

MAKAHIKI

The annual Makahiki festival begins with the rising of the constellation Pleiades, or Makali'i in Hawaiian, over the horizon at sunset. The rising of Makali'i, which occurs towards the end of 'Ikuā, is observed from a heiau dedicated to the god Lono at Kealakekua in Kona, Hawai'i. Makahiki celebrates Lono, the god of fertility and agriculture among other matters. The festival begins with offerings to Lono from the maka'ainana and includes feasting and festivities. Ulumaika (stone bowling), kukini (running), hākōkō (wrestling), and mokomoko (boxing) are played. In ancient days, fishing was kapu and no one was allowed to sail a canoe. Kapa beating, farming, and drumming were also kapu. The festival concludes with rituals involving the ali'i and kahuna, and representations of Lono.



Makali'i is the month occurring around December and January. Makali'i literally means "little eyes," because the shoots of yams, arrowroot, and turmeric are sprouting at this time. This month is a good time for kala fishing.

KALA

Bluespine Unicornfish

Nā Hana Hawai'i

The kala has a strong odor and is commonly caught for food and other uses. The skin of the kala is very tough, and is used for the top of pūniu (coconut shell knee drums).

'Ōlelo No'ēau

Mālama i ke kala ka i'a hi'u 'oi.

Watch out for the kala, the fish with a sharp tail.



Kā'elo occurs around January and February. 'Elo literally means "soggy" referring to the weather at this time, which consists of kona storms. The 'ama'ama are spawning at this time and are kapu from November to March.

'AMA'AMA

Mullet

Nā Hana Hawai'i

The 'ama'ama is an important fresh or brackish water aquaculture fish to Hawaiians. 'Ama'ama is an herbivore fish grown and stored in the loko i'a.

Mo'olelo

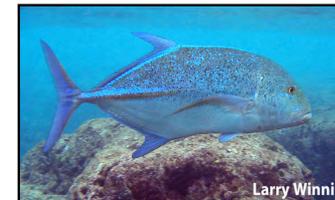
Keahupua-o-Maunaloa fishpond in the Maunaloa area is said to be connected to Ka'elepulu in Kailua. Great schools of 'ama'ama would disappear from the Maunaloa pond and reappear in Ka'elepulu and at the same time awa from Ka'elepulu would appear in the Maunaloa pond. When the 'ama'ama returned to the Maunaloa pond, the awa left.



Kaulua occurs around February and March. Kaulua means "dual natured" or "indecisive," referring to the alternating warm and cold winds that occur at this time. During this month Black Ulua are close to shore.

ULUA

Trevally



'Ōlelo No'ēau

Aia i ka huki ulua.

Gone to haul ulua fish.

Gone to get her man. The ulua fish signifies a man.

'A'ohē ia e loa'a aku, he ulua kāpapa no ka moana.

He cannot be caught for he is an ulua fish of the deep ocean. Said in admiration of a hero or warrior who will not give up without a struggle.

Nana occurs around March and April. The weather is sunny, but showery too. This month marks the start of deep-sea fishing and is a good fishing period for moi.

MOI

Threadfin

Mo'olelo

Moi was a favorite fish of the ali'i. In ancient times, moi was kapu to commoners. In Hilo, there was a chief who desired the moi from Kona, and everyday he would send his fast-running messenger to that side of the island to get the moi fish for him.



'Ōlelo No'ēau

Ho'i hou i ke 'ehu me he moi la.

Returns to the broiling sea like a moi fish. Said of one who leaves home for a better chance of advancing but eventually comes back.

'Ikuā marks the end of the summer, around September and October. 'Ikuā literally means "loud voice" and thunderstorms occur at this time. There are many āholehole fish at this time.

ĀHOLEHOLE

Hawaiian flagtail

Nā Hana Hawai'i

Āholehole were prepared by holding the dorsal fin with the teeth and drawing the body away, the word "hole" means "to strip away." The fish was used in magic, to chase away evil spirits and for love magic. The āholehole was a "pua'a kai", or sea pig, and was used in ceremonies as a pig substitute. The fish has a light skin tone, and sometimes foreigners were called "āhole" because of this characteristic.



'Ōlelo No'ēau

He āhole ka i'a, hole ke aloha.

Āhole is the fish, love is restless. Said of the āhole fish when used in hana aloha sorcery to arouse love.

