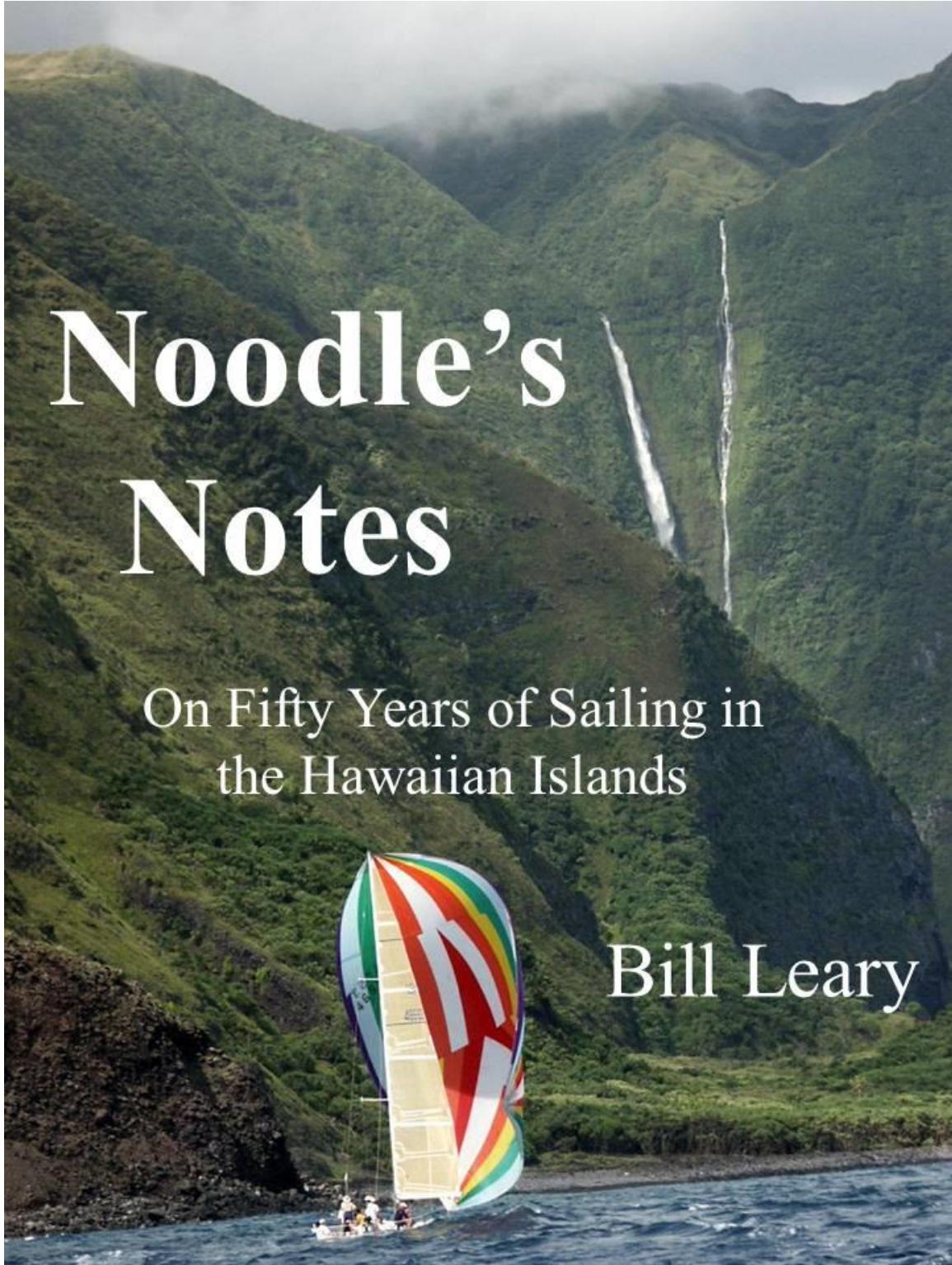


Noodle's Notes

On Fifty Years of Sailing in
the Hawaiian Islands

Bill Leary



Preface

Hawaii can be a challenging place to sail. The channels between the islands are wide and rough, small boat harbors are scarce, crowded, dilapidated and good anchorages are over-regulated, seasonally protected, and scarce. On the bright side, there aren't a lot of boats sailing in Hawaii. When you do arrive in a protected, spectacularly beautiful anchorage, you'll likely have it all to yourself.

There are a number of cruising guides available for Hawaii. Most of my favorite anchorages aren't listed in any of them. All thirty seven of my favorite anchorages and harbors are all detailed here. The other cruising guides also include some places that I wouldn't consider anchoring, primarily because many are not protected. Others provide nothing special when there is a better spot nearby.

Some local knowledge can really help make point to point sailing faster, safer and more pleasant. The cruising guides do a lousy job here too. I've put on paper here everything useful on sailing conditions that I can recall from racing and cruising in and around Hawaii for the past 50 years.

As you will see, this guide is most suitable for use on-line because it contains URL links to applicable state rules and regulations as well as links to 360 degree videos of most of the harbors and anchorages discussed. However, users should feel free to download the PDF file for use on your computer when you don't have internet access or print a hard copy to keep aboard the boat.

I hope this guide helps make your Aloha State sailing successful and enjoyable.

Bill Leary, January 2017

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The Sailing

Wind

Hawaii sits in the middle of the North East trade wind belt. Trade winds blow across the state approximately 300 days a year and vary little in direction between North East and East. The nearly stationary and strong North Pacific High Pressure area reinforces and strengthens trade winds in the islands from June through September. Summer trade winds in the open ocean average approximately 17 knots but are often stronger. The North Pacific High pressure area weakens and moves away from the state during the rest of the year and has less affect on our trade winds. As a result, from October through May the trades are usually weaker and less reliable. Between November and April, the Southern ends of fronts rolling Eastward across the North Pacific often reach far enough South to impact the state bringing Southerly or Westerly “Kona” winds.

Geographic Impacts on Wind

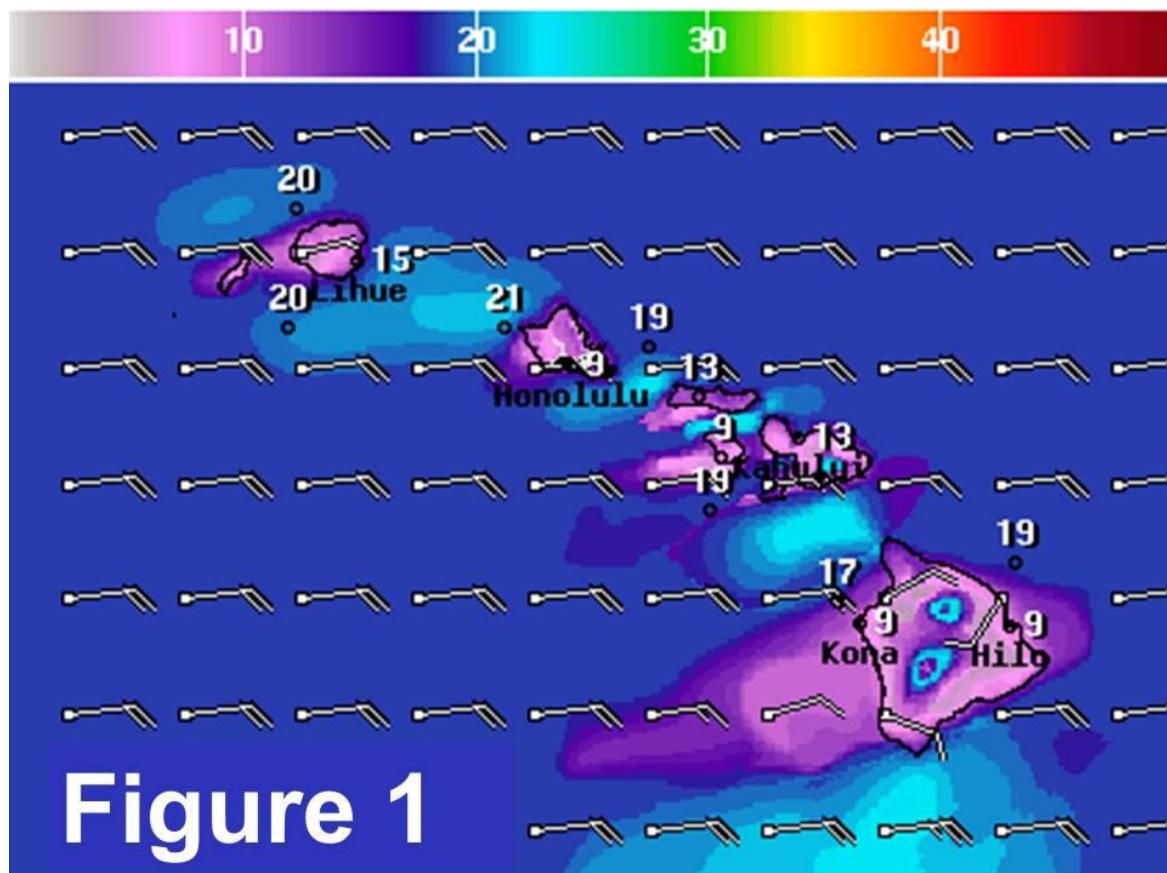


Figure 1 is an excerpt from an on-line NOAA graphic showing typical trade wind patterns around Hawaii during the summer. Note first that the open ocean trades are averaging 19 knots. In the channels between the islands the wind speed is significantly greater, as high as 23 knots, while immediately to windward and leeward of the islands the wind is slightly weaker at approximately 15 knots. Based on my experience, this graphic understates the geographic affects on wind, particularly in the channels. In some spots, it is not unusual to find that the wind is 10 – 15 knots stronger than the open ocean wind strength.

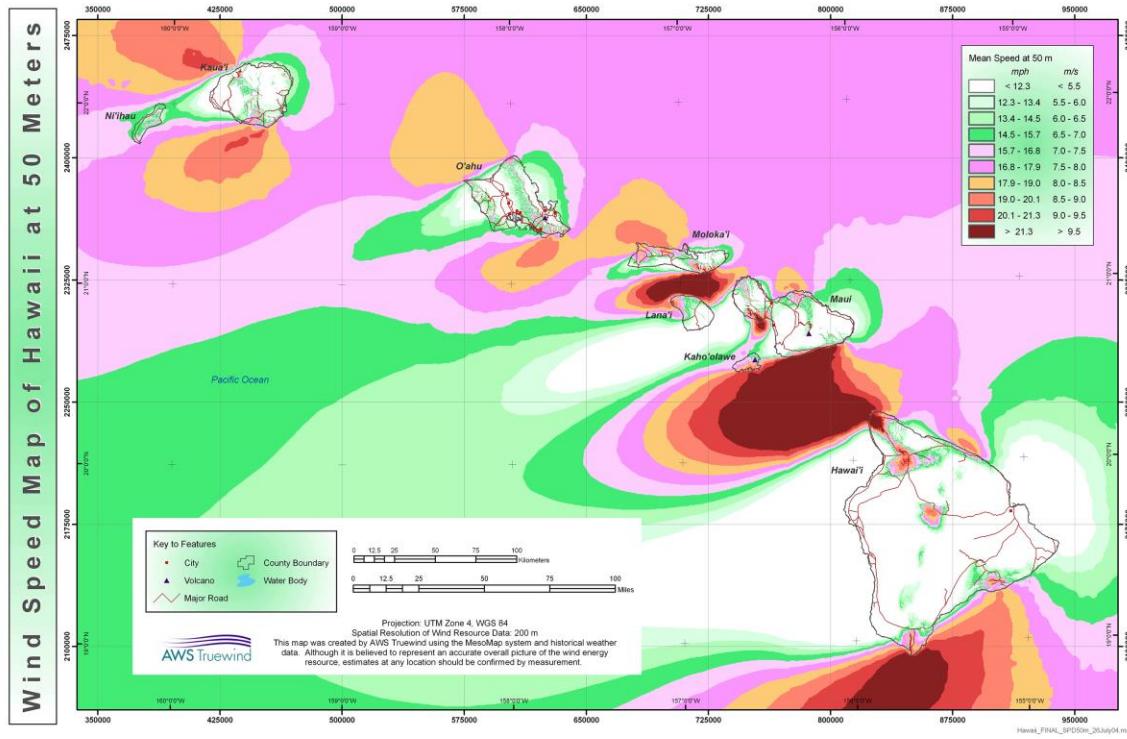


Figure 2 – Mean Wind Speed at 50M

Figure 2 shows the mean wind speeds in the state at an elevation of 50 meters. This may be even more enlightening than Figure 1. This tells us that it blows like hell in the channels, particularly the Kalohi, Alinuihaha, and south of the Big Island most of the time. Be prepared for heavy winds if you are sailing in these areas. Also note how the wind strength increases most and blows most consistently where it is forced around the ends of the islands.

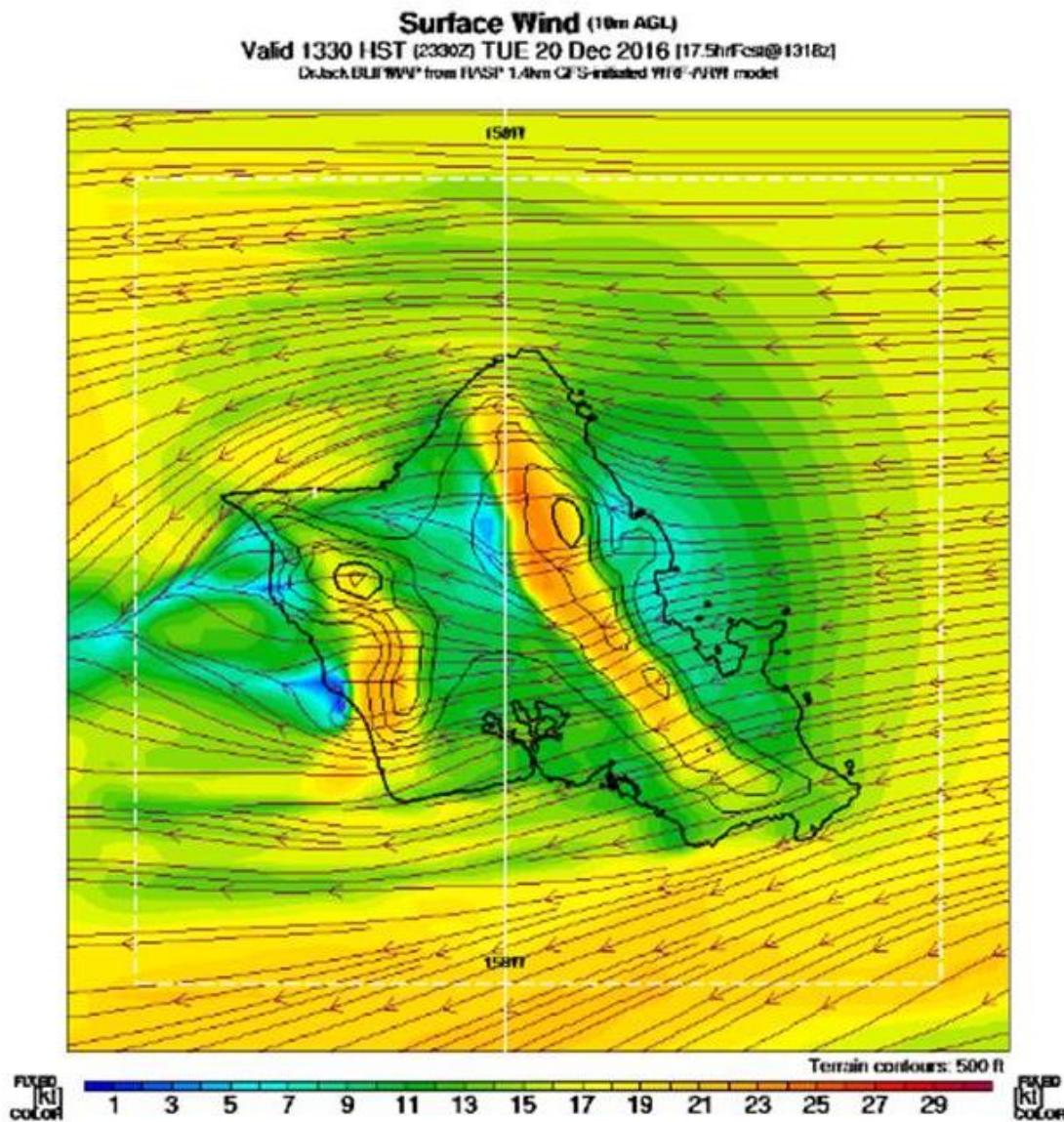


Figure 3 – Typical Trade Wind Surface Winds on Oahu

Figure 3 shows typical surface wind flow around Oahu during mid-day trade wind weather. Note how the wind direction bends as it flows around the northern and southern ends of the island. If you were sailing to windward around the island you would want to hug the coast in order to be on the inside of the geographic wind shift and thereby minimize the total distance sailed. This means short tacking up the coast. You should also be aware that in the open ocean in Hawaiian waters there is usually a weak surface current moving in the same direction as the prevailing wind. You will almost always find a counter current running in the opposite direction, in this case upwind, very close to shore. By short tacking close to the coast you can take advantage of this counter current

to help you get to windward. Sailing around the island in the other direction, you'd also want to hug the coast to minimize the distance sailed and take advantage of the stronger winds there. Interestingly, when heading downwind the current usually does not have a significant impact. This may be because boats are moving much faster and spending less time exposed to the current than when they are heading upwind. These general rules on sailing around the ends of Oahu can usually be applied to sailing around all of the Hawaiian islands with a few exceptions that will be discussed later.

