Huli ʻia: Every place has a story … Let's listen

Pelika Andrade (Kānaka ʻŌiwi, Hawaiʻi), *Na Maka Onaona and University of Hawaiʻi Sea Grant College Program*
Kanoe Morishige (Kānaka ʻŌiwi, Hawaiʻi), *Na Maka Onaona*

Every place has moods and characteristics that change throughout the year and seasons. Understanding these characteristics is a critical step in strengthening relationships to our places, ensuring that our places can care for us into the future. This is a collective journey of health based on the natural and social environment and the co-dependent relationship needed for both to thrive. From its creation to now, the Hawaiian Islands are shaped by winds, rains, waves, and the seasonal changes of the environment, and so too are the kānaka ʻōiwi (Native Hawaiians), who are genealogically connected to these islands. We descend from a millennium of knowledge systems, experiences, and memories passed down from our ancestors. Today, we support the gathering and building of our communities to re-remember how to listen to the needs of our places, and to engage in what we keenly observe through engaging our senses and building our collective memory base. Our traditional practices are a reflection of the intimate knowledge tied to understanding what our communities and places need to thrive. Huli ʻia is a way for us to re-engage in the seen and unseen, the smells, the sounds, the tastes, and all senses encompassed in the intricacies of ʻāina. Today, we perpetuate these knowledge systems to adjust our behaviors to support their natural rhythms and innovate best management practices.

Supporting healthy and bioculturally diverse natural ecosystems requires the recognition and inclusivity of people in our multi-generational goals towards ʻĀina Momona, abundant and productive social-ecological ecosystems. We know these ecosystems as our ʻāina bases—our lands, oceans, and communities that feed and nourish our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. In our world today, many of us have lost the ability to listen to our places. Without being able to understand what our places need to thrive, we often find ourselves facing management challenges that can protect the resource, but splinter the community for generations to come. Our places have a story and we need to re-remember how to listen. How can we understand a place so intimately that whatever we do and however we choose to live, we do it with minimal impact supporting the overall health and productivity of our places?

Developed by the non-profit organization Nā Maka Onaona, Huli ʻia is an ʻōiwi (Native Hawaiian) observational process documenting seasonal changes and shifts across entire landscapes, ma uka i kai (from the mountains to the sea), identifying dominant correlating cycles to guide resource management and best practices that support a productive and thriving community, ʻĀina Momona. It is an observational process documenting natural changes over time, identifies dominant cycles within certain species or occurrences (flowering, fruiting, presence/absence of flora/fauna, cloud formations, spawning, or recruiting of fish species, etc.) and assists in identifying correlations between species and/or occurrences as indicators of the other. When one thing happens (a flower species blooms en masse), it indicates that another occurrence (a fish is spawning en masse) is happening. It allows natural cycles to support and guide our management practices, allowing the flexibility needed to ensure the best times to rest areas or species from cultivation and harvest—or vice versa. Huli ʻia stems from traditional management systems driven by an intimate understanding of the natural environment and the ability of communities to adjust and adapt their activities as best management practices to support these systems of nature.

Huli ʻia grows our ability to be conscious of the world around us. It's about being present, paying attention, and consciously observing and immersing ourselves in a place until it becomes an unconscious behavior. It honors the breadth and depth of diverse perspectives grown through experiences that each

▲ Huli ʻia is an ʻōiwi (Native Hawaiian) observational process documenting seasonal changes and shifts across entire landscapes. PHOTO CREDIT

person comes from. Through sharing observations from life experiences within our communities, we are able to see what others see and grow our collective memory. For those who come from different hālau (schools of traditional knowledge systems and practices) of fishermen, farmers, weavers, hula dancers, woodcarvers, navigators, and many more, each person develops an intimate relationship to the resources they tend to and that feeds them. Our ancestors understood how to tend to spaces like ʻolonā and maile patches, fishponds, and limu (algae) beds to increase productivity and health through an intimate understanding of what these resources need to thrive and feed our communities in perpetuity.

Another layer of Huli ʻia is being inclusive of multi-generational perspectives, recognizing that kūpuna (elders), mākua (parents), ʻōpio (youth), and keiki (children) view the world differently. Huli ʻia also helps our ability to remember. We encourage the documentation process to be a group activity where individuals in the group reflect on and share the dominant characteristics of their observations in the past two weeks. This trains and challenges every person to depend on and strengthen their memory. The only written part is one person recording the discussion. The group discussion is one of the most valuable pieces of this process. The written product of Huli ʻia is part of the process, but it is not the end goal.

