

Kaloko-Honokōhau

Kaloko-Honokōhau
National Historical Park
Hawaii

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The partly shaded Ala Hele Kahakai, or Coastal Trail, has spectacular coastal scenery.



'Ai'ōpio fishtrap was constructed of lava rock by Hawaiians. Fish swam into the bay at high tide and were trapped inside the walls as the tide fell.



Honu, or green sea turtles, like to bask in the sun. They are endangered and are protected by law. Please do not disturb them.



The kuapā, or rock wall, now being reconstructed, separates Kaloko fishpond from the ocean.



Despite the modern development nearby, here at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park the ancient world surrounds you. Established in 1978, this park preserves the coastal sections of two ahupua'a (traditional land divisions), Kaloko and Honokōhau. In the past hundreds of Hawaiians lived here. Extended family groups fished, farmed, and lived self-sufficiently.

Hawaiian society was highly stratified; ali'i (chiefs) and priests ranked highest, followed by warriors, tradespeople, and commoners. They were governed by konohiki (land managers). Strict principles of land and ocean conservation were enforced through kapu, religious laws.

Look mauka, up toward the mountain Hualālai. Then look makai, out to sea. The ahupua'a extended from the upper slopes of the volcano down to the coast and even out into the ocean. Most necessities were found within the boundaries of the ahupua'a.

The volcano produced two types of lava: the smooth, ropy flows called pāhoehoe, and the rough chunks of 'a'ā. Look closely at piles of rock protruding from the lava field—they may be ancient structures that survived because of Hawaiian engineering skill. Some of the ahu (large rock cairns) marked formal boundaries between ahupua'a, which ensured sufficient resources for the people of each ahupua'a.

Also built from lava rock were agricultural, fishing, and religious structures. On the road to Kaloko fishpond look for elevated planters used to cultivate sweet potatoes, gourds, and other crops. An old heiau (religious temple) stands at the southern end of the park beside 'Ai'ōpio fishtrap. Throughout Hawaii heiau were built as tributes to the gods and for religious ceremonies dedicated to war, agriculture, fishing, ocean navigation, and medicine. Hawaiians gave offerings of prayers, plants, goods, chants, dance, and song.

Hawaiians had many different methods of fishing depending on the character of the coastal terrain. Nets were made of plant fiber, while fishhooks and lures were made from bone, shell, and rock. The coastal trail leads you past the Kaloko and 'Aimakapā fishponds and the 'Ai'ōpio fishtrap. Kaloko fishpond is an excellent example of traditional aquaculture. Fish were raised here to sustain the people.

Many coastal dwellers shared the ocean's bounty with their families in the uplands and, in return, received mountain products. Fish, salt, and coconuts were collected along the coast. Ulu (breadfruit), kalo (taro), and wauke (paper mulberry) were grown on the mountain.

Water is precious in this arid environment. Fresh groundwater flows downslope and mixes with salt water near the ocean. Where this brackish water is exposed at natural pits or hand-dug wells, it is known as an

anchialine pond. The water level of these ponds fluctuates with the tide, reminding us of their underground connection to the sea. In times past they provided drinking water for humans. Now these ponds shelter rare plants and animals.

Near 'Aimakapā fishpond is the hōlua, or stone slide. The hōlua was used as a form of sport for the ali'i. Its surface was lined with grasses in preparation for use. Riders would race toboggan-like sleds to the bottom of the slide. The length of this hōlua is about 150 feet, and it was wide enough for two sledders at a time.

As you walk through this ancient homeland, keep in mind that not everything you see is from the past. You may see offerings left recently at certain sites, a reminder that traditional Hawaiian practices keep the spirit of the past very much alive at Kaloko-Honokōhau.

Mālama Ka 'Āina—Care for the Land



Much has changed here since ancient times. Non-native plants and animals thrive in this coastal area, often at the expense of native species. The National Park Service practices mālama ka 'āina, "care for the land," by removing invasive species, monitoring native species, and educating the public.

A careful look may reward you with sightings of some native species. The 'ālae ke'oke'o (Ha-

waiian coot, *top left*) and the ae'o (Hawaiian black-necked stilt, *top right*) are found only in Hawaii and are endangered. These birds nest along the edge of 'Aimakapā fishpond.

The pua pilo (*above left*) is a fragrant native flower that blooms in the early morning and fades by the afternoon. It is used in traditional medicine.

The yellow blooms of the 'īlima (*above right*) are

also used in traditional medicine as well as being strung into beautiful leis.

The pohuehue (beach morning glory, *below*) is commonly seen against the salt-and-pepper (coral and lava rock) sand of the Hawaiian islands.



Planning Your Visit

Getting to the Park Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park is on the west coast of the island of Hawai'i, between Kona International Airport and Kailua-Kona.