Note how in Figures 1, 2 and 3 that the trade winds are slightly weaker on the windward and leeward sides of the islands than out in the open ocean. As you'd expect, the higher the island, the more impact it has on the wind flowing around it and over it. Generally, trade winds will flow across a Hawaiian island when its mountains are less than 5,000 feet high. On the leeward side of the island the winds will likely be gustier and shiftier than out in the open ocean. Trade winds generally can't get over the top when mountains exceed 5,000 feet in height, and significant lees result. Persistent lees are found during trade wind weather behind Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea on the Big Island, Haleakala and the West Maui Mountains on Maui, and Waialeale on Kauai. These lees can be huge; the Kona coast lee on the Big Island affects 40 miles of coastline and often extends one hundred or more miles off shore.

True thermal wind conditions are found on these coasts during trade wind weather with gentle on-shore flow during the day and offshore flow at night. Wind strength is directly related to the temperature difference between the land and sea surfaces. On a typical Kona coast day, the sea breeze will start to fill in at about 9AM. If the sun shines all day, the wind will continue to strengthen, maxing out at 10 knots or so at 2PM when the land is hottest. The land begins to cool as the sun sinks in the sky, and by 8PM the sea breeze dies completely. At about 10PM the land has cooled further and is now colder than the ocean surface. The off-shore land breeze fills in and blows all night at about 5 knots until it dies off just after sunrise. On cooler days, overcast days, or rainy days these thermal effects may be reduced or non-existent. As you'd expect, the strongest winds are found closest to shore with the wind slowly decreasing the further off shore you are.

Island thermal effects also tend to reduce near-shore trades at night and increase the trades during the day on all islands. When trade winds are light, it's not unusual for the normal on-shore flow on the windward coasts of the islands to die completely at night and be replaced by thermal land breezes that last until just after sunrise. This land breeze can extend about a mile off of windward Oahu and five or more miles off of the Hamakua coast of the Big Island. Light trades also tend to die off at night on the leeward coasts of the islands. This thermal effect is analogous to placing a bubble over the island at night that blocks out the trade winds. The bubbles over Molokai, Lanai, and Maui often combine at night to completely shut down the trade winds in the channels between these islands. This will be discussed in detail later.

Sailing can be tricky on the leeward side of islands with mountains approaching 5,000 feet in height. The Waianae Mountains on Oahu, Kohala Mountains on the Big Island, and Lanai fall into this category. Lees behind these islands tend to be intermittent. The

lees often disappear in the afternoon as the land heats with gusty trade winds rushing down the leeward slopes to replace the previously calm or light thermal conditions. Squalls crossing the mountains can also bring trade winds down to the surface with them. Be careful when sailing in these areas as strong trades often arrive without warning, and disappear just as quickly.

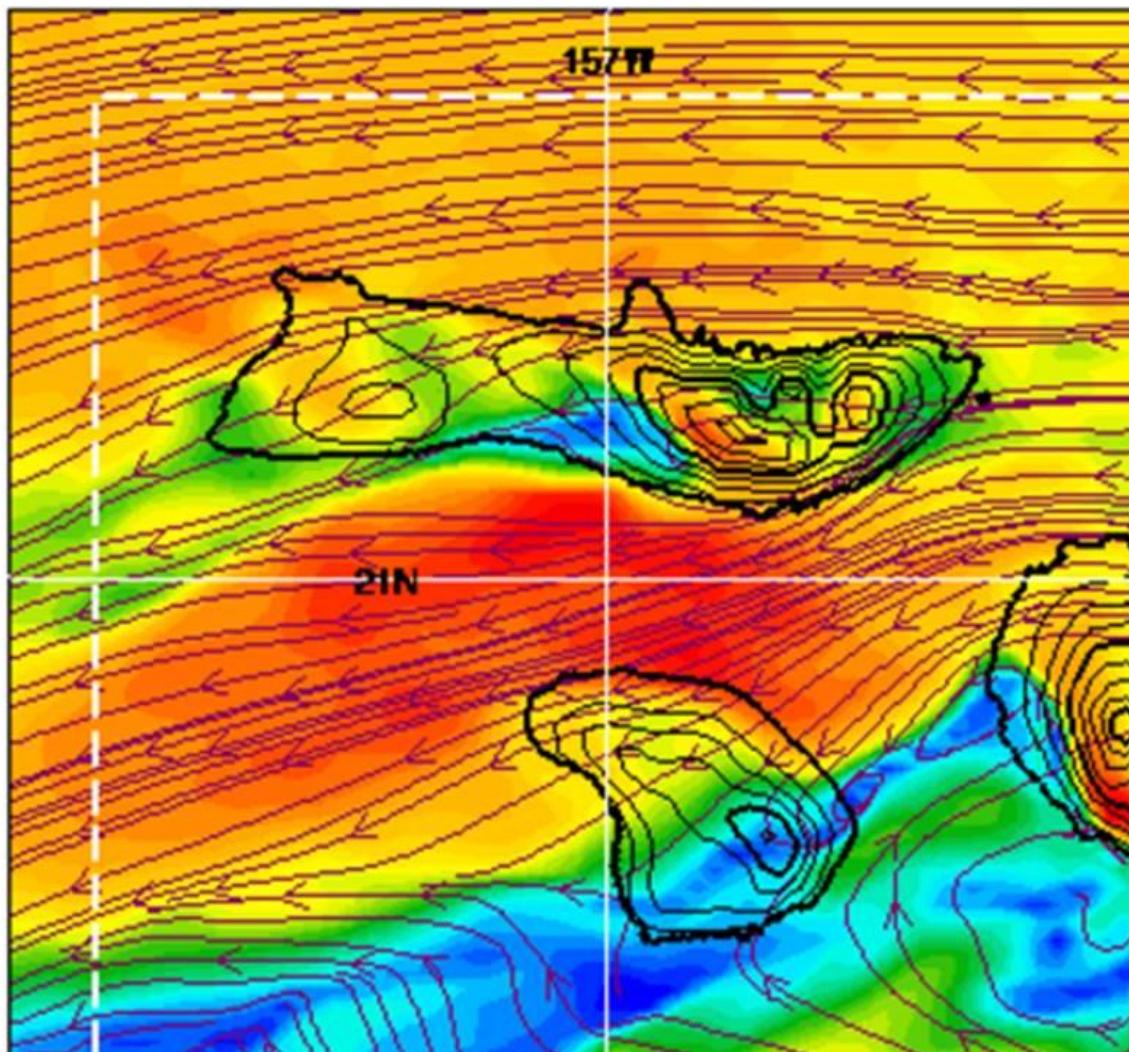


Figure 4 – Winds around Molokai and Lanai

Molokai Channel

Figure 4 shows typical summer afternoon trade wind patterns around Molokai and Lanai. Note how the easterly trade wind bends to the northeast to the west of Molokai. When sailing from Oahu to Molokai, you can count on a significant lift as you approach the West end of Molokai. When approaching from Kaneohe, you can also count on a significant increase in wind strength as you approach Molokai. If you are sailing around Laau Pt., be careful about getting too far South. Molokai's lee is intermittent, but if it is

there it extends like a cone South Westward from Laau Pt. with the narrowest part of the cone close to shore. Most races where the course takes the fleet past Laau Pt. are won by the boat passing closest to the point since that boat spends the least time affected by the lee of the island. Note the historically fastest track around Laau Pt. which diverges significantly from the rhumb line course.

Molokai North Shore

Figure 4 also shows typical summer trade wind patterns on the North Shore of Molokai. Note how the wind bends to the northeast and strengthens to the West of Kalaupapa Peninsula. When sailing to Honolulu, this northerly wind shift is maintained all the way across the Molokai Channel. In a perfectly sailed Transpac race, the boat would approach Molokai from the open ocean on port tack, jybing to starboard tack just as the wind shifts to the north near the Kalaupapa Peninsula. He'd then sail on the headed Starboard tack in stronger winds all the way across the Molokai Channel to the Diamond Head finish. The annual Labor Day race from Lahaina to Honolulu is best approached in a similar manner. The fast lane is just off the Molokai coast to the East of Kaulapapa, and then the same as Transpac the rest of the way to Honolulu. If you're not in close to the coast as you pass Kalaupapa, you will be on the outside of the shift and lose to those inside of you. In addition, the wind is a couple of knots stronger right off the North coast of Molokai. Boats closer to the shore West of Kaulapapa almost always gain on the boats further off the coast.

Channels Between Molokai, Lanai, and Maui

Sunrise on a typical trade wind day finds winds in the middle of the Pailolo Channel between Maui and Molokai that are a few knots lighter than in the open ocean. The bubble effect of these three islands will have reduced the trade winds during the night. The winds continue to get lighter closer to the islands until it is often calm just offshore. The trades die off a bit more as you penetrate further down toward Lanai. Off Lanai's Kaena Point at sunrise the trades are usually approximately 15 knots less than they will be later in the day. Most of the Kalohi Channel is calm. As morning progresses and the land begins to heat, the trades increase in the Pailolo and Kalohi Channels and the wind line moves closer to all three islands. By about 10AM the wind line has moved south to Kaanapali on Maui and is just offshore at Kaunakakai. The wind line is still well offshore at Laau Point on Molokai. By 2PM when the land is at its hottest, the wind is sweeping over Lanai and has filled in all the way down the South coast of Molokai. The wind line is making its closest approach of the day to Lahaina on Maui. Wind in the channels is at its maximum strength for the day. By 6PM, the land is beginning to cool, the trades are beginning to die off, and the wind lines are receding. By 10PM the land has fully cooled, the trades have backed off, wind lines have receded, and the wind characteristics early morning apply. The situation remains unchanged until just before sunrise when the offshore thermals start to weaken and the cycle repeats.

The scenario described above would be typical with prevailing 19 knot trades in the open ocean. If the prevailing open ocean trades are stronger, then the land's thermal effects have less impact on the winds around the islands. When the trades are weaker, the thermal effects have a greater impact.

These geographic impacts on the winds between the islands and their variation depending on time of day have a tremendous influence on strategies for optimizing sailing passages between the islands. When the course for the annual Labor Day race from Lahaina to Honolulu is down the slot between Molokai and Lanai, the race is almost always won by a boat that first heads for the North shore of Lanai and remains in the stronger trade winds while competitors that sail the rhumb line course end up parking off of Kaunakakai until the wind fills in. Racing in the other direction, boats that head offshore after passing Laau Point often find stronger trade winds while those inshore struggle. Of course, this depends upon when you arrive at Laau Point. If you get there in the middle of the night, you can often enjoy offshore thermals that carry you right up the coast of Molokai until they die off at sunrise.

Maalaea Bay between East and West Maui experiences similar thermal effects on the wind. Sunrise finds the bay calm with the typical wind bubble over the island. At about 10AM the land has heated and the trades begin to blow into Maalaea Bay at Kihei. By 11AM the trades are whistling between West Maui and Haleakala at 25 knots or so. This continues until just before sunset when the trades begin to back off as the land cools until the trades die off completely about 10PM. Keep these wind patterns in mind when you are planning a crossing of Maalaea Bay.

Lanai's South and West Coasts

Lanai sits to leeward of the West Maui Mountains which impacts the wind experienced off of these coasts. If the winds are tending Easterly, the trades usually don't fill in along the South coast of Lanai, as is the case in Figure 4. When the trades are tending North-Easterly or are stronger, the trades will fill in off the South coast of Lanai after 10AM and blow until just before sunset. The West coast of Lanai is much the same, but when the trades do fill in, they often accelerate as they come down the back of the island and can be as strong as the windiest areas of the channels. The wind on the West coast of the island usually dies off after sunset, but during times of strong North-Easterly trades it sometimes blows hard all night long.

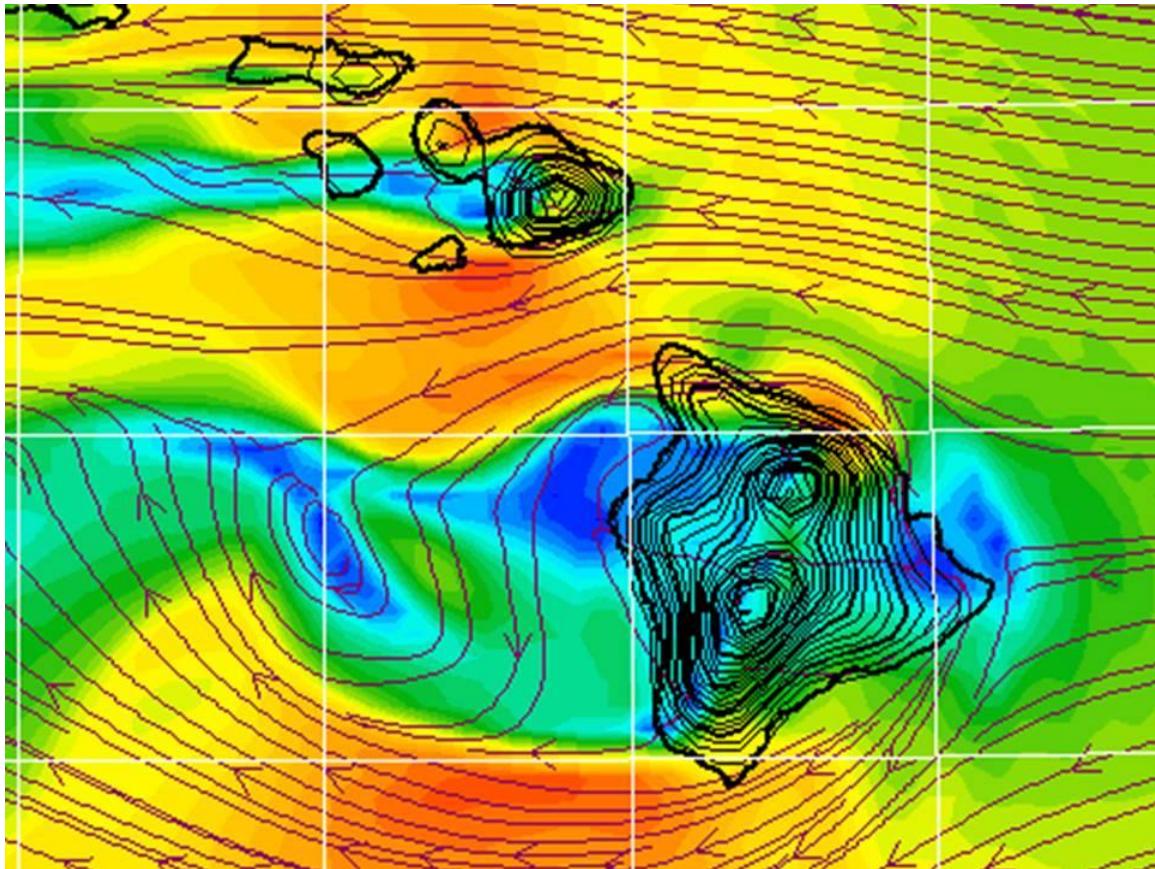


Figure 5 – Winds around the Big Island

Alinuihaha Channel

The Alinuihaha Channel between Maui and the Big Island is the windiest of Hawaii's channels with the wind funneling between 10,000 ft Haleakala and the 5,000 foot Kohala Mountains. The windiest part of the channel is just to the west of the throat of the channel and south of Kahoolawe. Figure 5 shows typical wind direction and strength in the channel. Note how the wind dies in strength 40 miles or so southwest of the channel and how the wind shifts to the North as you approach the Big Island. Both of these characteristics can be used to your advantage when crossing the channel heading toward the Big Island. The strongest winds can be avoided by starting your crossing well to the west of Kahoolawe. And there is no need to try to stay close to rhumb line as you are assured of a huge lift on the far side of the channel that will bring you back up on track. If you are heading toward Kailua-Kona or points South, you will end up powering through the Kona lee anyway, and it makes little difference where you enter the lee. When heading across the channel towards Maui, the further North you are when entering the channel, the broader the reach and therefore more pleasant the crossing will be. Entering the channel near Upolu Point ensures a pleasant broad-reach all the way to La Perouse Bay on the southern tip of Maui.

Kauai Channel

The channel between Oahu and Kauai is the widest in the group, and the land masses have the least effect on this channel as a result. Wind strength still accelerates due to the funneling effect of the islands, but less so than the other channels. On all but the fastest boats, this channel must be crossed at night to ensure landfall during daylight hours.

Waves

Wind Waves

Wind waves in the channels can be large and uncomfortable as they interact with other wave trains, squeeze around and bounce off headlands and are steepened by countercurrents and shallow water. Wind waves tend to become more regular the further offshore you are.

Wind waves often precede the wind that follows behind as trades fill in for the day or as wind lines approach.

Ocean Swells

For the purposes of this discussion, ocean swells are considered those that are generated by strong weather systems far distant from the Hawaiian Islands. Principally these are swells from between North and North-west that occur between October and April and swells from the South that occur between June and August. Both of these swells make anchorages in areas exposed to them untenable. The winter North swell is reliable enough that anchorages exposed to this swell should be avoided from October through April. The summer South swell is more intermittent. Anchorages exposed to the South can be enjoyed year-round, but pay attention to swell forecasts, particularly during the summer months, and get out before a South swell arrives.

Ocean swells have little impact on strategies for sailing between the islands, except that you need to pay attention to shallow areas exposed to the swells where waves could be breaking.

Currents

The open ocean current flow around Hawaii follows the direction of the trade winds at approximately 1/2 knot. Current flow in the middle of the channels is similar. Near-shore currents in the channels flow parallel to the coast but cycle in direction in relation to the tide. Velocity and duration in both directions is about equal. Unfortunately, there is no predictable pattern in relation to the tide in the current's direction or strength.

Very close to shore along the coast running parallel to the wind you almost always find a surface current flowing upwind. This can be used to your advantage when sailing upwind by hugging the coast to minimize distance sailed through the water.

