



Getting to Ka'ena Point: From the Wai'anae side, go to the end of Farrington Hwy (Route 93). From the parking area in the Makua-Ka'ena Point State Park, walk 2½ miles to the point. From the Mokule'ia side, take Route 930 past Waialua and Mokule'ia and park where the paved road ends, one mile beyond Camp

Erdman. It is about 2½ miles from there to the point. Lock your car and take valuables with you.

Be Prepared: Ka'ena Point is usually hot and sunny. Take ample water, wear cool clothing and a hat, and use sunscreen. Comfortable and appropriate shoes are needed for the 2½ mile walk, which can take 1 to 3 hours, depending on your pace. High waves and strong currents mark the coastline at Ka'ena Point. Stay away from the wave-exposed coasts unless you are familiar with the hazardous conditions.

Protect Your Reserve: The beauty of Ka'ena Point is worth preserving. Here are some ways you can help protect the area's native plants and animals:

- ☛ Leave your pets at home; dogs kill nesting birds
- ☛ Proceed only on foot or bicycle
- ☛ Stay on marked trails
- ☛ Avoid disturbing nesting birds; respect posted signs
- ☛ Prevent fires
- ☛ Carry out any litter you find
- ☛ Leave all living things as you found them

Visitors who move quietly and slowly through the reserve, respecting its Hawaiian plants and animals, gain most from the experience. In turn, they leave the reserve natural and pristine for the future.

Commercial activity (including tours, filming, commercial photography, etc) is prohibited without a special use permit.

For More Information:

Call the DLNR, Division of Forestry and Wildlife at (808) 587-0166, or write to Hawai'i Natural Area Reserve System, 1151 Punchbowl Street, Rm. 325, Honolulu, HI 96813. To report any problems, call the Conservation Hotline at (808) 587-0077.

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KA'ENA POINT Natural Area Reserve



State of Hawai'i
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Natural Area Reserves System

Ka'ena Point Natural Area Reserve

Ka'ena Point, the westernmost point on Oahu, is the site of one of the last intact dune ecosystems in the main Hawaiian Islands. Here beyond the end of the busy roads of Oahu, is an area known since the ancient times as leina a ka'uhane, the "leaping place of souls," where the spirits of the recently dead could be reunited with their ancestors. Today, you can walk there among the living; Hawaiian plants and animals that have made the rugged ancient shoreline their home for thousands of years.



The volcano that created the Wai'anae Mountain Range last erupted over three million years ago. On the narrow western point, the hard volcanic rock shows the mark of a millennia of pounding waves – the carved sea cliffs of Mokule'ia that rise above Ka'ena. In the warm surrounding ocean waters, reefs were gradually built up by countless coral animals, adding to their limestone skeletons, and replacing the parts broken by the thundering surf of Pacific winter storms. The waves churned the broken reef into sand, and created the pale dunes of Ka'ena.

Dunes such as these were once found on most of the main Hawaiian Islands, and on them developed ecosystems unique in the world. The plants that found their way from other continents and islands to Hawai'i did so only very rarely – scientists estimate that one successful colonization occurred every 100,000 years. But those fortunate colonizers found a land of warm, mild climate and many ecological opportunities, and they gave rise to thousands of species. The intense sunlight, low rainfall, strong winds, and salt spray created a challenging environment at Ka'ena. Yet many plants and animals were able to thrive here.



Richard Palmer

Unfortunately, these dunes and the native species that live on them have almost entirely been lost to 1,500 years of change. This is how long humans have been in the islands. Now, where dunes and other coastal ecosystems once held sway we find homes and businesses, or resorts and recreational beaches of the world's vacationers. Intact coasts are only found at remote sites, and these last glimpses of the ancient past of Hawai'i are precious. It was in recognition of this that Ka'ena Point Natural Area Reserve was established in 1983.

The reserve protects sand dune and boulder slope ecosystems that harbor many native Hawaiian plant species. Seabirds, such as wedge-tailed shearwater, red-footed and brown boobies, and brown noddy can be seen offshore at Ka'ena. The reserve provides refuge and a nesting area for the Laysan albatross, and is a potential nesting site for the green sea turtle and Hawaiian monk seal. During the winter breeding season, humpback whales will frequent the waters surrounding the point.

Over the past decades, jeeps, trucks, motorbikes, and other vehicles had severely damaged the dunes and surrounding areas.

