



He'eia

National Estuarine Research Reserve



Location: Southern portion of Kāne'ohe Bay, on the windward shore of O'ahu, Hawai'i

Date Designated: 2017

Area Protected: 1,385 acres

Web Address: nerra.org/reserves/heeia-national-estuarine-research-reserve

Management: Daily oversight is provided by the University of Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology. NOAA's Office for Coastal Management provides funding, national guidance, and technical assistance.

The He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve includes unique and diverse upland, estuarine, and marine habitats within the He'eia estuary and a portion of Kāne'ohe Bay—the largest sheltered body of water in the Hawaiian Island chain. Protected features include coral reefs, sand flats, and the He'eia stream, as well as important cultural components. Marine waters make up the largest component of the reserve and feature Moku o Lo'e (Coconut Island), home to the University of Hawai'i Marine Laboratory Refuge, which includes the most pristine coral reefs in the site.

Habitats protected at this reserve support important endemic species, including the federally endangered Hawaiian stilt, Hawaiian moorhen, Hawaiian coot, Hawaiian duck, and Hawaiian hoary bat. The reserve participates in the System-Wide Monitoring Program, collecting, analyzing, and sharing weather, water quality, and nutrient data.

NOAA Office for Coastal Management

HE`EIA

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Interesting Things to Know

- He`eia is the 29th—and newest—member of the research reserve family. Stay tuned for exciting updates!

About the Programs

The nation's 29 research reserves represent a tremendous asset, protecting over 1.3 million acres and providing habitat where plants and wildlife thrive. Community benefits include recreation, flood protection, and water filtration. Because the following programs are offered at each reserve, the system is able to make an environmental impact at the local level, as well as nationally.

Stewardship. Site protection and enhancement are part of every research reserve. Activities may include managing land and water resources, restoring habitat, controlling invasive species, maintaining biodiversity, and reducing environmental stressors.

Research. Reserve research is focused on how environmental factors—such as nutrient loading, climate change, invasive species, and storms—impact coastal ecosystems. The monitoring program, known as the System-Wide Monitoring Program, or SWMP, provides long-term data on water quality, weather, biological communities, habitat, and land-use and land-cover characteristics. This combination of research and data provides a strong, science-based foundation for addressing coastal management challenges.

Training. To provide the community with the information and skills needed to integrate coastal science into local decision-making and everyday lives, reserves provide specialized courses and information. Reserve training professionals are active in community planning and improvement initiatives.

Education. Local data generated at the reserve provide students with a firsthand experience of local environmental conditions. Educators lead student, teacher, and citizen field trips that are life-changing experiences, as participants see, feel, and smell what makes an estuary one of the most remarkable places in the world.

To learn more, visit coast.noaa.gov/nerrs.

Office for Coastal Management