Passages

Westerly passages between the islands are usually quickest when following the rhumb line course except as noted earlier in the areas around Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. These passages are generally downwind and quick and can be completed during daylight hours. The exception to daylight passages is a trip across the Kauai Channel which normally includes an overnight passage due to the channel's width.

Most Easterly passages between the islands can also be completed during daylight hours if you stop at the closest port or anchorage on the far side of the channel. This means stopping for the night at Kawakiu or Lono Harbor on Molokai when crossing the Molokai Channel from Oahu. Easterly crossings of both the Kauai and Alinuihaha Channels usually means an overnight sail, and if you are trying to make it from Oahu to Lanai or Maui without stopping an overnight sail is necessary. Night crossings of the channels are usually quite pleasant if you don't mind missing a little sleep. You can almost always see the lights on at least one island. Just keep watch for what little traffic there is in the channels and you'll be fine.

Seasons

When I was a teenager, we would go cruising every chance we got, no matter what month it was. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break in April; it didn't matter to us. As my experience grew though, I realized that we were having to forego many of the best anchorages unless we went there during the summer.

June, July, and August are the best month for extended cruising in Hawaii because anchorages exposed to North swells, which include most of the best anchorages in the state, are safest from North swells during this period. As the section on wind indicated, it is likely to be windier during these months, but being able to utilize the many great anchorages during that period is more important. Ninety percent of my cruising has been done during these summer months. The section on anchorages includes discussion on swell impact for each anchorage.

So that's when I try to cruise – during the summer. However, you can have great cruises any month of the year just like I have in the past. You should always pay attention to the swell forecasts. Outside of the summer months you need to pay particular attention to north swells, and be sure to avoid any anchorage that is not suitable when north swells are forecast.

My father, Bob Leary, liked to cruise in March and October when the winds were likely to be lighter. His chosen anchorages often got preempted by North swells though, and he

was forced to go elsewhere. He particularly liked his annual March cruise because our humpback whale population, which is here annually between November and April, usually provided spectacular entertainment for the crew.

Weather Forecasts

VHF weather broadcasts can be received in all Hawaiian waters on the standard VHF weather channels. Information provided includes wind forecasts, swell forecasts, and warnings. Regardless of other forecasting tools that you might use, VHF weather should be monitored religiously at least once daily by all boats sailing in Hawaiian waters.

Anchorage and Harbors

Resources

I've found Google Earth to be very useful when planning cruises and investigating potential anchorages. It gives a different and often better perspective on conditions to be expected than you can glean from a chart. To that end, a laptop with a wireless modem can be used to gather information real time from the internet and to check up on restrictions concerning anchorages you are considering. I've found that you can get wireless internet (and cell phone) access from most spots in the state. Notable exceptions are the North shore of Molokai, Southwest end of Molokai, Napali coast on Kauai, and the island of Niihau.

I cruise with a full set of paper charts of the islands. Many are outdated, but the islands haven't moved, we don't have shifting shoals, and I'm careful not to trust their specifics on aids to navigation as these may have changed since my charts were published. I carry a coast pilot, but this is more interesting reading than it is useful. A GPS helps, but isn't really necessary in Hawaii if you pilot carefully since we don't have fog or strong currents.

Rules and Regulations

Anchoring

Fifty years ago when I started sailing interisland with my father, there were no limitations on where, when, or how boats could anchor in Hawaii. The situation has changed considerably and will likely continue to change. Since those early days Hawaii's population has more than doubled and tourism has become the state's primary economic driver. The preservation of our natural resources is critical to ensure that tourists continue to visit and spend money here. The State government has recognized this, and

has put into place numerous regulations concerning the use of our aquatic resources including rules concerning anchoring and fishing.

While their intentions were noble, the government has done an abysmal job of disseminating these rules and regulations to the public. One of the most difficult and frustrating aspects of sailing in Hawaii is determining the restrictions on vessel operation in the state. I have attempted to decipher the regulations concerning the anchorages discussed in this essay, and address those regulations with the commentary on those specific anchorages. Keep in mind however, that the rules and regulations discussed were current as of the date of publication and may be out of date as you are reading this. It is strongly recommended that anyone planning to moor outside of a conventional small boat harbor conduct their own research to determine the current rules and regulations.

Regulations concerning the use of Hawaii's aquatic resources are issued by the state Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The DLNR has two separate divisions that issue these regulations, the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DBOR), and the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). The best way I've found to research current regulations is on the internet. Current regulations are contained in PDF files that can be downloaded from the DLNR web site at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/rules/>. Be sure to read the amendments as well as the rules! Good luck deciphering the legalese. You should also review the applicable brochures and pages available elsewhere on the DLNR website as they often prove to be useful as well.

Us taxpayers aren't the only ones who have a hard time determining the rules and regulations concerning the use of Hawaii's aquatic resources. Even DLNR's own enforcement personnel can't figure them out. In 2007 I anchored in Kealakekua Bay on the Kona coast of the Big Island. This bay is a DLNR regulated Marine Conservation District with strict regulations on anchoring and fishing. I was careful to anchor in the sand in Zone B where, based on my interpretation of the rules, anchoring is allowed. When I swam ashore I was met by a member of the DLNR Police, who informed me that anchoring was not allowed in Zone B. He was polite and courteous and acknowledged that the rules were somewhat ambiguous, but based on his interpretation anchoring was prohibited. We left, but a subsequent review of the commentary on this Marine Conservation District in DLNR's own web site states that "In Subzone B anchors may only be dropped onto sand...". The next time I anchor there I will take a hard copy of that page from the DLNR web site with me to show to the DLNR Police if they show up.

Fishing

Fishing in the open ocean is fine. You can keep anything you catch. However, there are numerous seasonal regulations regarding various species of fish, crabs, lobsters, etc., and geographic restrictions on harvesting marine life. If you plan to catch anything close to shore, make sure to familiarize yourself with the rules first at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/fishing/fishing-regulations/>.

Noodle's Anchorages

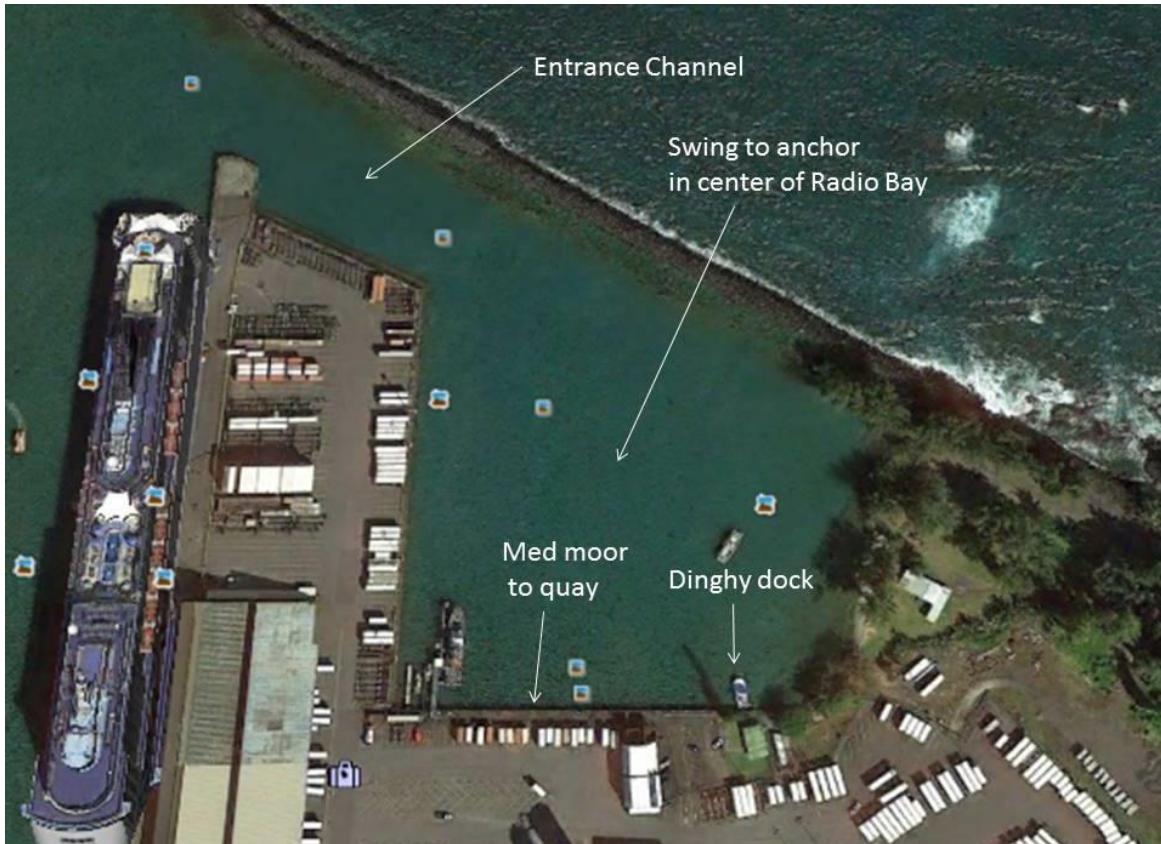
What follows is a list of thirty seven anchorages and harbors that I have used and enjoyed and recommend for other cruisers. Wherever you anchor, always set the hook so you can safely swing 360 degrees if the wind shifts in the middle of the night, as it often does here.

The inserted and annotated satellite photographs of the anchorages and harbors are from Google Maps, Google Earth, and Digital Globe. True north is always at the top of the photos. Some of the Google photos show rough water in the anchorages. Don't let that scare you away. Those photos were most likely taken during winter months when the north swell makes those anchorages unsuitable. Those anchorages are fine during the recommended periods. Kara Leary and I took all of the anchorage photos. Jesse Andrews took the title page photo.

I have recorded 360 degree videos of most of the anchorages and harbors that I discuss below. All of those videos are posted on YouTube and can be viewed via the links listed below. A video showing and discussing the typical conditions in the anchorage can be useful to someone who is considering going there for the first time. I'm working to fill in the gaps for those anchorages that I have not yet captured on video (the Big Island, mainly) and hope to post those soon.

The Big Island

Hilo – Radio Bay



GPS: 19-43.92N 155-03.15W approximate

Type: Anchorage or med mooring

Depth: 10 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video:

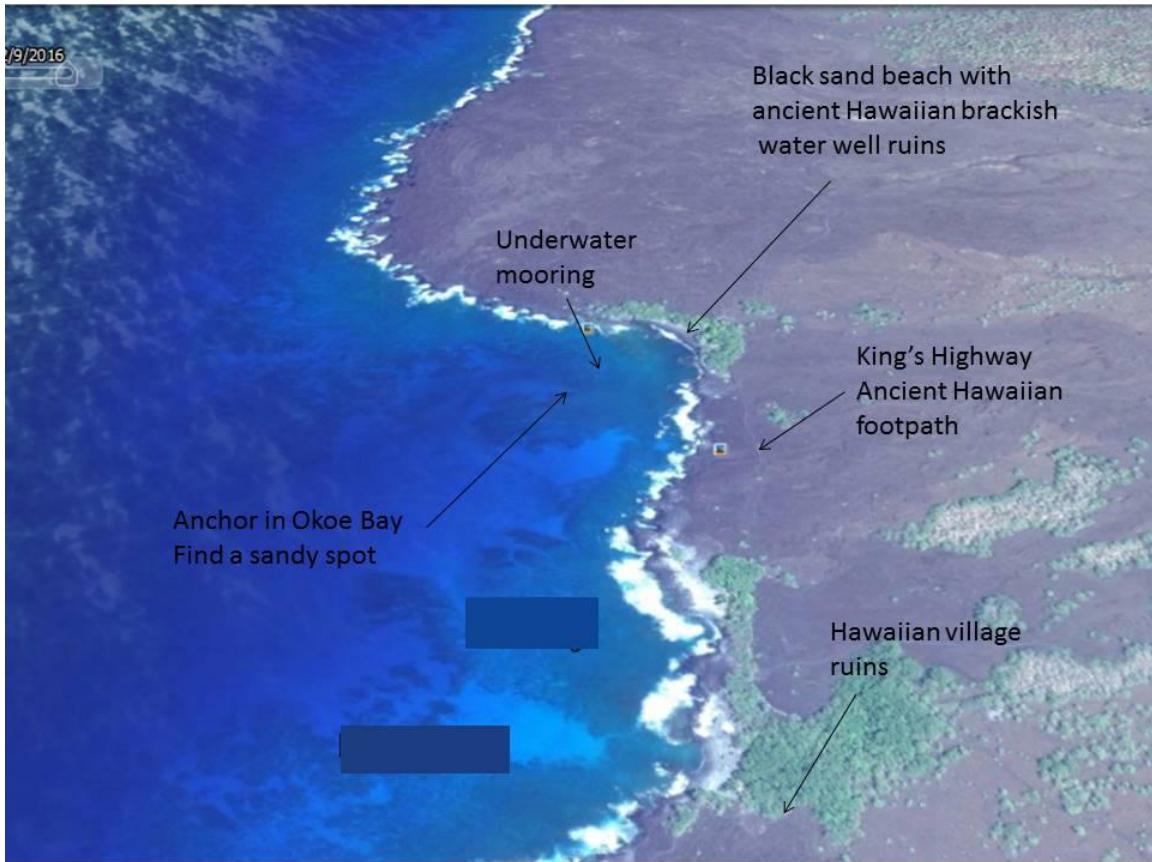
Comments: The only time you'll probably ever get to Hilo by sailboat is if you are arriving from the Americas or South Pacific. Hilo is the windward most port in the state and is simply too difficult to get to by sailboat against the easterly trade winds from elsewhere in Hawaii. Hilo is a great port though, and is a must visit IF you can get there, so it should be your port of entry of choice when arriving in Hawaii from the South Pacific, North or South America. It's a quiet, rural town with interesting sights, good access to Kilauea Volcano (a must see), and excellent stores close by for reprovisioning. Radio Bay provides excellent protection in all weather and swell conditions. Because it is so hard to get to, Hilo is seldom visited by local cruisers and is rarely crowded.

Hilo Harbor is well marked with lighted buoys and ranges so is safe to enter at night when the weather is moderate. When I arrived there from the South Pacific in November, 2014, I was told that some of the boats med-moored to the quay in Radio Bay had some problems with rats coming aboard via their mooring lines. You do not want rats on your boat (trust me, I have had them). Boats also have the option of anchoring in the middle of Radio Bay and going ashore by dinghy to the floating dinghy dock in the harbor. This is what we did, and is what I recommend. Be aware that the state run harbor charges the same daily rate for both med-moored and anchored boats, with no grace period. However, if you do not check in with the harbormaster within a short period of your arrival, you will be charged a higher rate. Don't chance it. Check in at the first reasonable opportunity.



The author's boat, *Moku pe'a*, at anchor in Radio Bay. Note med-moored boats

Okoe Bay



GPS: 19-09.00N 155-54.75W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 20-40 feet

Bottom: hard pan with crevasses, some sand patches

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This anchorage, which is nineteen miles Northwest of South Point, is my favorite anchorage on the Kona coast. The bottom of the bay is full of lava ledges and some coral so care must be taken when anchoring. Find a sandy spot to drop the hook in approximately 25' of water. If there's nylon line on your anchor rode, be sure to buoy it to keep the nylon from chafing on the rock bottom. Someone has also cemented in a mooring in the North East corner of the bay, but there is no surface buoy. After anchoring, snorkel in and check it out. You might choose to dive down and pick up the mooring line. I haven't used this mooring.

There are a few private beach houses along the shore, but I've never seen anybody in them and they appear to be used infrequently. Also along the black sand beach, and stretching to the South you'll find the remains of an ancient Hawaiian village that looks like it was abandoned recently. With the only access by 4-wheel drive and boat,

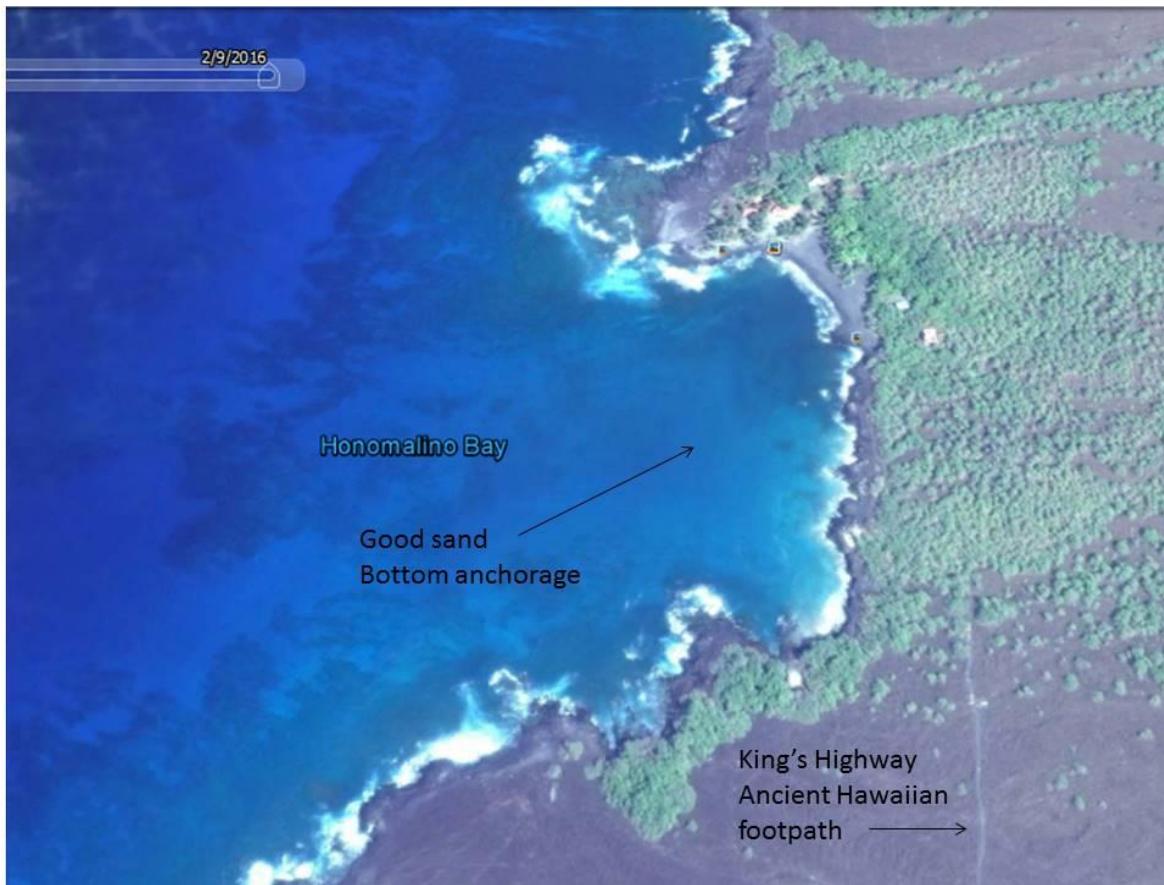
civilization has not destroyed wonderful this historical resource. There's the ruins of a rock lined brackish water well right on the beach, smooth coral stepping stone paths so the ancient Hawaiians wouldn't burn or cut their feet on the a'a lava, stone house foundations, and even a rock slide for sledding. A school of spinner dolphin also call Okoe home, and you'll likely awake in the morning to squeaks and splashes of the school playing around your boat. The snorkeling is also great in Okoe.

