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WAIKIKI AQUARIUM TO OPEN NEW NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS EXHIBIT

HONOLULU— Opening its first major exhibit in six years, the Waikiki Aquarium will unveil its new Northwestern Hawaiian Islands exhibit on August 18, 2011. Showcasing marine life from the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, which is home to over 7,000 marine species, a quarter of which are found nowhere else on Earth, the new exhibit will offer Waikiki Aquarium guests a rare opportunity to view a living reef ecosystem representative of that found in the world's most isolated islands.

“The new Northwestern Hawaiian Islands exhibit not only continues our mission to inspire and promote understanding, appreciation and conservation of Pacific marine life, but it also allows visitors to experience some of the rarity that the Marine National Monument boasts,” said Director Andrew Rossiter, Ph.D. “Many of the species on display are abundant around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, but are extremely rare or absent around the Main Hawaiian Islands.”

Among the unique organisms to be featured in the 4,400-gallon public display are table corals, masked angelfish, bandit angelfish and Japanese pygmy angelfish. Interactive touch screens associated with the exhibit provide additional information on the significance of the islands, their ecology and biodiversity, and the importance of preserving this almost pristine marine ecosystem for future generations.

In 2010, the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was designated as a United Nations World Heritage site, one of only 26 mixed UNESCO World Heritage sites in the world, recognized for outstanding natural and cultural values and it is the only mixed status site in the U.S. The Waikiki Aquarium's new exhibit will give guests an unprecedented opportunity to view abundant marine life from one of the most remote areas on the planet.

Once construction began, the new \$350,000 Northwestern Hawaiian Islands exhibit took slightly less than one year to complete and was developed in partnership and with support from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

About the Waikiki Aquarium

Founded in 1904 and administered by the University of Hawaii at Manoa since 1919, the Waikiki Aquarium is located on the shoreline of Waikiki Beach next to a living reef and across from Kapiolani Park. The Aquarium – third oldest in the U.S. – showcases more than 500 marine species, and maintains more than 3,000 marine specimens. Public exhibits, education programs and research focus on the unique aquatic life of Hawaii and the tropical Pacific. The Aquarium welcomes more than 320,000 visitors annually, and is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except Honolulu Marathon Sunday and Christmas Day. Admission is \$9 for visitors; \$6 for local residents, active duty military with ID, students with ID and seniors; \$4 for youths ages 13-17 and persons with disabilities; \$2 for juniors ages 5 to 12; and free for children 4 and under and Friends of Waikiki Aquarium (FOWA) members. For more information about the Waikiki Aquarium, including membership, please call (808) 923-9741 or visit www.waquarium.org.

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