Intertwining social, economic, and ecological values to track ocean health

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Hawaiians and other Pacific Island nations have a long history of sustainable resource use. They recognized that their wellbeing and health relied on the status or availability of their resource. Today, the same is true; the health of our island communities and our environment is intertwined. This strong sense of place and mālama ʻāina (care for the land and ocean) drives community conservation in Hawaiʻi and is a model for the rest of the world. These social and cultural values are the foundation for the development of the Hawaiʻi Ocean Health Idex. The index was developed by a diverse group of stakeholders including community members, non-profit groups, private industries, state and federal agencies. It integrates community values, disparate data sets, management priorities, and ecosystem indicators for a more complete assessment of the benefits that our ocean provides the people of Hawai’i. The index was developed to assesses the status of our ocean resources as they relate to sustainability goals that have been defined by the multidisciplinary group of stakeholders. Integrating social, ecological, and economic values into one index enables communities, local businesses, managers, policy makers, and scientists to more holistically understand, track, and communicate the status of our ocean resources and creates a shared vision for the future of our oceans.