All of the anchorages between Okoe and Honaunau sit in the lee of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea and are always sheltered from the trade winds (see Geographic Impacts on Wind).



Moku pe'a at anchor in Okoe Bay, Big Island

Honomalino Bay



GPS: 19-10.22N 155-54.53W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 10-20 feet

Bottom: sand

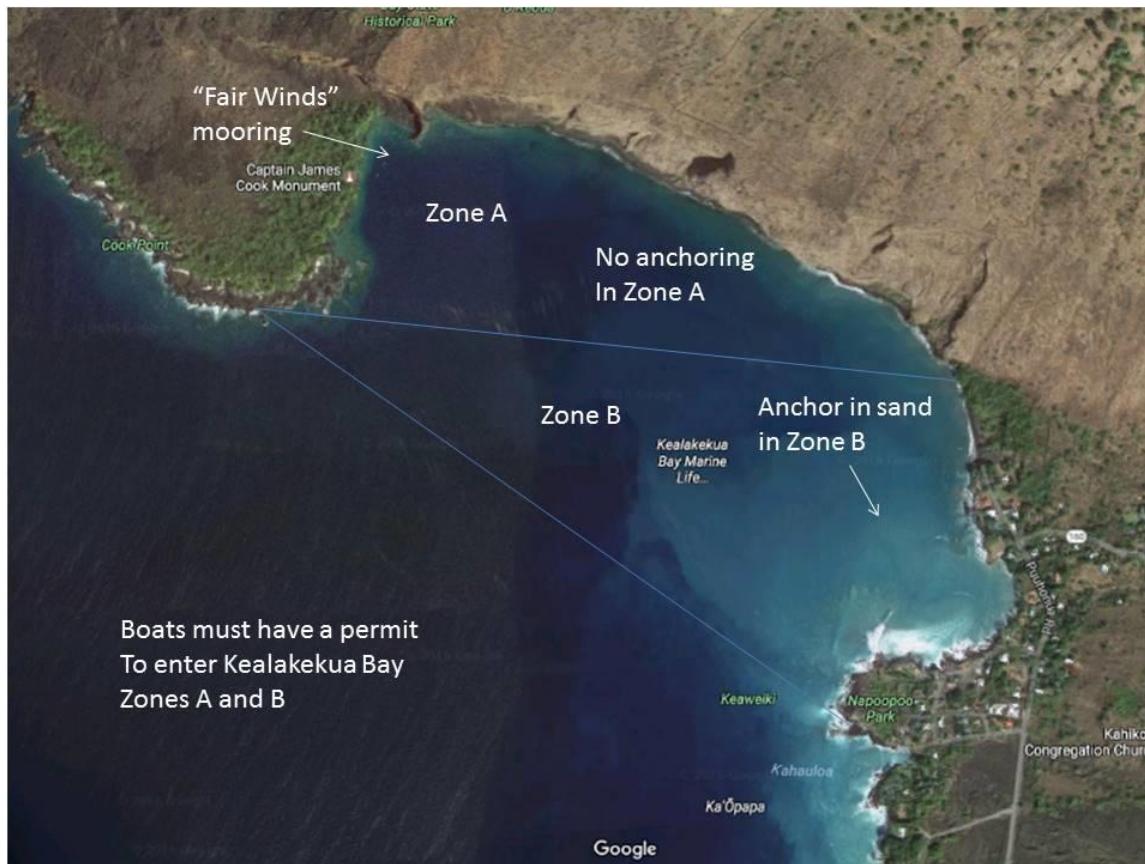
Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: Smaller and less protected, Honomalino lies one mile North of Okoe. It's a nice anchorage with white sand beach on the North end of the bay. This bay is usually a bit more exposed than Okoe, and the anchorage can be rolly at times.

Kealakekua Bay



GPS: 19-28.91N 155-55.94W approximate, *Fair Winds* mooring
19-28.50N 155-55.28W approximate, Napoopoo

Type: Mooring (Zone A) and Anchorage (Zone B)

Depth: 20-40 feet (Zone B)

Bottom: sand (Zone B)

Regulated area: <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/marine-managed-areas/hawaii-marine-life-conservation-districts/hawaii-kealakekua-bay/>

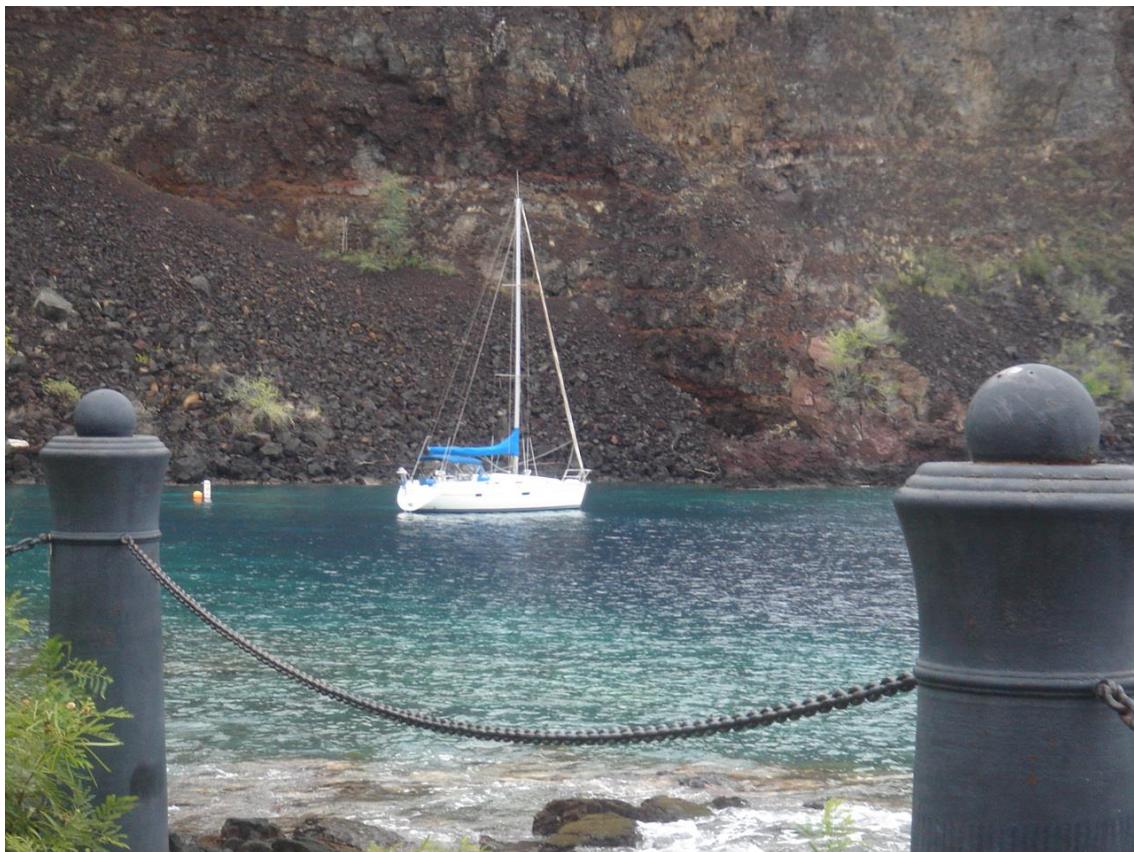
Suitable period: *Fair Winds* mooring – year round, Napoopoo - summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: One of the most spectacular and historic bays in Hawaii, it is also one of the most regulated so be careful here. The bay is regulated by both DBOR and DAR and is also a State Park, so the rules are confusing. In addition, following a kayaker fatality in 2012, special regulations were implemented limiting access to Zones A and B in the bay to those with special permits. It isn't difficult to get a permit, but you need to apply well in advance to get it. Permit application procedures can be found at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dsp/parks/hawaii/kealakekua-bay-state-historical-park/>. Make sure you have a permit and copies of all of the rules with you, and follow them, when you visit this bay. It sounds like it's more trouble than it is worth, but it's not. This place is truly special and worth it. The bay is divided into two zones, A and B.

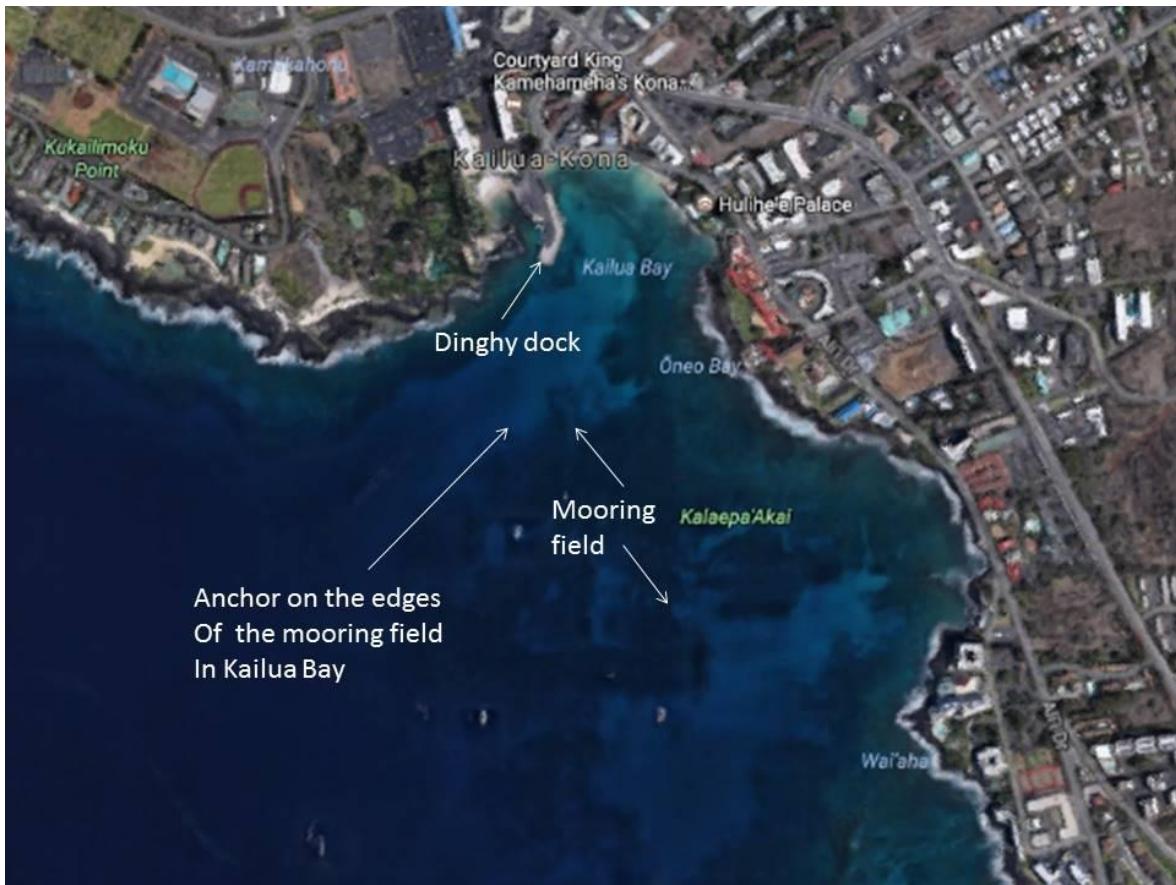
Zone A encompasses the Northwest quadrant of the bay and includes the Captain Cook Monument. The best snorkeling and diving can be found in this part of the bay. You aren't allowed to anchor in Zone A, but you can drift while your crew snorkels near the Captain Cook Monument. There is a single permitted mooring in the bay next to the monument. You will see the *Fair Winds*, a commercial catamaran, pick up this mooring daily at about 10AM. They depart for the day at about 430PM. My favorite trick is to arrive in Zone A just as the *Fair Winds* is departing for the day, pick up their mooring, and spend the night tied to it. I depart the next morning before they return. This gives us plenty of time to snorkel, and the mooring is totally protected from any swell. The mooring ball is about four feet below the surface, and you must dive a line down to it. Pay attention to where the *Fair Winds* lies so you can easily find their mooring.

Zone B. Earlier in the discussion on Anchoring Rules and Regulations I discussed an interaction with the DLNR Police about anchoring in Zone B. A brochure can be found at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/marine-managed-areas/hawaii-marine-life-conservation-districts/hawaii-kealakekua-bay/> stating that anchoring is allowed in Zone B. I strongly suggest that anyone anchoring in Zone B off of the town of Napoopoo have a hard copy of this brochure in hand to show to the DLNR Police if they hassle you like they did me.



Moku pe'a tied to the *Fair Winds* mooring in Kealakekua Bay

Kailua Bay



GPS: 19-38.20N 155-59.82W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 20-50 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This is an open roadstead anchorage, and it can be quite rocky-rolly, but it does provide walking access to stores, restaurants and services that can't be found elsewhere on the Kona coast. I've anchored there overnight on a couple of occasions. The area is managed by the Honokahau Harbor Master, so contact him by phone at 327-3685 before you arrive and he'll tell you where to anchor. There is a mooring field in the bay, and he'll probably ask you to anchor along its edge. There is a dinghy dock near the end of the pier and you can land your dinghy there. I recommend rowing ashore so you can lift your dinghy out of the water and lean it against the seawall. Lock your dinghy and oars if you can to prevent theft.

Honokahau Harbor



GPS: 19-40.12N 156-01.54W approximate

Type: med mooring

Depth: 10 feet

Bottom: hard pan

Regulated area: no

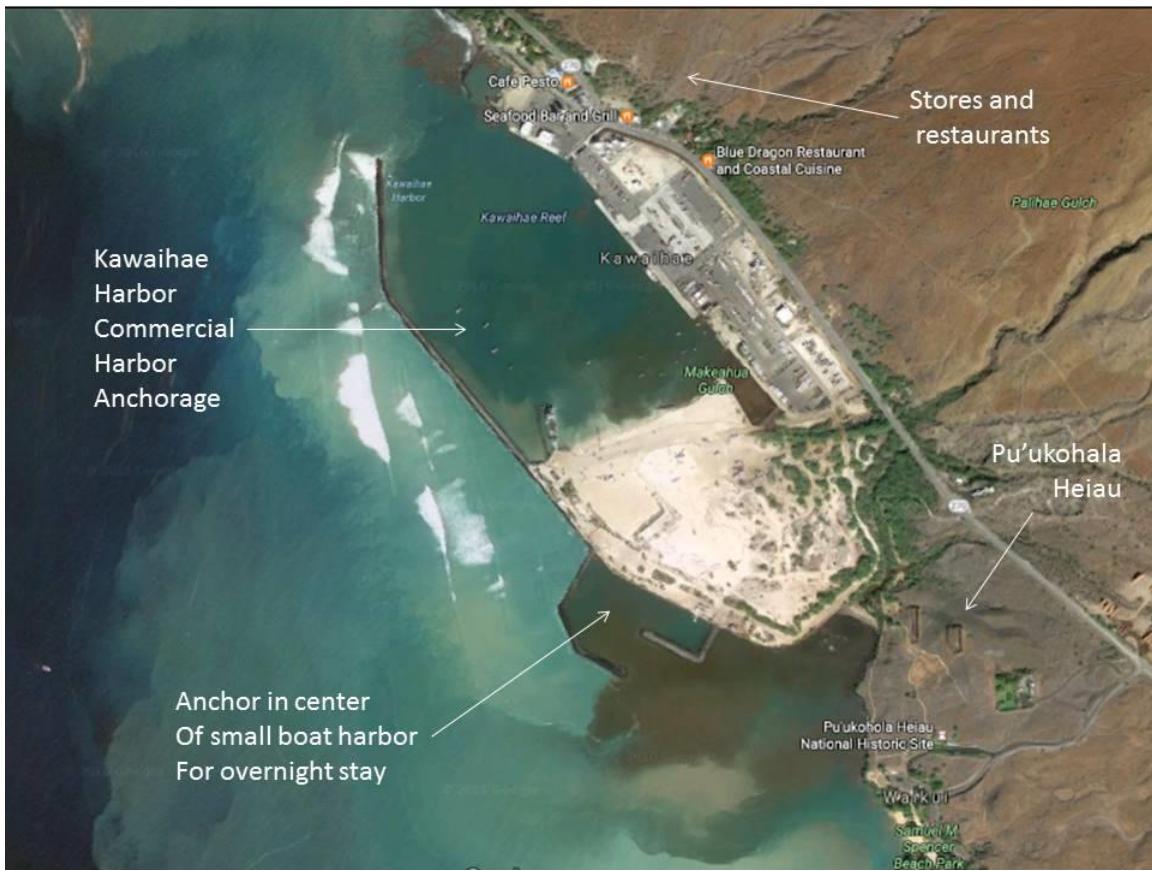
Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: Every time I cruise the Kona coast I've tried to get a visitor's slip in the harbor. I've only been able to overnight there once. Contact the harbormaster at 327-3685 before you arrive to see what's available. Even if there are no temporary slips available, you can tie up at the fuel dock just inside the harbor for a while to take on fuel and water. We've cleared customs here when returning from the South Pacific as well.

