



Proclamation

Renowned as places of astonishing beauty and biodiversity, coral reefs throughout the world provide food, offer shoreline protection as natural breakwaters, create white sandy beaches, generate surf breaks and are the largest living organism on the planet.

As the most isolated archipelago in the world, Hawai'i is home to unique coral reef ecosystems that support more than 7,000 reef species including invertebrates, sea mammals and more than 4,000 species of fish, of which one quarter are found nowhere else on the planet. Native Hawaiians' stewardship of island reef systems, as a fundamental and sacred core of their culture, stemmed from an intimate knowledge of species and natural processes that informs sustainable management to this day. The extraordinary natural and cultural heritage of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, led to the 1,200 mile chain of atolls and reefs being formally named by the United States Department of the Interior to the 2008 U.S. World Heritage Tentative List. The United Nations Scientific and Educational Committee will consider the official nominations for World Heritage Sites, which recognizes the most significant cultural and natural treasures on the planet.

More than 80 percent of all visitors to Hawai'i participate in ocean recreation activities, which depend on healthy coral reef ecosystems and contribute to a diversified local economy by generating an estimated \$800 million in gross revenue through coastline protection, recreational activities and fishery usage.

The coral reefs of Hawai'i, like those around the world, are experiencing declining populations of many species of reef fish, corals, invertebrates and marine algae. Land-based development, pollution, irresponsible fishing, introduction of non-native species, coral disease and bleaching worsened by rising sea temperatures, excessive recreational use, and the interruption of stream water flow contribute to the decline. In Hawai'i, an effort to combat invasive algae has led to the development of the Super Sucker, which is able to scoop up 800 pounds of algae per hour without harm to other species in the process.

More than 60 countries and organizations across the globe are joining the 2008 *International Year of the Reef* campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs, and to motivate people to take action to protect them. The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources in partnership with Mālama Hawai'i, the Coral Reef Outreach Network, the counties and countless organizations and individuals throughout the state are working to increase understanding of coral reefs and to energize the public to become active stewards of our marine resources through activities designed to increase awareness of reef conservation throughout our state.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and **I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR.**, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby **proclaim 2008**, as

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

in Hawai'i, and encourage our citizens to commit to the obligation of protecting our state's unique coral reef ecosystems for today and for future generations.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this twenty-fifth day of January 2008.

Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i

James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i