Paired with monthly documenting activities, Huli ʻia can provide each community with consistent data throughout the year, as well as support and deepen relationships to place. The compiled cycles provide us with a timeline of place and a well-documented resource to guide discussions and best practices that

It's not just about the one flower that grows there or the one-time event, but rather about looking at the dominant patterns that compose the moods and characteristics of each place.

will support the natural rhythms of place. This allows the flexibility needed to ensure the best times to implement management actions, like resting areas or species and/or allowing access to harvest resources.

Huli ʻia has been instrumental in shaping the direction and evolution of more than a decade of intertidal research focusing on the role of habitat and environment on the carrying capacity of ʻopihi (endemic Hawaiian limpets) as part of sustainable harvesting and adaptive community-driven management strategies. Huli ʻia illuminates areas to better understand important components to manage, not only intertidal fisheries in general, but also particularly the Community-based Subsistence Fishing Area in Hāʻena and the Kaʻūpūlehu Try Wait Area. These are a few examples of how Huli ʻia is applied to management to account for the needs of our places to be productive. Place-based knowledge can tailor the solutions and care needed to benefit all people and places.

One example of deepening relationships to place is growing a collective consciousness of the animals, plants, and natural rhythms of our places, and letting these collective observations allow a place to tell its story. Our ancestors and our communities today celebrate wahi pana (storied places) in a massive repository of oral histories and Traditional Knowledge systems and practices passed down today. "Wahi" means place and "pana" means heartbeat. The heartbeat of our places represent the famous moods and characteristics of our places. This can include the particular presence/growth of plants, animals, weather patterns, limu on the shoreline, smells in the air, etc., recognized through an intimate understanding of dominant characteristics and moods of our places. Huli ʻia allows these stories to come through today. It's not just about the one flower that grows there or the one-time event, but rather about looking at the dominant patterns that compose the moods and characteristics of each place. Through these monitoring efforts, the data are compiled into a seasonal calendar as a powerful visual describing the dominant natural cycles and their correlations. A facilitated discussion component of Huli ʻia includes observations of:

- Fish spawning, recruiting, and migrating;
- Flowering, seeding, and fruiting of plants;
- Seasonal presence and absence, such as whales, kōlea (Pacific golden plover), limu, etc.;
- Natural growth and dieback of plants and animals;
- Weather and climate activity, such as temperature shifts, cloud formations, windy seasons, rain/drought, etc.; and
- Celestial movement and characteristics, such as colors during sunset and sunrise, starline presence, sun movement to the North and South.

These compiled cycles are then compared or correlated to each other as indicators of activities that occur together or in sequence, providing us with a natural timeline of each community and a well-documented resource to guide discussions and implementation of best practices in support of these cycles, and ultimately, their productivity. Over time, the amount of observations shared within the community groups grows as the months and years pass and as more people participate and contribute to the discussion. This represents the re-remembering, where people pay attention to dominant patterns of plants, animals, weather, etc. that they never noticed until listening in on these discussions over time. These calendars also include perpetuating Traditional Knowledge systems through the creation of ʻōlelo noʻeau (Hawaiian proverbs). These wise sayings are the ancestral vessels transferring knowledge through time. Based on the dominant patterns that arise from each place,

participants can compose new contemporary ʻōlelo noʻeau capturing knowledge of today.

Huli ʻia is being used across Hawaiʻi paeʻāina (Hawaiian Archipelago) from the northwestern extent at Hōlanikū (Kure Atoll) in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) to Kauaʻi and Hawaiʻi Island. For more than a decade, it has been implemented through long-standing multi-disciplinary partnerships with Native Hawaiian communities and state/federal agency partners. It has been successfully incorporated into research and management efforts across PMNM and the extended Hawaiian Archipelago through the intertidal research cruises at Lalo (French Frigate Shoals), Mokumanamana (Necker), and Nihoa, and by the Hōlanikū (Kure Atoll) field teams.