All of the moorings in the harbor, including at the fuel dock, are med-moor types with a mooring ball. Most boat put the mooring ball on the bow and back in to the dock.

Kawaihae Harbor



GPS: 20-01.67N 155-49.74W approximate (south small boat harbor)
20-02.00N 155-49.87W approximate (commercial harbor)

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 10 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

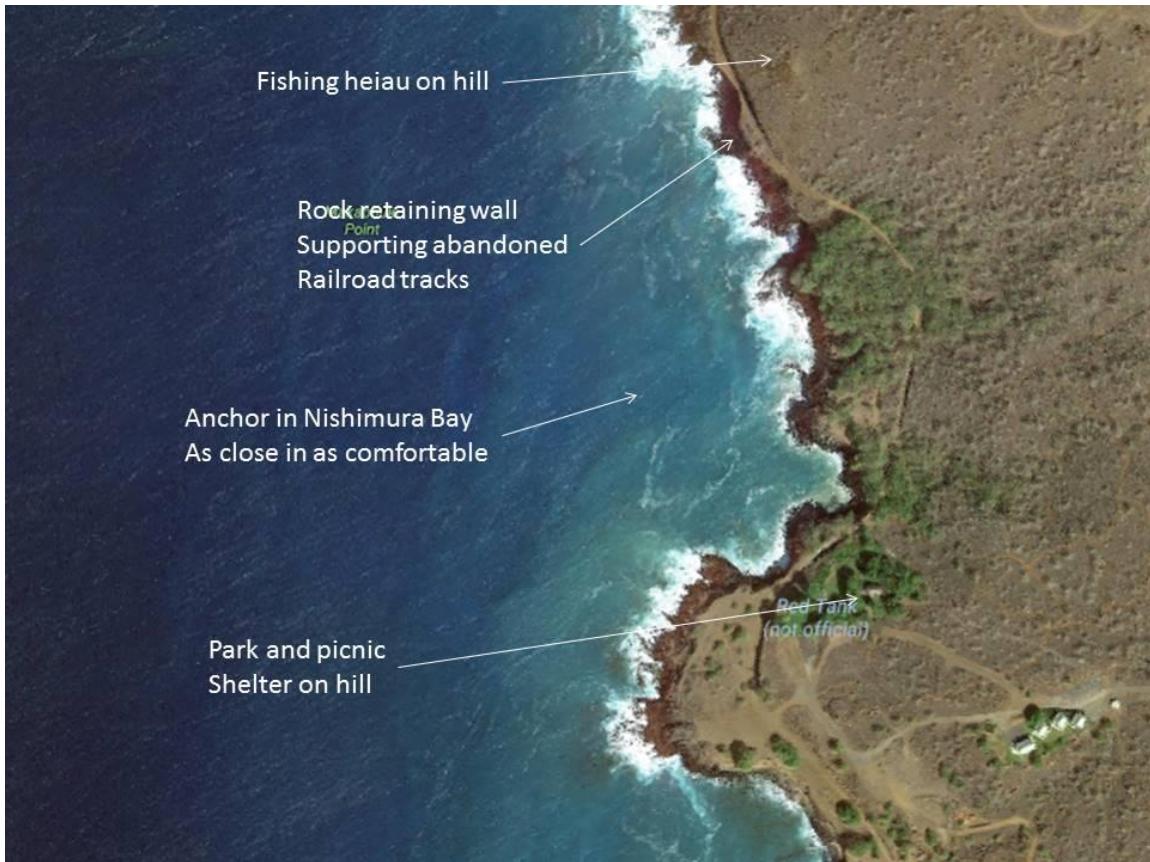
Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: There are two harbors at Kawaihae, the larger and older commercial port to the North and the newer small boat harbor to the South. Both are managed by the Honokahau harbormaster at 327-3685. I've never bothered to call him when visiting though. Yachts can anchor on the southwestern side of the commercial harbor, but I usually anchor in the middle of the small boat harbor and have always stayed for just one night. I figured it was easier to get forgiveness than permission, and also figured that if anybody complained about my being there that I'd be gone before the authorities arrived from thirty miles away in Kailua.

There are stores, restaurants, and services walking distance from the harbor in Kawaihae. Pu‘ukoholā Heiau, built by Kamehameha the Great prior to his conquering of the Hawaiian Islands, lies just inland from the harbor and is a must see.

Nishimura Bay



GPS: 20-11.35N 155-54.18W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 15-40 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This is the northernmost protected anchorage on the Big Island and is the best departure point for a trade wind crossing of the Alinuihaha Channel. The bay is just a few hundred yards north of Mahukona Harbor. It is a sand bottom with good holding. Anchor as close in as possible allowing for swinging room if the trade winds die off during the night time hours. You will likely be anchored in about 25 feet of water.

The anchorage can be recognized by the features ashore. Looking shoreward on the North side of the bay you will see a fishing heiau on the top of the hill. Between the heiau and the shore is a rock retaining wall that once supported railroad tracks. On top of the hill on the South side of the bay is a park that is accessible from the highway with a picnic shelter.

The Kohala mountains are not high enough to completely block the trade winds. On windy trade wind days the trades will fill in and come rushing down slope in the early afternoon and blow until about 8PM. It can really blow too. I've seen well over 30 knots of wind in the anchorage, so make sure you are tucked in as close as possible and well anchored. My boat sails back and forth at anchor when it is windy, so I often put out two bow anchors with an angle of sixty degrees between them. This locks us in place and stops the sailing back and forth.

Maui

La Perouse Bay



GPS: 20-35.45N 156-24.83W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 20-30 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: when no south swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This bay is the logical overnight stopping point after crossing the Alinuihaha Channel from the Big Island. Protection from the strong trade winds can be

found on the far Eastern side of the bay under the cliffs. Tuck in as close to the beach and cliffs as you can leaving enough room to swing if the winds change. You will be anchored in about 25 feet of water over a sand bottom.

Be particularly careful to avoid the Western end of the bay, which is included in the ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u Natural Area Reserve. The reserve extends offshore up to 3000 feet. Anchoring, powering, and fishing are prohibited in the reserve.
<http://dlr.hawaii.gov/dar/regulated-areas/ahihi-kinau-natural-area-reserve-maui/>. The state takes this one seriously. I have read of violators being fined thousands of dollars for breaking the rules here.

Lahaina



GPS: 20-52.19N 156-41.00W approximate

Type: mooring (outside harbor) or med mooring (inside harbor)

Depth: 10- 70 feet

Bottom: hard pan

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: I have had pretty good luck getting a transient slip in Lahaina Harbor, particularly when there is no event that increases local traffic including the

biennial Victoria-Maui race and annual Labor Day Race to Oahu. Call the harbormaster at 662-4060 a couple of days before your planned arrival to see if there is a slip available.

If a slip is not available, you may be able to pick up one of Lahaina Yacht Clubs guest moorings outside of the harbor. These moorings are available for up to a fourteen day stay on a first come first served basis. The club's eight moorings are white with a blue stripe and are numbered. Call the club at 661-0191 to see if a mooring is available. If you are able to pick up a mooring, you will need to pay a fee at the Lahaina Harbormaster's office and register with both the Harbormaster and the Yacht Club.

You can dinghy into the dinghy dock in the center of Lahaina Harbor from the mooring field. I do not recommend anchoring off of Lahaina. The bottom is hard pan and poor holding. It can get quite windy at times and the current can run at up to two knots. I am not comfortable leaving my boat for an extended period when anchored off of Lahaina.

Kaanapali



GPS: 20-55.56N 156-41.79W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 12-40 feet

Bottom: sand

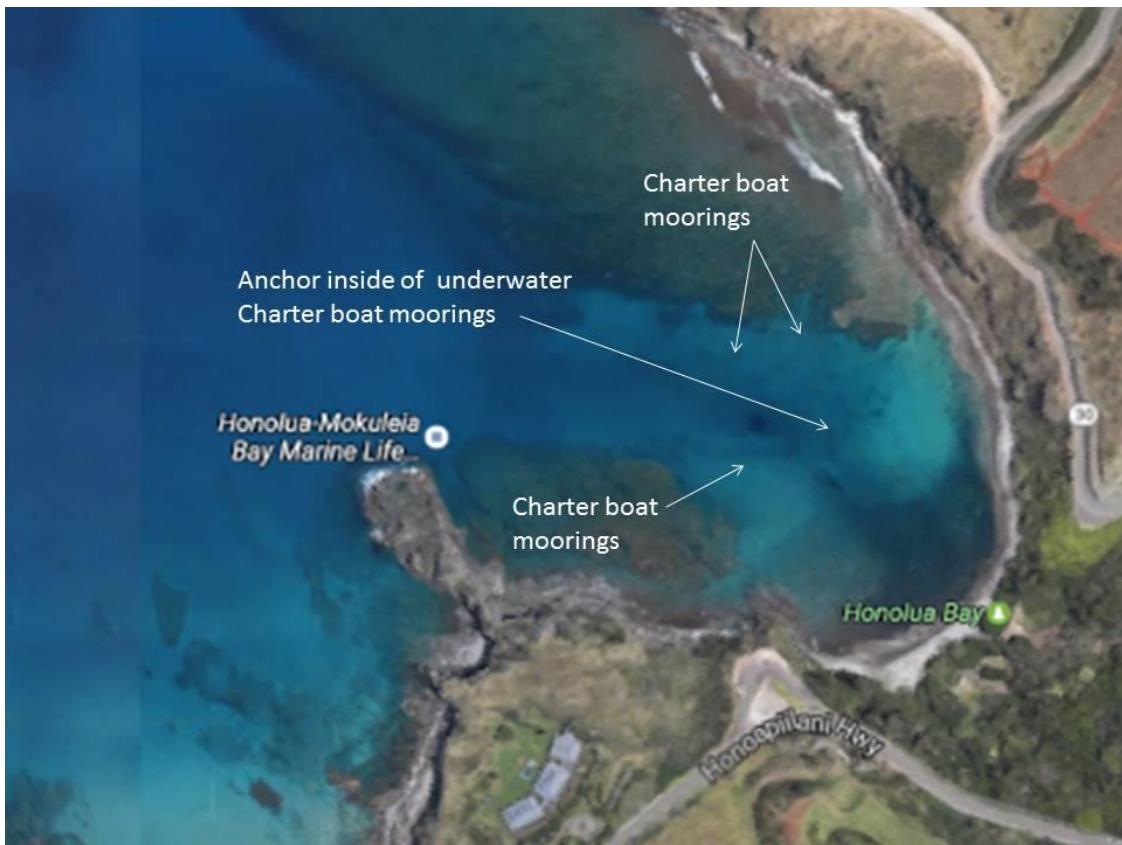
Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This can be a fun place to anchor for a day or two, but the trade winds howl here in the afternoons. There are regulations concerning permanent moorings and commercial activities here, but none that affect temporary visitors except that it is illegal to anchor within 200 feet of the shoreline. The best anchorage is just south of Kekaa Pt. on which lies the Sheraton Hotel.

Honolua Bay



GPS: 21-00.88N 156-38.36W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 10-30 feet

Bottom: sand and small boulders

Regulated area: <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2014/05/ch32.pdf>

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qta19KCf6g>

Comments: This is one of Hawaii's gems, and provides a protected anchorage as long as there is not a significant North swell running. The snorkeling here is spectacular as the area is protected. Fishing or damaging coral is prohibited. Anchor only in sand, river rock, or hard pan areas.

There are three double moorings installed in the bay that are used daily by the large commercial catamarans that ferry tourists up from Lahaina Harbor and Kaanapali. The cats moor with the bow secured to one mooring and the stern to another. Avoid blocking these mooring areas. The moorings are underwater and can't be seen from the surface. Once you are anchored, I strongly recommend you snorkel the area around your boat to ensure that you are well clear of the moorings. If you are too close to the moorings, move to avoid a confrontation later when the catamarans arrive.

Kahoolawe

The island is now owned by the State of Hawaii and anchoring in its offshore waters is currently prohibited. The potential to encounter unexploded ordinance is the reason they give for prohibiting anchoring, but the previous owners, the U.S. government, did allow anchoring during specific periods for many years, and there were no reports of any ordinance being encountered. I anchored there a few times during these open periods. Information on the Kahoolawe anchorages is being provided in the event this area is once again opened for anchorage.

Smugglers Cove



GPS: 20-30.73N 156-41.04W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 10-40 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov/rules/13-261_final.pdf

Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: This open roadstead on the western end of the island provides a decent anchorage and is a good overnight stopping point before departing for the Big Island. It is a sand anchorage off of a sand beach. The trade winds often blow strongly here, but they are offshore.

Waikahalulu Bay



GPS: 20-30.85N 156-38.84W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 20-30 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov/rules/13-261_final.pdf

Suitable period: when no south swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This deep gorge on the south coast of the island provides good protection and decent holding. Tuck as deep into the bay as comfort and swinging room allow.

Lanai

Manele Bay



GPS: 20-44.50N 156-53.30W approximate

Type: slip

Depth: 8 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

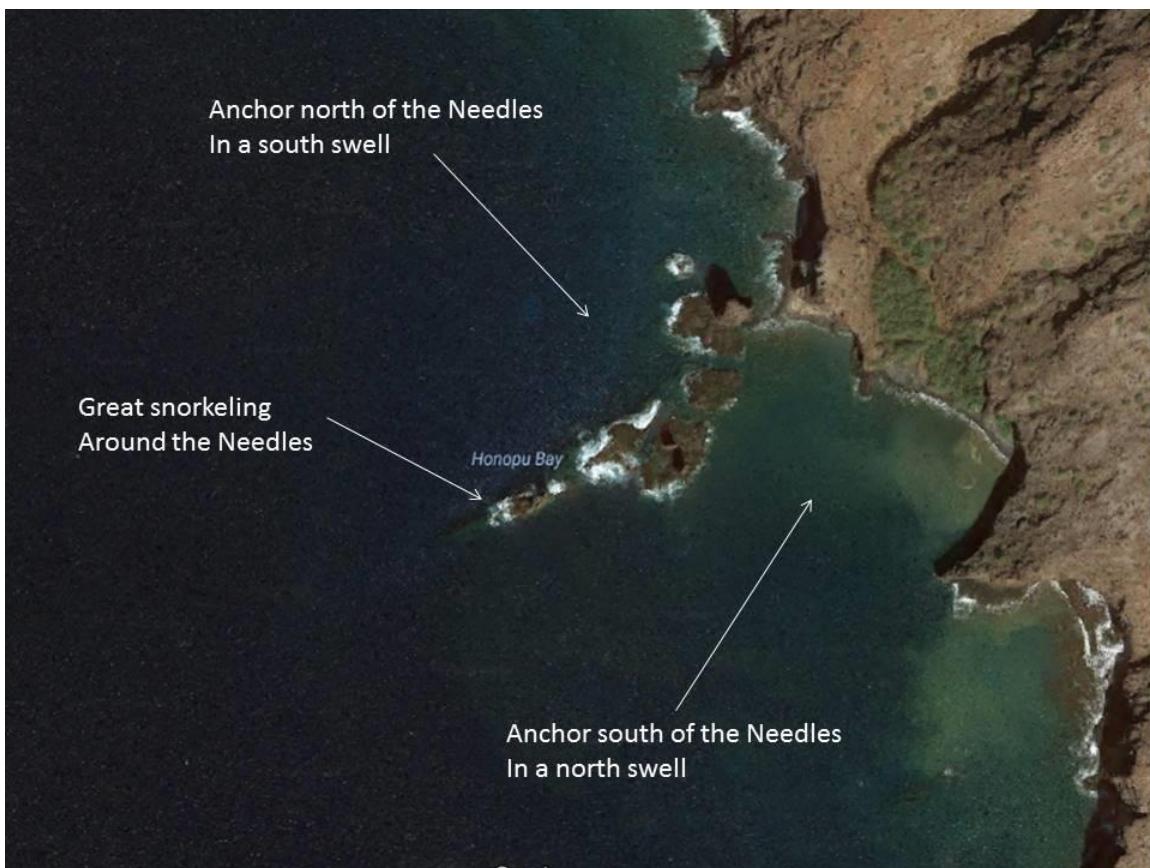
Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: This state run small boat harbor has few visitors slips, but I have had luck in the past getting permission to stay for a few days at a time. The harbor is managed by the Lahaina Harbor Harbormaster. Call the harbormaster at 662-4060 a couple of days before your planned arrival to see if there is a slip available.

There used to be a rock right off the end of the breakwater where you would turn to enter the harbor approximately six feet below the surface. Called “rainbow rock” for the various colors of bottom paint embedded in its surfaces as a result of boats groundings, it is closer to the breakwater than the shore. I don’t know if Rainbow Rock is still there, but don’t take any chances. Give the breakwater plenty of clearance as you enter and leave the harbor to avoid the rock. The rock is shown on current charts.

Needles



GPS: 20-49.50N 156-59.53W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 20-40 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Shrra2UFuM

Comments: This fabulous anchorage on Lanai’s west coast is a must stop if you are in the area. Called “Needles” because of the five spectacular offshore rock spires that mark the anchorage, it provides good protection in all but a north or west swell.