Nā Wā I'a : Hanauma Fish Calendar

Hawaiian Conservation

Hawaiians developed a calendar based on the phases of the moon and natural cycles occurring throughout the year. Changes in moon phases and seasons are significant to farmers and fishermen. Each day and month has unique characteristics that Hawaiians observe can be favorable for crops or fishing. Hawaiians place kapu on certain fish, forbidding the harvesting of those fish during a specific time of the year. Often, fish are kapu during the times they are known to be spawning so they can reproduce freely, and this guarantees similar large populations of fish for future Hawaiian fishermen.

Hawaiians also developed an extensive system of aquaculture. Loko i'a, fishponds, are used to store and grow fish. Fishpond walls built near the shore of the ocean, are sometimes constructed using stones from valleys away. The makahā, or gate, allows the seawater to flow in and out of the fishpond, and also allows small fish to swim in. When the fish grow larger the makahā prevents them from leaving. Because the fishpond was considered part of the land, people could sometimes gather fish from fishponds that were kapu in the ocean.

Hilinamā, or Mahoe hope, occurs around August and September. This time is marked by rough seas and rain, much like the previous month. This month is good for awa fishing.

AWA

Milkfish

Mo'olelo

The awa is a well loved fish often grown in loko i'a along with the 'ama'ama. The delicious, white-fleshed awa was, at times, reserved for ali'i.



A tale remarked, "Where did the awa'āua come from. From the chief's favourite pond, Kaloaloo (near Moanalua)...It slipped down the throat with some o'lu seaweed. Ah it was so good."

'Ōlelo No'ēau

He loko kapu ia, he awa ka i'a noho; eia ka ua komo 'ia e ke 'ā kōkōki.

It was a pond reserved only for awa fish, but now a bait-stealing 'ā fish has gotten into it. A woman who is the wife of a fine man of chiefly rank is now having an affair with a worthless scamp.

Hilinaehu or Mahoe mua occurs around July and August. At this time there is both rainy and sunny weather, and there are rough seas. During this month the uhu fish run.

UHU

Parrotfish

Mana'o

The behavior of the uhu is said to reveal the happenings at the fisherman's home. "If the uhu frolicked in the water it was a sure sign of too much levity at home, instead of the somber conduct a fisherman's wife should display when her husband is at sea."

'Ōlelo No'ēau

Ka pali nānā uhu ka'i o Makapu'u.

The uhu – observing cliff of Makapu'u. The sea surrounding Makapu'u Point, O'ahu, is the favorite haunt of the uhu.

'A'ohē e loa'a,

he uhu pakelo.

He will not be caught, for he is a parrotfish, slippery with slime. Said of a person too wily and wise to be caught.



Hinaia'ele'ele occurs around July. There are dark, or 'ele'ele, clouds, hot weather, and sudden storms. During this time there is rich fishing for uhu, akule, pāpio, and mūhe'e.

MŪHE'E

Oval Squid

'Ōlelo No'ēau

Ka hana a ke aloha, he kōhu mūhe'e i ke alo pali.

The action of a lover is like that of a squid at the face of a precipice. A squid is said to be a creature that goes every which way. A squid-like lover is not to be trusted.

Mūhe'e

literally means "changeable, unsteady," like the backward and forward motion of the swimming mūhe'e.



Ka'aona occurs around June and July. Ka'aona means "pleasantly rolling along"; good weather and abundance of food occurs at this time. The kapu on 'ōpelu starts, and the kapu on aku (skipjack) is lifted.

'ŌPELU

Mackerel Scad

Mo'olelo

The 'ōpelu along with the aku are considered sacred fish. Schools of these fish calmed the stormy waters during Pā'ao's voyage to Hawai'i from Kahiki. Pā'ao was a kahuna, who is said to have brought the first ali'i from Kahiki. Pā'ao



honored the two fish by making them kapu. 'Ōpelu is kapu half the year (Ka'aona to Kā'elo), and aku is kapu the other half of the year.

'Ōlelo No'ēau

'Ōpelu ha'alili i ke kai.

'Ōpelu that make the sea ripple.

Said of active, quick moving people.

Ikiiki is the month around May and June and literally means "uncomfortably warm and sticky," describing the humid weather that occurs at this time.

MANINI

Convict Tang

Nā Hana Hawai'i

During Ikiiki, manini fish spawn and "appeared by the millions."



'Ōlelo No'ēau

Ka i'a a ke kualau i lawe mai ai.

The fish brought in by the rain at sea. The spawn of the manini fish that came to the islands by the millions during the summer months. They were said to come after a shower at sea, in the early morning.

He manini ka i'a, mai hō'a i ke ahi.

The fish is just a manini, so do not light a fire. Said to one who suffers defeat in a practice session: "This occasion is a mere manini, a small fish, so do not let your temper be kindled."



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