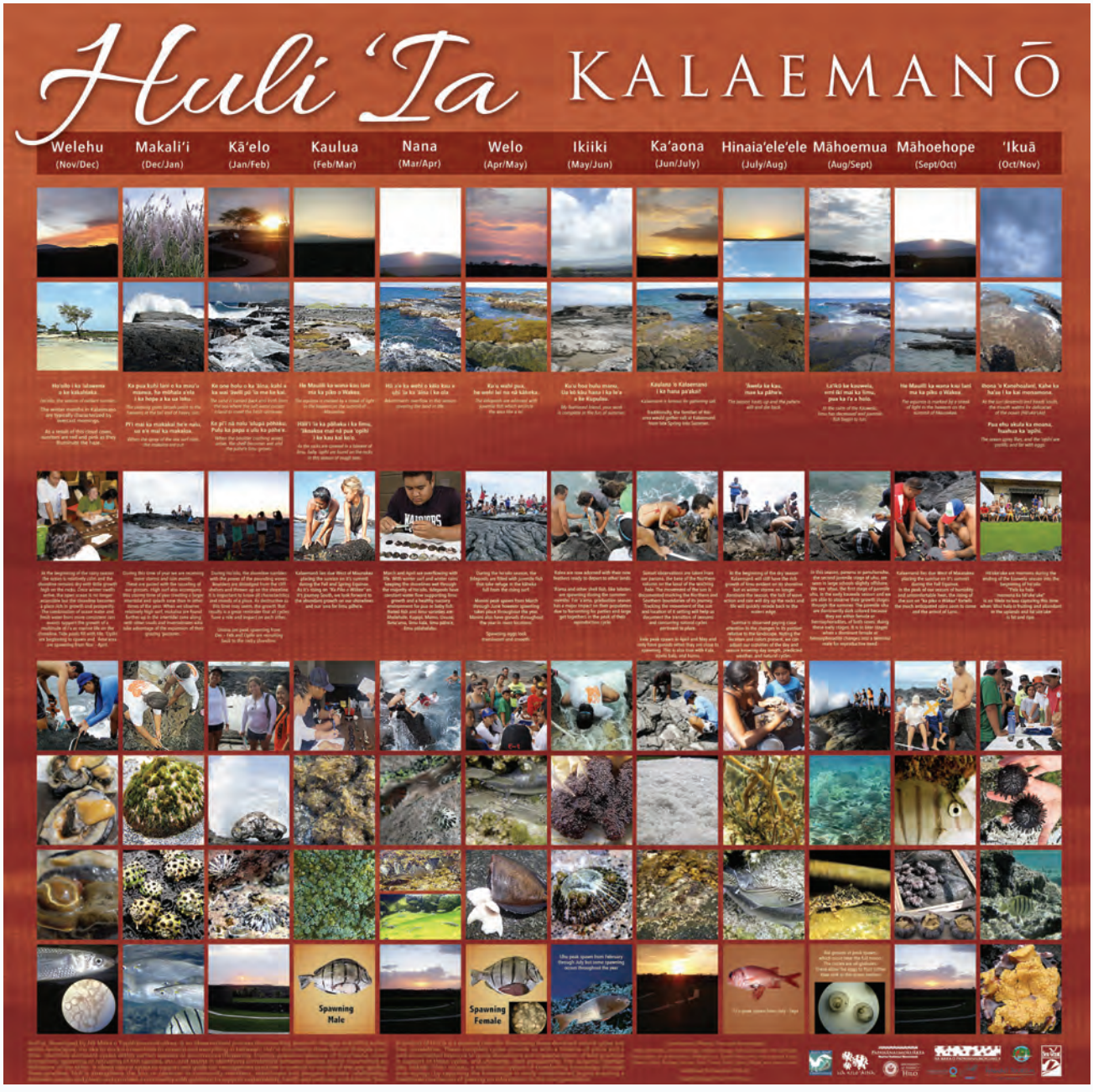
ʻEnaʻena ka lani i ka ʻālaʻapapa, ʻenaʻena ka honua i ka ʻā aia. *The heavens are red with long cloud formations, the lands are red with the mating red-footed birds.* The reds are very active at this time of the year as the ʻā (red-footed booby) is attracting potential mates; the ʻiwa (great frigate bird) males are in full display, also attracting potential mates; and the koaʻeʻula (red-tailed tropic birds) begin their breeding season. There are vibrant sunrises and sunsets in the peak of moli (Laysan albatross) covering the landscape. (November–December)

▼ **ʻŌlelo Noʻeau for Hōlanikū (Kure Atoll) in 2015.**

‘Akekeke a pili, ‘Akekeke a holo.
Friends gather talking, and they keep talking as they move on. ‘Akekeke (ruddy turnstone) gather before flying off as a flock, in migration. The ocean is still rough and stormy, contributing to the ever-changing contour of the shoreline and the increase in scavenging along the shoreline due to an increase of dead sea life washed up from the wave action. ‘Akekeke are visibly increasing along the water’s edge and flying in large flocks taking advantage of these ideal scavenging conditions. (January–February)