Boats can anchor either north or south of the Needles. Check out both anchorages when you arrive and select the one most protected from any swells or chop that might be

present. Tuck in as close to the cliff as you are comfortable with to get the most protection from the offshore trade winds that can howl in the afternoons. You will find yourself anchored in sand in water approximately twenty feet deep. Leave room to swing if the trade winds die off at night. The snorkeling around the spires is excellent.



Yacht at anchor on the south side of the Needles, Lanai

Kaena Point



GPS: 20-54.00N 157-03.61W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 15-30 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This is one of my favorite anchorages in a small bay on Lanai's northwest coast. The bay can be located by the large lava rock heiau on its western side. Tuck in as far as possible to get the moat protection for wrap around wind chop. The offshore trade winds can be strong here in the afternoons. I often put out two bow anchors sixty degrees apart to stop the boat from sailing at anchor in the strong winds. Snorkeling is excellent here. It is also fun to go ashore on the stone beach and explore the heiau.



Moku pe'a in the anchorage at Kaena Point, Lanai

Molokai

Kaunakakai



GPS: 21-04.98N 157-01.72W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 8-20 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: There is a state run small boat harbor on the commercial pier with slips on both the east and west sides, but I've never used them. You can try to get a temporary slip assignment by giving the harbormaster a call at 553-1742 before you arrive.

The trade winds can howl from the east during the afternoon, and there is more shelter on the western side of the pier. I usually anchor there in about fifteen feet, mud bottom, good holding. Be sure you are far enough in so you won't obstruct any commercial traffic that might be using the pier.

Lono Harbor



GPS: 21-05.17N 157-14.92W approximate

Type: Anchorage or med mooring

Depth: 15 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: periods when south swell < 6' and north swell < 20'

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9dSH3UTbqw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qEQSVJKvYI>

Comments: This harbor was constructed in the late 1950s by a private company as a loading point for sand and gravel to be used for construction projects on Oahu. Commercial operations ceased in the late 1960s and it was taken over by the state in the 1990s. Private citizens have maintained the aids to navigation (day marks at the harbor entrance and unlit range), but no other maintenance has been done in the past 50 years. No one lives in the area, and there are no permanently moored boats there. The harbor is used as the starting point for canoe races to Oahu, but most of the year it is all but empty except for a few transient cruising boats and some shore fishermen.

There can be a surge in the harbor, particularly during periods of south swell, so tying alongside the wharf is normally not feasible. The surge is least in the eastern end of the harbor. Viable mooring options include med mooring to the wharf, med mooring to

bollards on the shore or breakwater at the eastern end of the harbor, or anchoring in the middle of the harbor. If you have a readily accessible dingy, I recommend swinging to a single anchor. You won't notice the surge and you will always be pointed into the often shifty winds.

Water depth in the channel is less than twenty feet in some places. A large swell from the northwest, west, or south can cause waves to break in the channel. Do not attempt to transit the channel when waves are breaking there.

I love Lono Harbor. It is a great first stop after bashing across the Molokai Channel from Oahu. It is a calm secure anchorage and you usually have it all to yourself. The hiking ashore is great. Try heading east up the beach. You'll find a boy scout camp one mile away and some abandoned tentalos a half mile further. To the west are a series of spectacular empty white sand beaches that look like no human has ever been there. You can also hike to the top of the hill overlooking the harbor for some great views.

One of the few downsides of Lono Harbor is the occasional infestation of honey bees. During drought periods the honey bees that feed on the kiawe are desperate for fresh water and will see you and your boat as a potential source. If the bees become a nuisance, place a large pot full of fresh water ashore (if you are med moored) or on the foredeck (if you are swinging at anchor) to draw the bees away from you. It works, but I've seen a full pot of water emptied by the bees in twenty minutes. Be sure to keep the pot full. The bees will disappear before dusk.



Moku pe'a swinging to an anchor in Lono Harbor

Kawakiu



GPS: 21-12.48N 157-15.21W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 15-30 feet

Bottom: hard pan

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: This open roadstead under Ilio Point on Molokai's west end is well protected, but the bottom is hard pan so be sure to put plenty of chain on the bottom and use plenty of scope. It can be quite windy in the anchorage during periods of heavy trade winds.

Kalaupapa



GPS: 21-11.40N 156-59.25W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 15-30 feet

Bottom: hard pan with crevasses

Regulated area: <https://www.nps.gov/kala/planyourvisit/maps.htm>

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

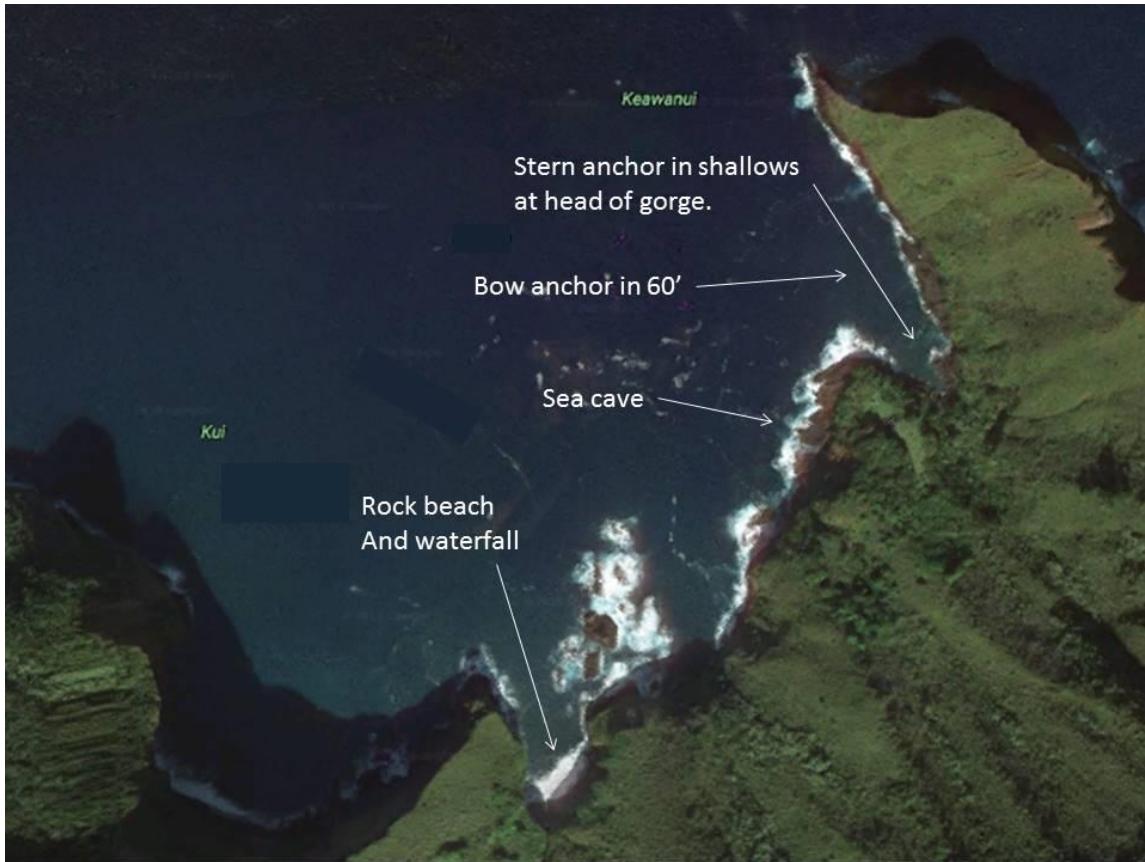
360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ST68bb1cKVw>

Comments: Kalaupapa National Historic Park was created in 1980 and includes the submerged lands up to one quarter mile offshore of the Kalaupapa Peninsula. You must obtain a permit, in advance, from the State of Hawaii Department of Health in Honolulu prior to entering the park. This is too tough, so don't enter the park.

The open roadstead anchorage is approximately one quarter mile offshore in the vicinity of the clearly evident landing site on the west side of the peninsula. How far is a quarter mile? I don't know for sure without a tape measure, but every time I've anchored off of Kalaupapa I believe I have been at least a quarter mile offshore (wink, wink, nod, nod). The residents have come down to the landing en-mass and waved their arms at me every time I anchored there. I suspect they are trying to tell me not to anchor, but I can't hear what they are saying because I am just over a quarter of a mile offshore and out of earshot. I leave my VHF radio off too, just in case. I know of many other boaters that

take the same approach here. I don't know of anybody getting in trouble here with the authorities.

Keawanui



GPS: 21-10.01N 156-53.58W approximate

Type: anchor bow and stern

Depth: 60 feet (bow), 5 feet (stern)

Bottom: boulders

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfhpN2pg-0Y>

Comments: I have cruised all over the Pacific, and this is the most spectacular anchorage I have ever visited. The North Shore of Molokai's 3,000 foot high sea cliffs are the highest on the planet. Right in the middle of those cliffs is a gorge offering protection from the trade winds and easterly swell. It is not suitable during a north swell.

The best anchorage is at the end of the gorge. Drop your bow anchor in sixty feet of water and back into the gorge. Your bow anchor will be in large boulders. Swim a second anchor into the shallow reef at the end of the gorge. Using two anchors in this way will keep your bow pointed northwest into the slight swell that wraps around the headland. The anchorage is totally protected from the trade winds. You may experience

a light wind from the northwest but I've never seen it exceed ten knots. Make sure you have plenty of chain on the bottom on your bow anchor. The load on it will not be significant, but it is keeping you off of the rocks so it must be reliably set. I have anchored here approximately twenty times and I've never had a problem. However, I always set up for an immediate departure, if necessary, by having buoys ready for both anchors so they can be cast off in an instant and retrieved later.

If there are other boats already anchored in the gorge, moor the same way parallel to the inner anchorage with your shore side anchor up on the lava shelf just above sea level.

The anchorage description may make it sound like it is more trouble than it is worth. It is worth it. Once anchored, you will find yourself in a wonderland of beauty. On the hill above the bay lies Joyce Kainoa's abandoned home that was featured in National Geographic. The sheltered bay stretches half a mile to the west and includes a fifty yard deep sea cave that you can dinghy into and a stone beach with a fifty foot high waterfall and pool. You will likely have this magic all to yourself.



Moku pe'a properly anchored, bow and stern, in the gorge at Keawanui Bay, Molokai



The view looking out of the sea cave, Keawanui Bay, Molokai



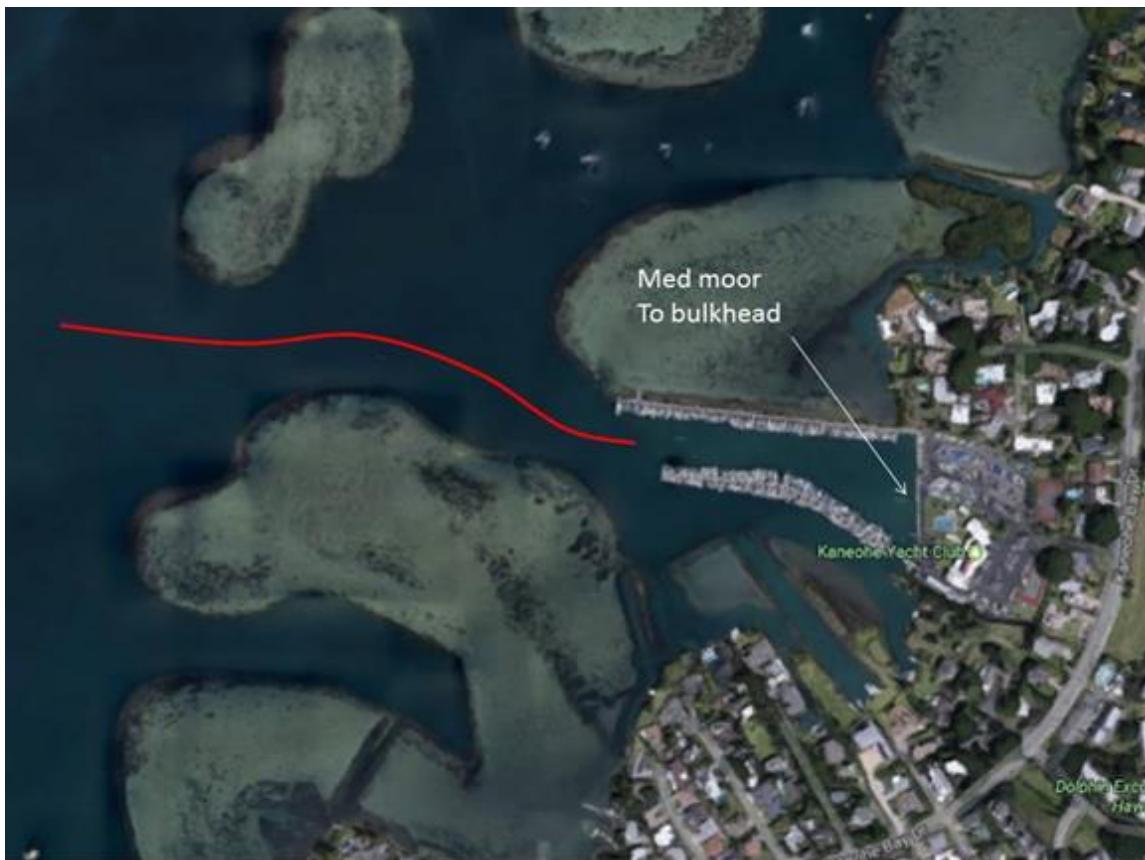
The waterfall and pool on the stone beach at the west end of Keawanui Bay, Molokai

Oahu

Kaneohe Bay

This bay is the only fully protected large body of water in the state. The seven mile long, two mile wide bay is protected on three sides by land and on the forth side by a barrier reef. There are regulations limiting commercial use of the bay, but cruisers passing through need not be concerned with them. There is an active Marine Corps Base on the Mokapu Peninsula. Stay at least one quarter mile away (there are stand-off buoys in the bay) from this military base. There are numerous protected anchorages in the bay including:

Kaneohe Yacht Club.



GPS: 21-25.04N 157-45.98W approximate

Type: slip and med mooring

Depth: 7 feet

Bottom: mud

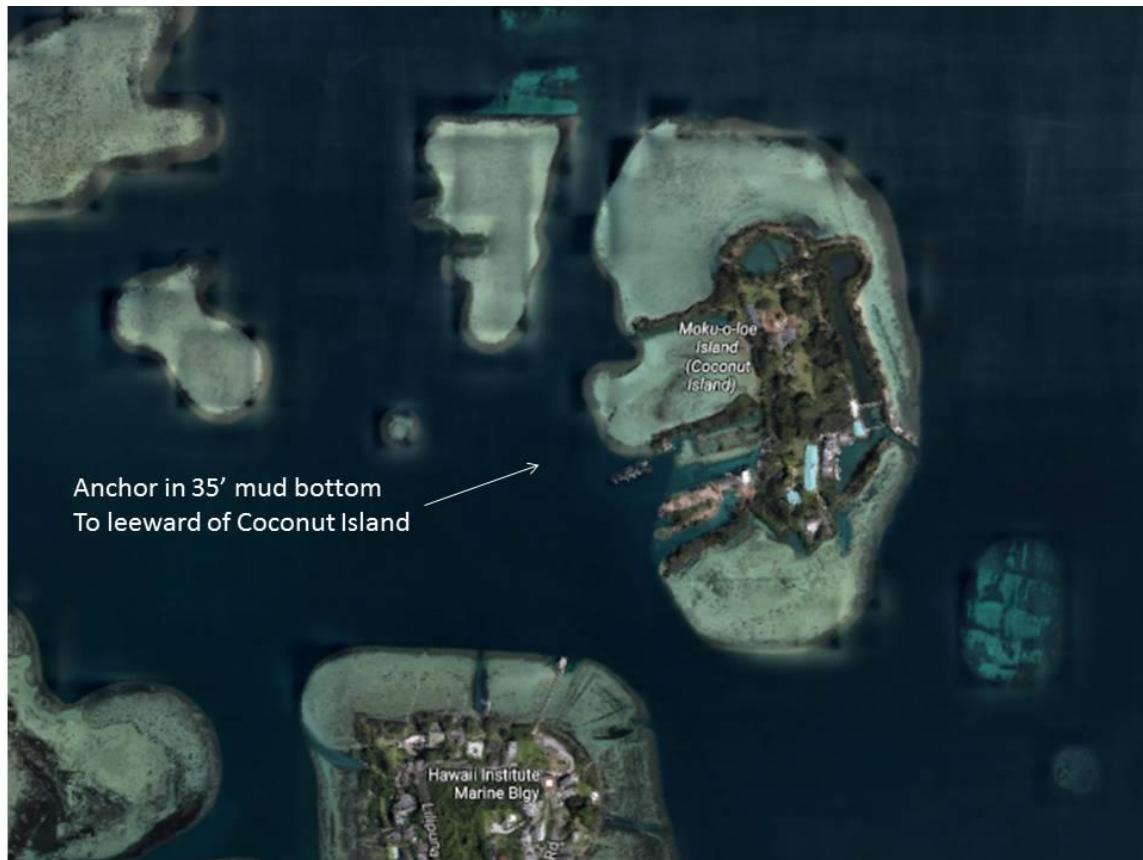
Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video: none

Comments: Located in the southeast corner of the bay, the club welcomes visiting yachts and provides visitors slips, when available, for a nominal fee. The harbor was dredged to 8 feet at MLW a few years ago, but boat with drafts greater than 7 feet should not attempt to enter the inner basin. Deeper draft vessels may be directed to end tie on the floating pier. Contact the club at 247-4121 for availability.

