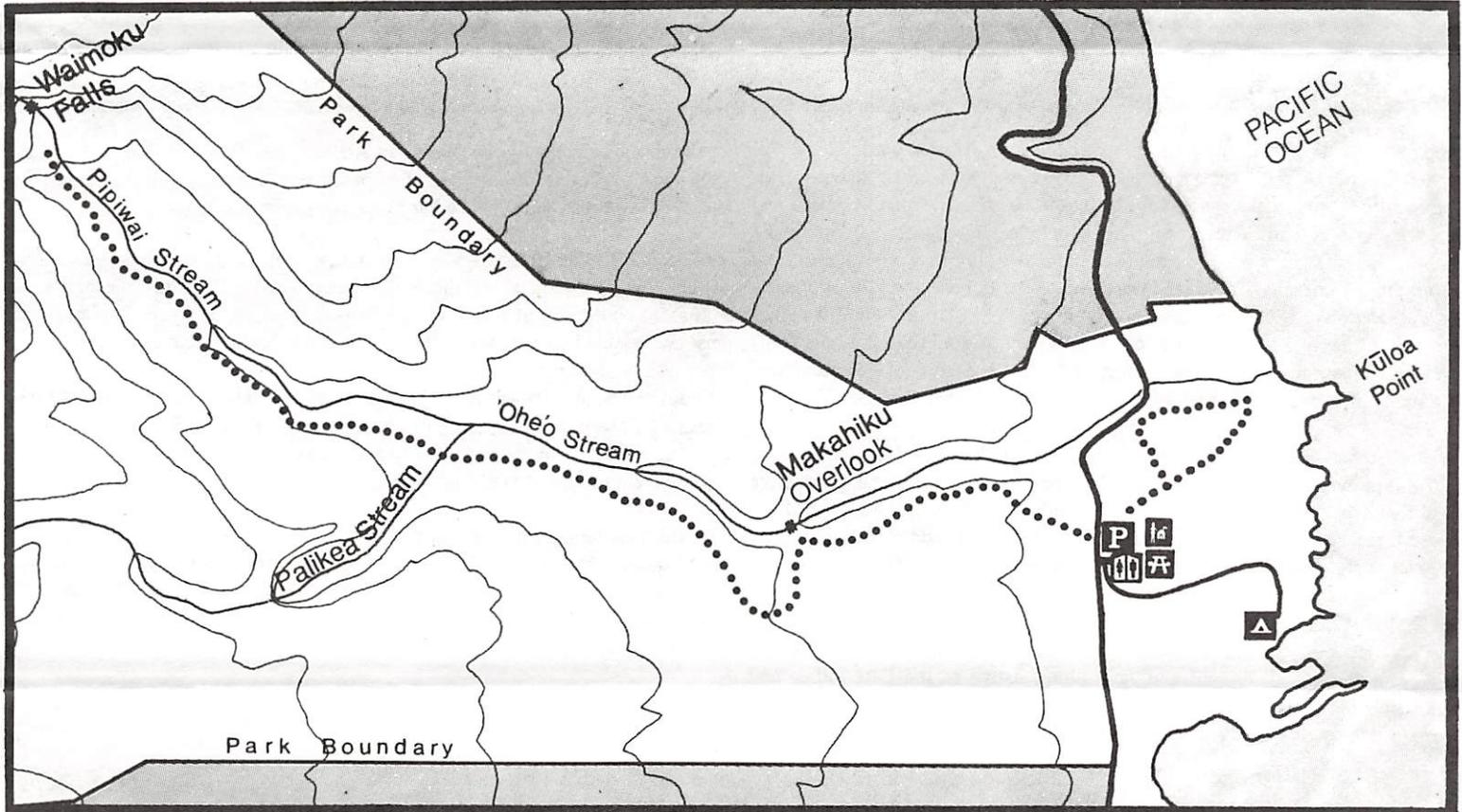
Hawaiian streams are very special places. Here in the middle of a salty sea, flowing fresh-water habitats exist for stream life. You will not find any native freshwater trout or bass in Hawai'i, they could not survive an ocean crossing. Instead, fish, shrimp, and snails that have evolved from saltwater ancestors make their homes in these pools and riffles. Many inhabitants still maintain a vital link to the ocean, spending parts of their life cycles in salt water. The 'o'opu (a rare type of goby fish) breeds in the upper streams, spends its youth in the ocean, then returns to the streams to mature. Glance at 'Ohe'o Stream and imagine the remarkable journey of the 'o'opu--it climbs up waterfalls! By using its lower front fins as a suction cup and squirming forward with its tail, the 'o'opu inches upstream.