Hō‘ea mai ka ‘ewa‘ewa i ka ‘ena makani, holo aku ka ‘akekeke i ke ahe makani.
‘Ewa‘ewa arrive in the time of stormy winds, ‘akekeke leave in the time of gentler winds. There is a huge increase in some bird species like ‘akekeke (ruddies are not increasing, they are getting ready to leave the island so they might be flocking up in distinct areas) and ‘ewa‘ewa adults are just arriving while moli and ka‘upu (albatross) chicks are getting closer to fledging and departing our shores. The smell of death will begin to increase as moli and ka‘upu chicks die

▼ **‘Ōlelo No‘eau for Kalaemanō in 2012.**



It is important to know all characteristics and moods of a place. As destructive as this time may seem, the growth that results is a great reminder that all cycles have a role and impact on each other.

from malnutrition and heat exposure. Shearwaters are beginning their breeding season and noio (noddy tern) are increasing in numbers. As we transition into kauwela (summer), ʻewaʻewa are swarming and kolea (Pacific golden-plover) and ʻakekeke are getting ready to depart, noted by their change in plumage.

Hū aʻe ka wehi o kēia kau e uhi ʻia ka ʻāina i ke ola.
Adornments overflow in this season covering the land in life. March and April are overflowing with life. With winter surf and winter rains keeping the shorelines wet through the majority of hoʻoilo (wet/rainy season), the water is constantly flowing throughout the tidepools, supporting limu growth and a healthy nursery environment for pua iʻa (baby fish).

He Mauiili ka wana kau lani ma ka piko o Wakea.
The equinox is marked by a streak of light in the heavens on the summit of Mauna Kea.

Ihona ʻo Kanehoalani, Kahe ka haʻae i ke kai monamona.
As the sun descends and heads south, the mouth waters for delicacies of the ocean. The hāʻuke'uke (helmet urchins) grow fat and are ready to harvest.

Pua ehu akula ka moana, huahua ka ʻopihi.
The ocean spray flies, and the ʻopihi are prolific and fat with eggs. Through observation and tracking reproductive activity, we know that this is the time of the year when ʻopihi (limpets) and hāʻukeʻuke release their eggs and produce the next generation. In the following months, we see an influx of recruits on the rocks. Large surf and rain events are correlated with the timing of their reproductive events.

Hoʻoilo i ka ʻulawena o ke kakahiaka.
Hoʻoilo, the season of radiant sunrises. At the beginning of the rainy season the ocean is relatively calm and the shoreline remains dry, with little growth high on the rocks. Once winter swells arrive, the open ocean is no longer accessible but the shoreline becomes a place rich in growth and prosperity. The combination of ocean water and fresh water from more consistent rains support the growth of a multitude of iʻa (marine life) on the shoreline. Tidepools fill with life. ʻOpihi are beginning to spawn and ʻamaʻama (mullet) are spawning from November to April.

Ke piʻi nā nalu ʻulupā pōhaku, pulu ka papa a ulu ka paheʻe.
When the boulder crashing waves arrive, the shelf becomes wet and the pahee limu grows. During hoʻoilo, the shoreline rumbles with the power of the pounding waves. Boulders are dislodged from the cliff shelves and thrown up on the shoreline. It is important to know all characteristics and moods of a place. As destructive as this time may seem, the growth that results is a great reminder that all cycles have a role and impact on each other.

Huli ʻia represents a collective journey addressing the need to repair and heal our relationships to place through a process grown from within our communities. It allows our places to tell their stories, removing our biases and opinions from one perspective to building a collective memory and repository of knowledge. The goal is to listen to the needs of place to improve natural resources through growing awareness and consciousness of participants and the community at large. Huli ʻia honors our traditional practice of spending the majority of our energy observing to understand natural processes and productivity and the minority of our energy to complement these processes with appropriate and efficient actions like harvest. This mosaic of cultural relationships opens our consciousness, builds an intimate understanding of the world around us, and helps every participant recognize their contributions

Huli ʻia represents a collective journey addressing the need to repair and heal our relationships to place through a process grown from within our communities.