Coconut Island (Moku o loe)



GPS: 21-25.96N 157-47.54W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 40 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dnjd3LPWm4>

Comments: This majestic island, which was the setting for the opening scene in the “Gilligan’s Island” TV series is a half mile long by quarter mile wide high island that lies in the southern third of the bay. Shelter from the trade winds can be found to the west of the island. Anchor as close to the island’s fringing reef as practical. Holding is good.

The Sandbar.



GPS: 21-27.82N 157-48.60W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 0 feet

Bottom: sand where shallow, mud where depth > 25 feet

Regulated area: no

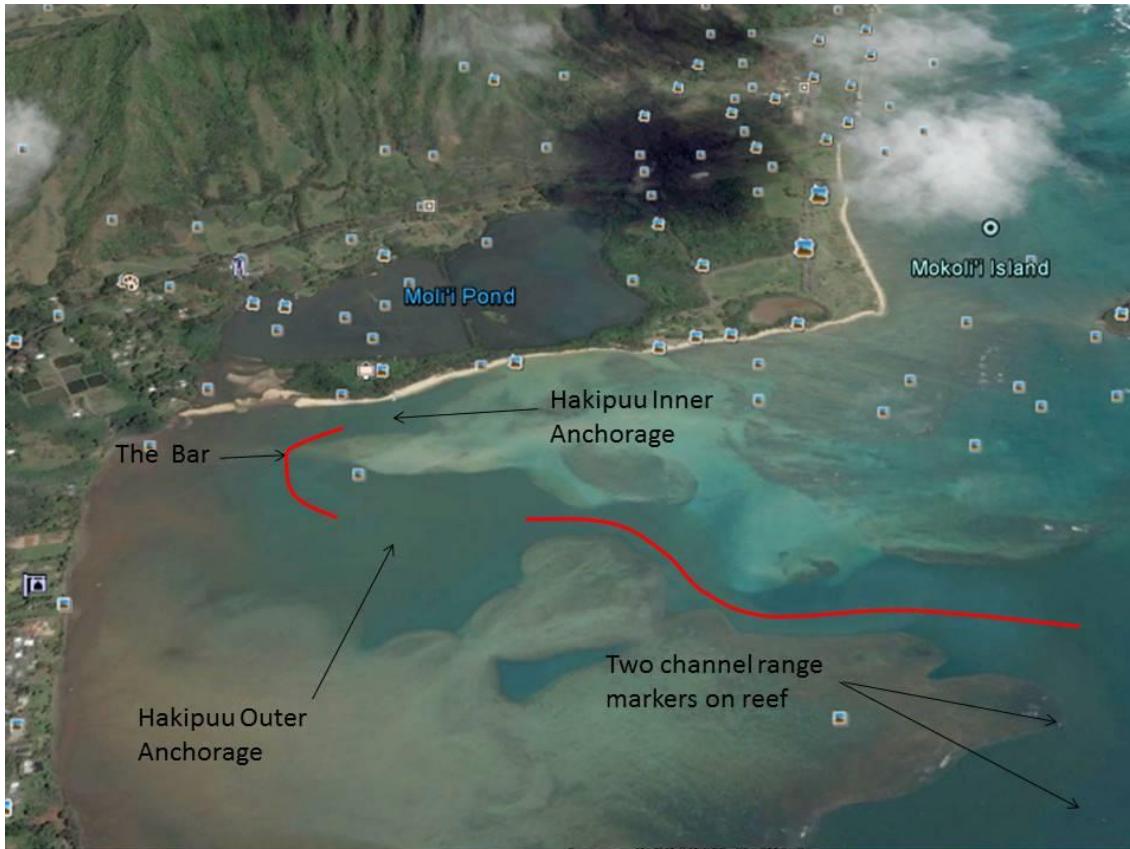
Suitable period: year round during trade wind or calm weather

360 video:

Comments: On the western, bay side of the barrier reef that protects Kaneohe Bay lies the famous Sandbar. It can be easily located by the many private vessels that anchor there daily. The Sandbar dries at low tide but is completely submerged most of the time. It is remarkable for the steep drop off on its western side, going from zero to forty feet deep in almost the same horizontal distance. During trade wind weather boats nose into the Sandbar and drop their hooks right on to the shallow sand, back off, and swing to the wind. Prudent overnights will drop a stern hook to keep them off of the sand if the wind dies or shifts offshore during the night.

The only regulation to be concerned of here is that there is no alcohol allowed on boats at the Sandbar during summer three day weekends (Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day).

Hakipu'u.



GPS: 21-30.15N 157-50.75W approximate outer anchorage
21-30.31N 157-50.82W approximate inner anchorage

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 17 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuBbDO-MvrY>

Comments: Located at the northwestern end of the bay, this is a wonderful and seldom visited anchorage. Boats must weave their way through the reefs to get into the large outer anchorage which is about seventeen feet deep over a mud bottom. The entrance to the outer anchorage is narrow and tricky and should only be attempted (for the first time) during periods of good visibility (little or no cloud cover, sun overhead).

Boats with drafts of less than six feet can cross the bar into the inner anchorage. Care must be taken to only cross the bar during a rising tide just in case you miss the center of the pass and get stuck in the sand. A range to enter the inner harbor is to line up a white pipe in the trees on the beach with the highest peak on the mountains behind the anchorage. Depth in the inner anchorage is similar to the outer anchorage. Once inside the inner anchorage you can put the bow of your boat on the beach if you choose because

the drop off is similar to the Sandbar. In the inner anchorage you will be anchored at the site where the beach scenes were shot for the popular movies “Fifty First Dates”, and “Along Came Polly”.

Note that the inner anchorage is not shown on nautical charts, but it can be clearly seen on Google Earth.



Moku pe'a in the inner anchorage at Hakipu'u, Kaneohe Bay, Oahu



View from the outer anchorage of *Moku pe'a* in the inner anchorage at Hakipu'u

Waimea Bay



GPS: 21-38.47N 158-03.93W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 12 – 40 feet

Bottom: sand, good holding where deep enough over underlying hard pan

Regulated area: <http://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dobor/rules/amend/Amend-13-230-250-256.pdf>

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FU-9reAhTTM>

Comments: The large waves that break in the bay during the winter months move a lot of sand around so bottom profile is slightly different each summer. It is usually calmest closest to the northern end of the bay. However, this corner of the bay sometimes has a hardpan bottom due to the shifting sands. The regulations allow anchoring in sandy areas only and at least 200 feet offshore. You should dive your anchor to ensure you are in good sand and not hardpan after setting. The regulations prohibit powering into the bay. Leave your sails up until you drop your hook to at least give the appearance of compliance.

Pokai Bay



GPS: 21-26.59N 158-11.44W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 8-20 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north or west swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zbLxyIDFig>

Comments: The old abandoned marina, South Pokai, is a great place to anchor. Tuck inside the breakwater and drop the hook in a sand bottom about twelve feet deep. We have awoken here in the morning to find the boat surrounded by hundreds of spinner dolphin.

Ko Oolina Marina



GPS: 21-19.71N 158-07.17W approximate

Type: slip

Depth: 15 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video:

Comments: This is a well managed private marina, and is my marina of choice if a hurricane is approaching Oahu. It is well built, well sheltered, and well maintained. It has every amenity you can think of. It isn't cheap though. To my knowledge there is always space available there. Contact the harbormaster at 679-1050.

Ala Wai Small Boat Harbor



GPS: 21-17.17N 157-50.50W approximate

Type: slip

Depth: 14-20 feet

Bottom: mud

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: year round

360 video:

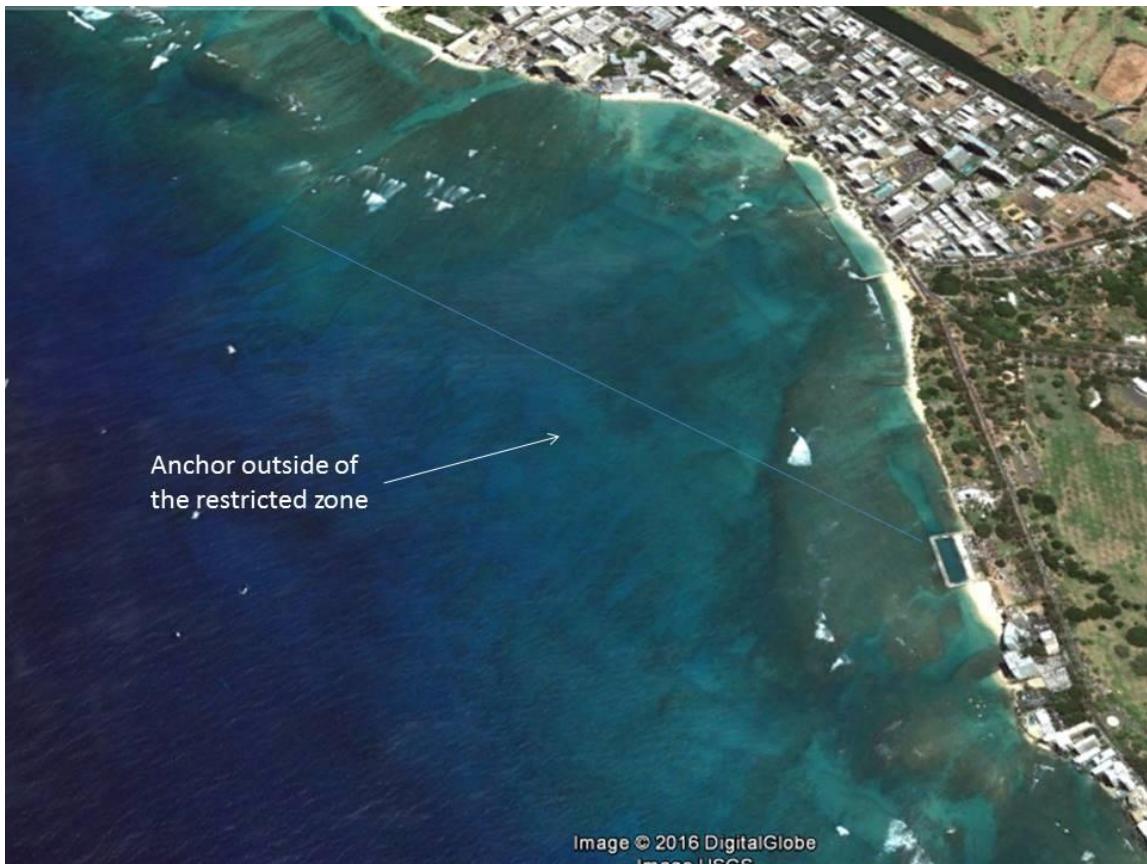
Comments: This is the largest small boat harbor in the state. It has three marinas.

The large state run harbor might have slips available. Contact them at 973-9727.

The Waikiki Yacht Club manages their own slips, and welcomes visiting cruisers. Contact their harbormaster at 955-4405.

The Hawaii Yacht Club also has a few visitor slips as well at their "Aloha Dock" where they allow visiting cruisers to moor temporarily. Contact their harbormaster at 949-4622.

Waikiki Bight



GPS: 21-16.15N 157-49.85W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 10-30 feet

Bottom: hard pan with crevasses

Regulated area: <http://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dobor/rules/compiled/HAR244-Compiled.pdf>

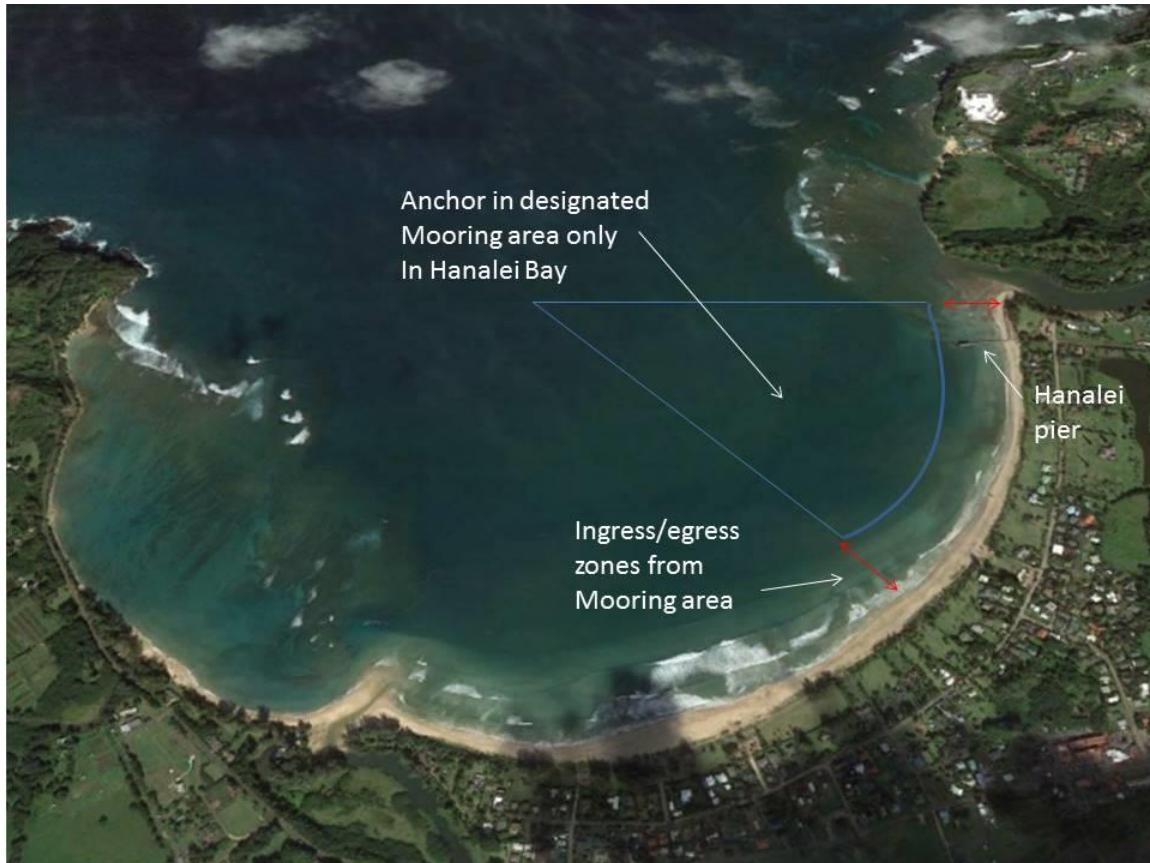
Suitable period: whenever south swells are small

360 video:

Comments: Anchoring in “The Bight” off of Waikiki during periods of small south swells is a fun way to spend an afternoon off of Hawaii’s most famous beach. Regulations prohibit anchoring within approximately one half mile of the beach. The rules are cited above, but there is no map provided showing the restricted area and it is too difficult to determine from the verbiage alone. Current navigation charts show the restricted area and should be consulted before anchoring. Tuck in as close as swells and depth allow, but be sure to anchor outside the restricted zone.

Kauai

Hanalei



GPS: 22-12.66N 159-29.96W

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 12 – 50 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dobor/files/2013/08/HAR256-Compiled.pdf>

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbiYWBBhyd8>

Comments: This bay provides a great summer anchorage. It is a popular place though, and can be quite crowded. There are a bunch of rules concerning where you can anchor, where you can go ashore, etc. Be sure to read the rules before you arrive in Hanalei so you can be in compliance. It is worth the trouble as it is a nice stop for a couple of days. It is calm during the summer and the holding is good in a sand bottom.

A must do activity is a dinghy or kayak trip up the Hanalei River which empties into the bay just north of the Hanalei Pier. You can make it approximately three miles up the

river before the vegetation overgrowth stops your progress. It is a great way to spend an afternoon.

Haena



GPS: 22-13.57N 159-33.65W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 15 feet

Bottom: hard pan

Regulated area: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dobor/files/2013/08/HAR256-Compiled.pdf>

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StP7cqLv_m8&t=4s&index=5&list=PLSzvBla75w78-X2r_Rw7Urx9oV9pbQtYd

Comments: This is one of the most spectacular keyhole anchorages in the world. Check out both the chart and google earth before you go. The entrance is on the western side of the reef just off of the beach. The anchorage is totally protected, but at high tide wave chop coming over the reef at the “Tunnels” surf break can make it a bit rocky rolly. The bottom is hard pan, but with enough chain on the bottom you will be safe. Anchor in fifteen feet. The rules allow daylight anchoring only.

This is always my last anchorage before setting off down the Na Pali coast. Even though the rules don't allow it, I'll spend one night and then depart early the next morning before the authorities arrive to harass me.

I have been hassled here during daylight hours by the park lifeguards who told me that anchoring in the area was not allowed. When pressed, they admitted that they had not actually read the rules. Always have either a hard copy or a PDF file of the rules on your computer to show the authorities if they challenge you.



Moku pe'a lies peacefully at anchor in the keyhole at Haena, Kauai

Nualolo



GPS: 22-09.62N 159-42.10W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 30 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxQTyd9Dkps>

Comments: This is the only semi-protected anchorage on the Na Pali coast. The anchorage lies behind the only significant coral reef on the coast, and is just seaward of Nualolo State Park. The park is on a narrow spit of land that once housed a Hawaiian community. Because it is accessible only by boat, the ruins have not been destroyed by modern civilization. Rock walls, wells, stone house foundations and terraces for gardens all remain unspoiled from this once thriving but now abandoned community.

There are approximately six moorings to leeward of the reef. Their floats are underwater, and you have to dive down to pick one up. These moorings are used daily by tour boats that come around from Port Allen. Most of the boats make two trips a day, so if you plan to pick up a mooring for the night, don't do so until after 4:30PM to ensure that nobody will be coming back to use it again that day.

The area is regulated for commercial use, and it is illegal to operate a motorized vessel over the reefs. Otherwise there are no special regulations that should concern a visiting non-commercial cruising vessel.