Stop first at Hale Ho'okipa, the park visitor information center, 4.2 miles south of the airport via Hawaii 19. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. There is an information desk and sales area.

To drive to the beach area, turn right from the parking lot onto Hawaii 19 and go 0.6 mile south. Turn right on Kealakehe Parkway, take the next right, and follow the road to the park entrance.

Things to Do The park has few visitor facilities but many opportunities for exploring on your own. There is no food service in the park. You are welcome to picnic, but open fires and glass containers are not allowed.

Park trails are unpaved and cross areas of soft sand and loose, jagged 'a'ā lava. If you plan to hike, wear thick-soled shoes, carry water, and prepare for unshaded terrain. Even on a short hike, it is easy to get lost out on the lava. To help protect fragile park resources, please stay on the trails.

The 0.5-mile Ala Hele Ike Hawai'i trail leads from the main parking area to the beach. It connects with the Ala Hele Kahakai, or Coastal Trail, which runs north-south beside the ocean and takes you along the sand beach and fishponds and through areas of dense vegetation. Two historic trails, the Māmala-hoa, dating from the 1830s, and the Ala Hele Hu'e Hu'e (an old ranch road), cross the lava fields.



Regulations This area is considered sacred; please treat it as such. All cultural and natural objects within the park are protected by federal law.

- Do not climb on or deface walls, pick plants or flowers, or remove artifacts or rocks.
- Open fires and glass containers are not permitted.
- Service animals are allowed.
- For firearms regulations see the park website www.nps.gov/kaho.

Related Sites There are two other National Park Service areas on the west coast of the island of Hawai'i where you can explore traditional life. Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park is 22 miles south of Kailua-Kona. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site is 27 miles north of Kona International Airport.

More Information Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.

Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park
73-4786 Kanalani St., #14
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740-2600
808-329-6881
www.nps.gov/kaho

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The Spirit of Kaloko-Honokōhau

Within the Ahupua'a



Native Hawaiians sometimes speak of a mo'ō, a water-dwelling guardian spirit, who rests on a rock as it watches over Kaloko fishpond. As long as the pond is cared for and treated with respect, the mo'ō will allow bountiful fishing. But if the pond is disrespected, the mo'ō will take the fish away, punishing not just those who brought harm to the sacred waters but everyone else as well.

In the past, the lava flows from Hualālai volcano were home to a community of hundreds of people. They lived within the ahupua'a, a land division extending from the mountaintop to the shoreline and into the ocean. Hawaiians thought of the land not just as a place to live but as an entity that possessed mana—spiritual power. Today at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park, the spirit of mālama ka 'āina, “care for the land,” continues.

Forest

The forest was restricted to all but a few, such as the kahuna. The forest held a wealth of plants collected for food and medicines and timber (above) for houses and canoes. Areas were cleared near the forest to cultivate bark-fiber plants (wauke) and upland food plants like breadfruit and taro. Pigs were raised for food or to pay taxes. Feathers from birds such as the 'ō'ō and 'i'iwi (top right) were collected and made into capes and headdresses, marks of royalty for the highest of the ali'i.



Lava flats

Scant rainfall made large-scale agriculture impossible on the Kona Coast. Instead, people used lava rock to build raised planters (above) on the lava flats. They grew taro, sweet potatoes, and gourds. The husks of dry coconuts, soaked in water, were placed around the plants' roots to provide moisture and protection from the sun. The walls of the planters protected crops from drying winds.



Coast

The coastal zone was an area of high productivity. Crops were cultivated, the ocean's bounty was harvested through a variety of fishing methods, fresh water was available, and many people made their homes here. They built fishtraps and fishponds—walled-in areas along the shore where fish were raised. Pictured above is the kuapā (wall) and mākāhā (sluice gate). Fishponds belonged to the ali'i, who distributed fish when needed to feed the common people or the court.



Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park preserves the coastal areas of two ahupua'a in Kona district on the island of Hawai'i. The illustration above by artist John Dawson shows how the shoreline of today's park

might have looked in ancient times. Inset illustrations roughly correspond to elevations where they occur on the landscape. Numbers are keyed to the labels at right.

- 1 Forest: many species of timber and birds
- 2 Planters for crops
- 3 Niu (coconut) palms
- 4 Kahua kapa (women's workyard)
- 5 Hālau (long house) with wa'a (canoe)

- 6 Pounding taro for poi
- 7 Hale ali'i (house of the chiefs)
- 8 Loko i'a (fishpond)
- 9 Lawai'a (fishermen)
- 10 Gathering limu (edible sea plants)

- 11 Making fishhooks and nets
- 12 Kōlea (golden plover)
- 13 Basins carved in lava
- 14 Hīna'i (fish basket)
- 15 Honu (green sea turtle)

ILLUSTRATION NPS / JOHN DAWSON