THE OCEAN As you look out across 'Alenuihaha Channel (Ah-lay-new-ee-hah-hah), you may be able to see the peaks of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa on the Big Island of Hawai'i. The channel is 30 miles long and 6,180 feet deep. The currents of the Pacific Ocean, coming from the east, squeeze between the two islands resulting in strong near-shore currents on Maui's south shore. These strong currents, and the frequent presence of sharks, make swimming in the ocean here dangerous. Even climbing near the ocean can be hazardous--unexpected large waves and surges have been known to wash the unwary visitor into the 'Alenuihaha.

The waters of Hawai'i contain about 700 species of fish. Many have been used by Hawaiians past and present as an important food source. From the park's shore, Kīpahulu fishermen cast for 'o'io (bonefish) and use thrownets (introduced from Japan) to capture schools of aholehole (silver fish) and manini (surgeonfish). During low tides, the more adventurous brave the exposed rocks at the surge line in search of 'opihi (limpets) which are considered a great delicacy.

THE HISTORY This area abounds in traditional Hawaiian culture, as evidenced by remains of old kalo (taro) patches, shelter sites, fishing shrines, temples, canoe ramps, and rock walls. Archaeological findings indicate that this coast once supported a large Hawaiian population. Your help is needed to protect these treasures of our national heritage. Keep people and vehicles off of these sites. Report anyone seen dismantling or defacing these sites to a Park Ranger.

Working to restore the historic scene through reestablishment of native plants and animals, and control of alien species within the narrow boundaries of the park, the National Park Service is attempting to pass on the wonders of Haleakala, unimpaired, to future generations. Aided by ongoing scientific research, it is hoped that a fragment of native Hawai'i, much as it was seen by arriving Polynesians almost 2,000 years ago, may be preserved for the enjoyment of present and future visitors. May the rocks, flowers, animals, and trees in the park remain an inspiration long after you have left. Your help to protect the National Park is absolutely critical to its survival.



★ SWIMMERS TAKE NOTE ★

Because swimming in the park is unsupervised, everyone entering the water should be aware of the special hazards found in and about Hawaiian streams and the rugged Kīpahulu seashore.

'Ohe'o stream is subject to flash flooding. If you see the water level rising, get out fast! Never swim alone and never during high water.

An invisible layer of extremely slippery microorganisms coat rocks. Hidden rocks, ledges, branches, and turbid waters make diving dangerous.

Strong currents and sharks make ocean swimming dangerous. Remember, you are responsible for your family's safety. Watch your children!

PLEASE KŌKUA We remind visitors that national parks exist to preserve the benefits of the natural and cultural environment. It is ecologically, culturally, and legally kapu (forbidden) to remove anything (including plants, rocks, and animals) from the park. Please dispose of trash properly; leave the area as you would like to find it.

HIKING All trails start at the trailhead map at the lower end of the parking lot. Pipiwai Trail, which crosses the road and follows the south side of 'Ohe'o Stream, will take you 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) to an overlook of the 184-foot waterfall at Makahiku. Continuing on another 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) will bring you to the base of Waimoku Falls. The trail passes by ancient Hawaiian farm sites and through an alien (non-native) bamboo forest. Mud, rain, alien mosquitoes, slippery mosses, stream crossings, and high humidity are the normal conditions that challenge the hikers who tackle the second mile of Pipiwai Trail through the rainforest.

Do not attempt this hike or any stream crossings when streams are swollen. Stay on trails; numerous cliffs and streams present dangers to unwary

explorers. Hikers need sturdy boots, water, raingear, and mosquito repellent.

Kūloa Loop Trail is an easy 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) walk down to the ocean, looping along the stream past overlooks on several waterfalls and returning to the trailhead (or branching off and connecting to Pipiwai Trail).

CAMPING You will find a primitive campground in a secluded field near the ocean, accessible by a rough dirt road just beyond the turn-off to the parking area. Chemical and pit toilets and a few picnic tables are available, but there is no drinking water. No permit is required, but camping is limited to three nights per month. Pets are allowed on a leash. Detergents must not be used in the streams--they kill rare aquatic life.

Bring a camp stove or charcoal for cooking. Use the charcoal grills provided. Do not build stone fire rings. Rocks here are parts of archaeological structures under Federal protection. Help preserve these irreplaceable reminders of ancient Hawai'i. Do not camp on or alter the archaeological sites in the campground or elsewhere in the park.

GETTING THERE The Kīpahulu District of the park is 62 miles southeast of Kahului Airport via the Hana Highway. Driving time is approximately three hours one-way. From the airport, take Route 36 (360) to Hana, then Route 31 to Kīpahulu. These narrow, rugged roads have few straight sections. Sightseers should pull over to allow local traffic to pass. No gas, food, lodging, or potable water are available in the Kīpahulu area. Most businesses in Hana are open for limited hours. Services are generally available from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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