Moku pe'a, at anchor off of Nualolo, Kauai

Niihau

This island is privately owned but the submerged lands and beaches up to the vegetation line are public property just like all other submerged lands and beaches in the State of Hawaii. The Hawaiian population, guests of the Robinson family which owns the island, considers the entire island including the submerged lands and beaches to be private and off limits to outsiders. This can lead to uncomfortable interactions with the residents if they catch you on the beach. My sixteen year old daughter and I once came face to face with a hostile group of residents on the beach at Keawanui. They repeatedly yelled at us that "This is a private island" and "You are not welcome here", but refused to engage in any discussion about public lands and state law. They did not threaten us and they did not touch us, which would have been illegal. This led me to believe that they had been coached by legal counsel to react as they did. I believe others who encounter residents on Niihau's beaches will get the same uncomfortable but non-threatening response.

Niihau is a gem though, and should not be missed simply because some local thugs want to discourage visitors from enjoying their legal right to be there. It is seldom visited because it is generally perceived to be private. As a result, its beaches and coastal waters have been nearly untouched by human contact. I have found glass floats on the beaches of Niihau during each of my four visits. On my first visit I found more than sixty, and could have gathered sixty more but we didn't have any more room on the boat to stow them.

The further north you anchor the less likely it is that you will encounter any residents. This is because their only settlement, Pu'uwai, is down near the south end of the island. I have gone for three days without seeing any residents while anchored up at the north end of the island. If you do see someone else ashore, I recommend you simply get back in your dinghy and return to the boat until they leave. This way you will avoid any uncomfortable confrontations.

Pu'ukole Point



GPS: 22-00.17N 160-05.68W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 12 feet

Bottom: hard pan

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLbgD8OYn_U

Comments: This is my favorite anchorage on Niihau. It is well protected, has a nice beach that almost always has a couple of monk seals napping on it, and is far from the area where the often hostile residents of the island live. Pick your way in carefully and keep your GPS track handy so you can retrace your steps out into deep water in a hurry if a swell comes up and you have to depart during the night.



Moku pe'a at anchor off Puukole Pt., Niihau. Note monk seal on beach in foreground

Keawanui



GPS: 21-57.70N 160-07.36W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 8-15 feet

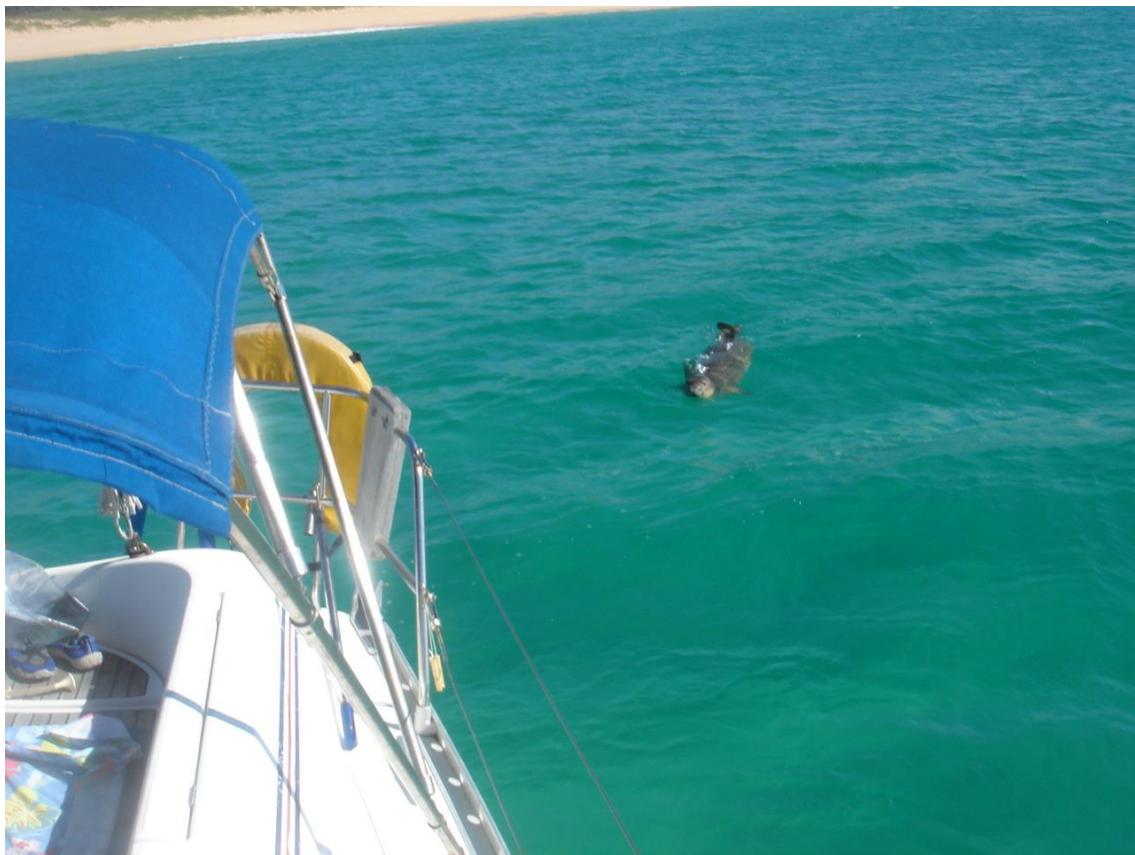
Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video:

Comments: I anchored here during my first visit before discovering the more protected Pu'ukole Point anchorage. It can be a bit rolly here, but may be worth it – this was the spot where I found sixty glass floats in an hour and a half.



A monk seal comes by *Moku pe 'a* for a visit off of Keawanui Beach, Niihau

Kaununui



GPS: 21-56.04N 160-10.00W approximate

Type: Anchorage

Depth: 8-15 feet

Bottom: sand

Regulated area: no

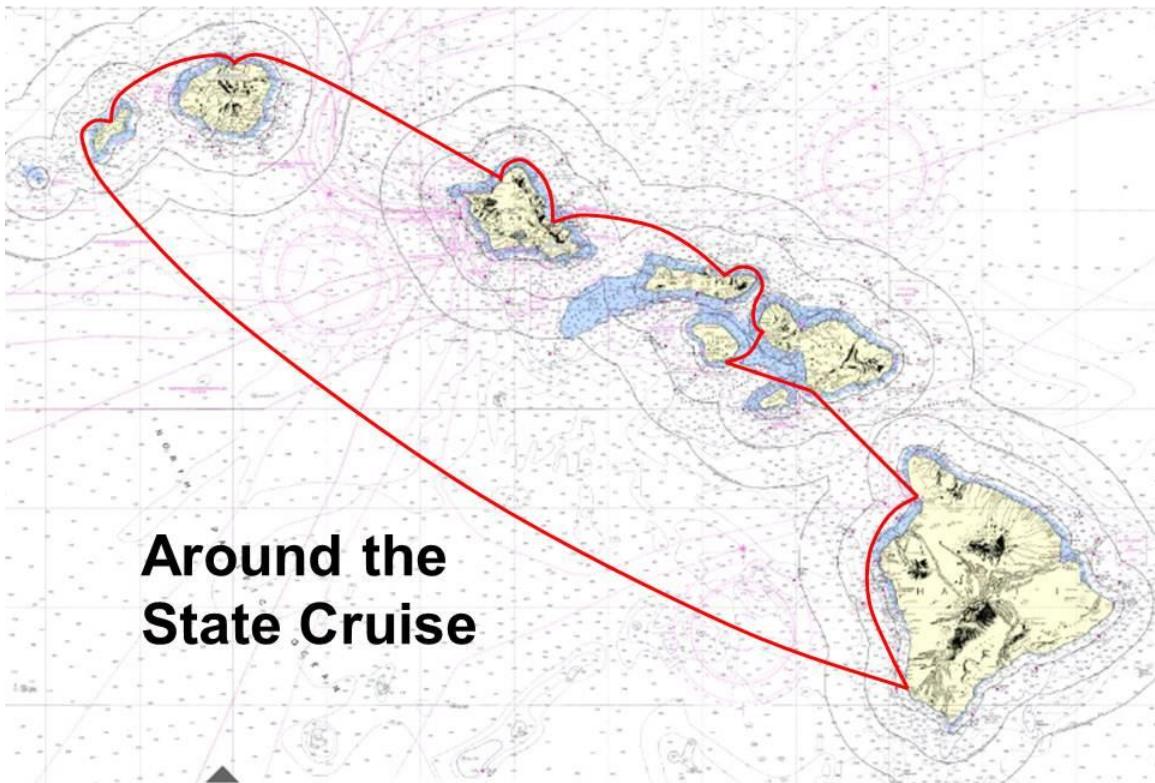
Suitable period: summer months when no north swell is present

360 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyCd2PeiJbg>

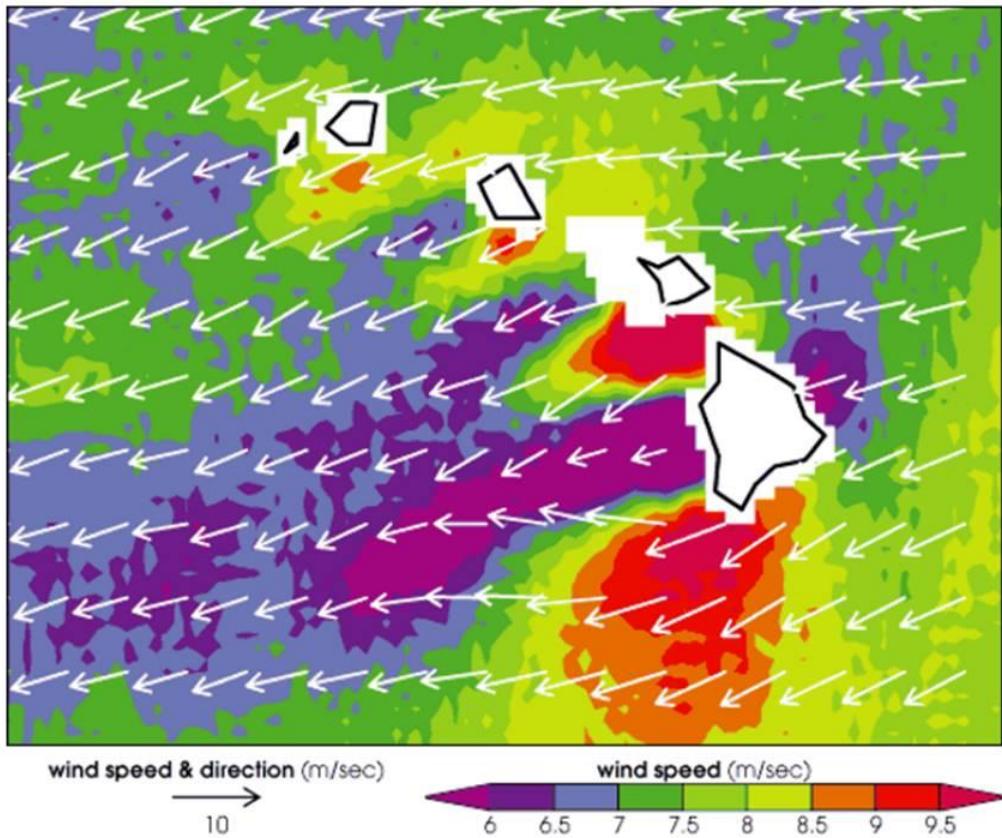
Comments: This is the most protected anchorage on the coast during the summer months, and it is the spot where the landing craft that is used to bring supplies to the island is beached. Unfortunately, it is also close to the settlement and your presence will likely be discovered fairly quickly. It is a nice place to overnight though before departing on the passage to the Big Island.

Suggested Cruising Itineraries

Around the State



I sailed in seven “Around the State” races in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Our course for all of those races took us down the northwest shore of Niihau, which is how I discovered the great anchorages there, and then straight from Niihau to South Point on the Big Island. In all seven of those races the passage to the Big Island was a relatively easy 300 mile close reach. The wind seemed to be both more northerly and lighter than the typical west-east channel crossings in the Hawaiian Islands. Refer back to Figure 2 at the beginning of this essay. You can see that the route from Niihau to the Big Island takes you outside the area of consistently heavy winds.



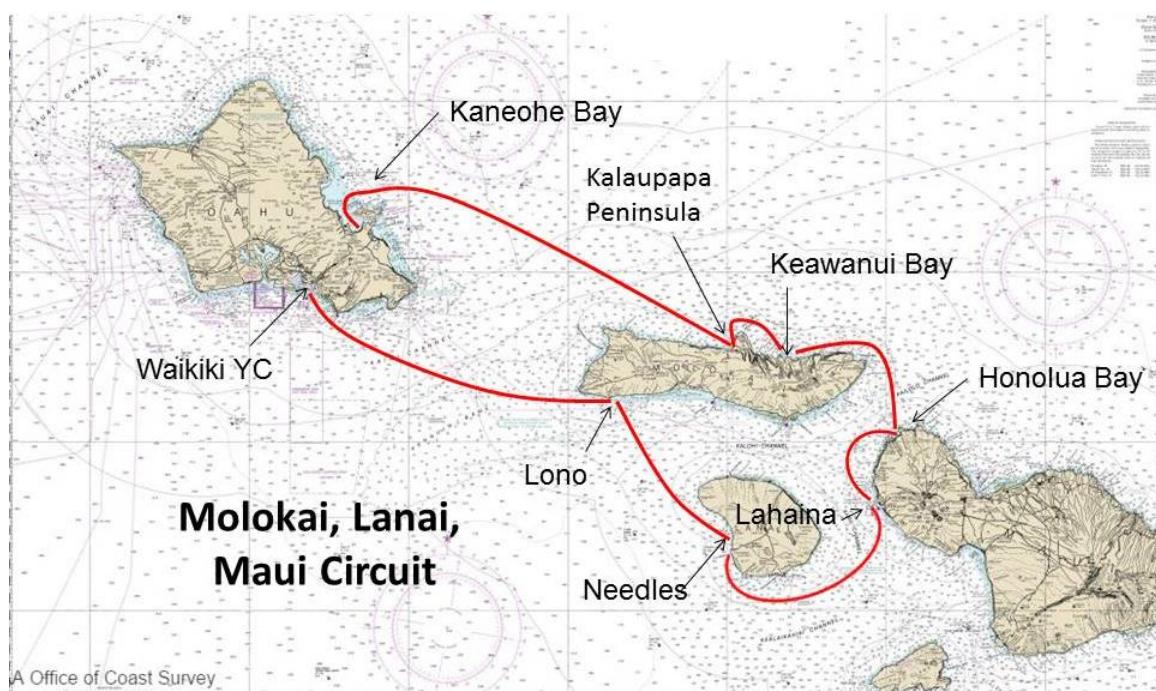
The graphic image above generated by satellite data shows that the easterly trade winds bend to the north as they pass through the channels and maintain this northerly shift until they are a couple of hundred miles west of the island chain. My personal experience sailing from Niihau to the Big Island supports this. In addition to the seven Around the State races, I've made the passage from Niihau to Okoe Bay on the Big Island twice now as a cruiser. It is an easier passage than getting to Okoe from Oahu because one is further from the throats of the channels. Depart Niihau on a close reach with sheets just cracked for speed. Don't worry about sagging below the rhumb line. You will get a 40+ degree wind shift on the south side of the Alinuihaha Channel that will lift you until you are heading straight for Kailua, Kona. You will eventually run into the lee of the Big Island, which extends more than 100 miles to the west. Once in the lee, turn on the engine and power into your destination.

The rest of the trip westward through the island chain is all down hill. Okoe Bay is normally where I make landfall as it is the southernmost good anchorage on the Kona coast. After a few days resting and exploring Okoe, it is all day sails north stopping at Honomalino, Kealakekua, Kailua, Honokahau, Kawaihae and Nishimura Bay. From Nishimura Bay the crossing of the Alinuihaha Channel to La Perouse Bay on Maui is a broad reach in daylight hours. With the wind this far aft, it will be comfortable no matter how hard it blows. From La Perouse, you can visit Manele Bay, Lahaina, and Honolua Bay and then head down the north shore of Molokai to Keawanui and then to Kaneohe on Oahu. From there you can head to Waimea Bay and then across the channel to Hanalei

on Kauai. After Hanalei you can head west to Haena, Nualolo and down to Niihau's three great anchorages.

You can begin and end this circular cruise around the state at any point along the way. We always started and ended in Kaneohe, our home port. The circuit usually takes about a month, and when you are finished you have truly seen the best Hawaii has to offer a cruising sailor.

Molokai, Lanai, Maui Circuit



If you only have a week or two to go cruising, then consider a cruise from Oahu to Molokai, Lanai and Maui. This is the circuit most cruising sailboats from Oahu follow for their summer cruises.

Starting from either Kaneohe or Honolulu, head east to either Lono Harbor on Molokai or Needles on Lanai. The sail to Lono can be done in daylight hours. The trip to Needles is an overnight sail, but it is easier to lay the Needles from Honolulu.

If you go to Lono first, then your second stop should be either Kaena Point on Lanai or the Needles. From there you can go to Manele Bay, Lahaina, Honolua Bay and then down the North Shore of Molokai visiting Keawanui before returning to Oahu.

Oahu to the Big Island and Return

I've made a few trips to the Big Island from Oahu, stopping along the way at Lono Harbor and the Needles (or Smugglers Cove on Kahoolawe, when it was open) before venturing out into the Alinuihaha Channel. It is an overnight sail to get from Lanai to the Big Island. Don't be afraid to crack well off of the wind if it is rough in the Alinuihaha Channel. Just like the trip from Niihau, you will be lifted on the south side of the channel and you will have to power in to Kona anyway. A few more miles won't make any difference. Once on the Kona coast, the return trip is the same as the Around the State cruise. This cruise can be done in 2-3 weeks.



Lori finds a big glass ball floating off of Makapuu aboard *Moku pe'a*, September 2010