Nearly six feet of sand were lost due to vehicular erosion in less than five years. In response, motor-vehicles are now prohibited within the Reserve to help the dune ecosystem recover. Please help protect the plants and animals as you travel on foot or bicycle by keeping to the marked trails.



USFWS

Plants and Animals of Ka'ena

These photographs and descriptions will help you to identify some of the native plants and animals that can be found in the reserve. Many of the plants have adapted in their own way to live at Ka'ena point.



'ohai
Sesbania tomentosa
The 'ohai at Ka'ena are among the last survivors of a plant once commonly found along the Wai'anae and Mokule'ia coastlines. The salmon colored flowers of the 'ohai bloom among the low lying, silver-green leaflets.



mōli
Diomedea immutabilis
During the proper season – usually middle to late fall, pairs of Laysan albatross begin their elaborate mating rituals at Ka'ena Point. These large, graceful seabirds nest in the open among the native shrubs; vulnerable to pests such as mongoose, feral cats, and dogs. Please keep your pets at home.

naupaka kahakai *Scaevola sericea*

The beach naupaka is a common shoreline plant in Hawai'i. It shelters sand from blowing wind and its roots hold the dunes against erosion. The leaves and branches it sheds collect on the dunes and help retain moisture and build soil. Naupaka is easily damaged by off-road vehicles and trampling.



pā'ū o Hi'i'aka
Jacquemontia ovalifolia
Stories tell how Pele, the volcano goddess, left her baby sister Hi'i'aka asleep on the beach while she went fishing. When Pele returned, she found Hi'i'aka gently wrapped in a vine with pale blue, bell shaped flowers, draping over her and protecting her from the scorching sun. This is the origin of pā'ū-o-Hi'i'aka, "skirt of Hi'i'aka."



ma'o (Hawaiian cotton)
Gossypium tomentosum
The ma'o was once very common on the shores of O'ahu, but its habitat has been mostly displaced by weeds and coastal development. Ma'o, meaning "green," is the color of a bright dye that Hawaiians extracted from the plant. Its delicate, bright yellow flowers grace portions of the boulder slopes at Ka'ena.

naio
Myoporum sandwicense
The dark green, rounded naio shrubs stand out against the boulder slopes of Ka'ena. Naio became important in the 1800's when merchants tried to substitute its wood for a dwindling supply of Hawaiian sandalwood. In recent years at Ka'ena, naio have reappeared while the thickets of the introduced koa haole have died back.



'ilima papa
Sida fallax
Like most plants at Ka'ena, the 'ilima papa grows close to the ground, where it is less exposed to wind and blowing sand. Perhaps the name, papa ("flat"), evokes its flattened growth form. The orange-yellow blossoms of 'ilima are the traditional symbol of O'ahu, and a challenging and delicate material for lei making.



Ka'ena 'akoko
Chamaesyce celastroides var. kaenana
With the winter rains, the Ka'ena 'akoko sends out its pale green leaves. During the dry summer, it drops all of its foliage. This endangered plant is found only on boulder slopes in the Ka'ena area, and is easily damaged by trampling.

'ua'u kani
Puffinus pacificus
One of the Reserve's greatest success stories, the Wedge-tailed Shearwater population has increased from none to over 1,000 individuals since protection of the dunes. Today, they are safe from disorienting urban lights and motorized vehicles. Stay on trails or you might step through a burrow injuring yourself and possibly a bird hiding inside.



hinahina
Heliotropium anomulum
Hinahina means "silvery" and refers to the shiny hairs that cover the leaves and reflect the intense sunlight of the coastal habitat. The white flowers that spring from its tightly-whorled succulent leaves send a delicate fragrance on the ocean breeze.



pōhinahina
Vitex rotundifolia
Pōhinahina is one of the first plants to colonize coastal dunes, keeping the sand from blowing away. This hardy shrub bears handsome deep blue to purple blossoms that are a favorite of lei makers and growers of Hawaiian plants.

nehe
Wollastonia integrifolia
The nehe grows along the coasts of most of the Hawaiian Islands. Its light-colored succulent leaves frame bright yellow flowers that resemble miniature daisies. Low growing and hardy, the nehe often favors wave-tossed boulder beaches. It is no surprise that the word "nehe" also describes the endless rumbling of the sea.

