



## For Immediate Release September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006

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### CALENDAR EVENT

#### ***Free Ocean Awareness Training Course Begins Again this October***

**Date:** October 10<sup>th</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup> (Tue's in Kihei, Wed's in Lahaina) Concurrent sessions

**Time:** 4:30pm – 7pm

**Where:** Sanctuary Education Center (Kihei); Wharf Cinema Center (Lahaina)

Local environmental organizations on Maui in partnership with the County of Maui and the State of Hawaii's, Dept of Aquatic Resources are joining forces to offer a free Ocean Awareness certification course to the community and commercial marine tour operators. After completing all 6 courses you will receive a CORAL (Care of our Ocean, Reefs and Animal Life) Card certification that demonstrates your ocean knowledge. The course has been designed by NOAA'S Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, the Maui Ocean Center, Maui Reef Fund, Maui Community College Marine Option Program, Hawaii Eco-Nature Society, Project S.E.A.-Link, Hawaii Wildlife Fund, and the Pacific Whale Foundation (PWF). This free training course will provide marine tour operators & community volunteers with up to date knowledge and interpretive skills to properly educate visitors about Hawaii's unique marine environment. A series of interactive workshops will be held, beginning Tuesday, October 10th, and continuing Tuesday's at the Sanctuary in Kihei & Wednesday's at the Wharf Cinema Center in Lahaina, through November 15th.

Each workshop is designed to provide outreach tools and resources, and will cover the basics for anyone out on the water or onshore talking with visitors, from community volunteers to professional tour boat operators and CORA guides and owners. Course topics include recent research, ocean etiquette protocol, Hawaiian culture, marine creatures, ocean safety, marine rules & regulations and more. This certification is beneficial for marine tour operators and the general community for improving and updating current ocean knowledge. In addition, this certification will help participants meet the requirements for volunteer positions with the Sanctuary's Naturalist Corps Program and other island wide volunteer programs where volunteers assist certified professional guides and owners. Speakers include: David Mattila, Science & Rescue Coordinator from the Sanctuary, Kimoeko Kapahulehua, president of the Fishpond Association, Donna Brown from MCC, Alison Cohan from PWF, Ed Lyman, Marine Mammal Response Manager and Educator Patty Miller from the Sanctuary, Liz Foote from Project S.E.A.-Link, Kuhea Paracuelles from the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission and Johanna Kamaunu, a cultural specialist and others.

*"The Ocean Awareness Training course was an excellent experience! This course should be mandatory for all tour guides and operators that care about the environment and want to have the latest info about our local marine ecosystem." - Paul Noble, Owner/Operator Maui Kayaks*

**SPACE IS LIMITED!** For more information or to register, please contact Emily Carlson at 879-2818.

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