and roles in feeding a place in the same way it feeds the community. Huli ʻia provides a platform to share and contribute to the health of our communities of people and place. As we continue to gather around managing our resources, Huli ʻia provides a space for ʻāina to guide research and management to support ʻĀina Momona, productive and healthy communities of people and place. I ola ʻoe, I ola kākou!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF CONTRIBUTORS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Kim Kanoeʻulalani Morishige, Pelika Andrade, Kehau Springer, Pat Springer, Makani Greg, Moani Pai and ʻOhana, Kahoane Aiona, Nakoa Goo, Puaʻala Pascua, Eva Schemmel, Niegel Rozet, Tyson Fukuyama, Trisha Soares, Nick Sagum, Amy Waishog, Uilani Macabio, Iolani Kauhane, Cynthia Vanderlip, Naomi Worcester, Matt Saunter, Brad Wong, Maria Carnevale, Naalehu Anthony, Hoku Cody, Kaikea Nakachi, Hiilei Kawelo, Koa Matsuoka, Kurt Johnson, Tobze, and organizations/agencies: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, ʻOiwi TV, Flickr Creative Commons, Marisla Foundation, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. Graphic Designer Mele McPherson.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Pelika Andrade
pelikaok@hawaii.edu

PSF
PARKS STEWARDSHIP FORUM

The Interdisciplinary Journal of Place-based Conservation

Co-published by the Institute for Parks, People, and Biodiversity, University of California, Berkeley and the George Wright Society. ISSN 2688-187X

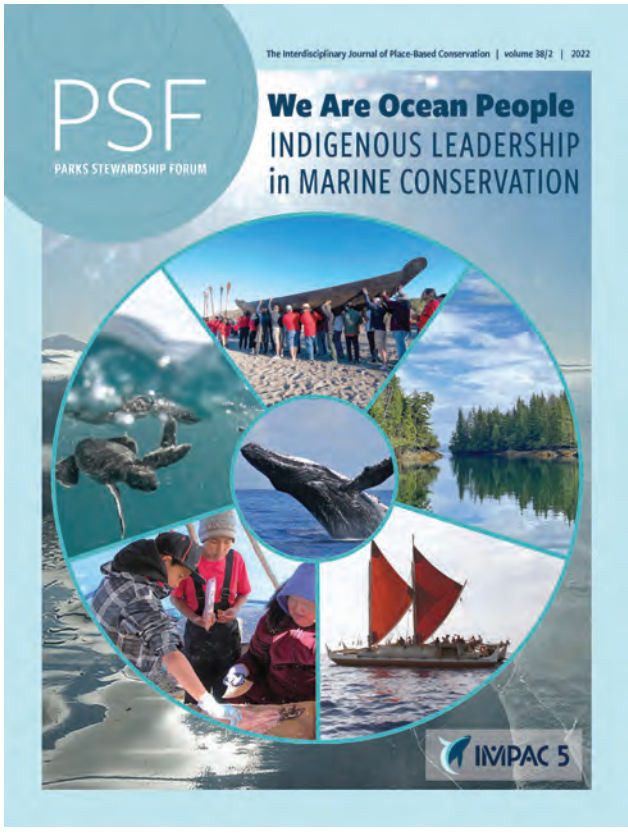
Citation for this article
Andrade, Pelika, and Kanoe Morishige. 2022. Huli'a: Every place has a story … Let's listen. *Parks Stewardship Forum* 38(2): 310–316.

Parks Stewardship Forum explores innovative thinking and offers enduring perspectives on critical issues of place-based heritage management and stewardship. Interdisciplinary in nature, the journal gathers insights from all fields related to parks, protected/conserved areas, cultural sites, and other place-based forms of conservation. The scope of the journal is international. It is dedicated to the legacy of George Meléndez Wright, a graduate of UC Berkeley and pioneer in conservation of national parks.

Parks Stewardship Forum is published online at https://escholarship.org/uc/psf through eScholarship, an open-access publishing platform subsidized by the University of California and managed by the California Digital Library. Open-access publishing serves the missions of the IPPB and GWS to share, freely and broadly, research and knowledge produced by and for those who manage parks, protected areas, and cultural sites throughout the world. A version of *Parks Stewardship Forum* designed for online reading is also available at https://parks.berkeley.edu/psf. For information about publishing in PSF, write to psf@georgewright.org.

The journal continues *The George Wright Forum*, published 1981–2018 by the George Wright Society.

PSF is designed by Laurie Frasier • lauriefrasier.com



On the cover of this issue

CIRCLE DESIGN, clockwise from top:
- Northern Chumash ceremony | ROBERT SCHWEMMER
- Haida Gwaii | CINDY BOYKO
- The Polynesian Voyaging Society's voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a | NOAA
- Elder teaching youths, northern Alaska | US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
- Baby Honu (sea turtles), Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument | NOAA
- Center: Humpback whale, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument | NOAA

Background: Pacific Rim National Park Reserve | PARKS CANADA