



Day 2: Saving Our Wildlife

Organization feature: Marine Mammal Research Program

All about the Marine Mammal Research Program

The [Marine Mammal Research Program](#) (MMRP) is a research lab that is part of the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. MMRP focuses on scientific research on the acoustics (sound), ecology, and conservation of marine mammals as well as how climate change will impact them. They work with species like the humpback whale, spinner dolphin, Hawaiian monk seal, and more. But how do they work with these animals? And what makes them so successful?

Part of what makes MMRP able to study wild marine mammals without hurting them is the technology and tools they use. We will focus on two types today: **drones and accelerometer tags**.

Drones can capture footage of wild marine mammals from above, and computer software can help answer questions about their behavior and biology. How much weight do mothers lose while they are lactating and during their migration from Alaska to Hawaii to birth calves each year? Well, drone footage taken in both places can show how the size of a mother humpback whale may have changed over the migration. Using math, statistics, and many hours at the computer, researchers can put a number to that energy loss! The incredible drone fo



Drone footage of a mother and calf humpback whale.



Accelerometer tags can be gently placed on marine mammals using suction cups, and can stay attached for days! These tags can collect underwater video to get an inside look to the secret life of whales. Check out this incredible [short video](#) footage directly from tag footage placed on a humpback whale calf. Tags are a great tool for researchers – but they do have to be retrieved once they fall off!

Another reason why MMRP is able to “make waves,” to help marine mammals is because they see the importance of working together. Their research projects involve partnerships across many different people and places. They collaborate with government agencies, non-profits, other research labs, and scientists from all over the world. As we learned, addressing climate change will require immediate action by governments, scientists, individuals, and companies! If we all work together, our questions are easier to answer.

Learn about their work:



Marine Mammal Research Program is working on many projects, with many different species. If you want to learn the details about some of their projects, check out their [project webpage](#). Otherwise, let's hear from MMRP themselves!

We've included a short video from the graduate students at MMRP explaining their projects and the species they work with. They will give you an inside look to what their days are like as students who study marine mammals, and include tips in case you want to be a marine biologist when you're older. ***Watch this video as a class or as homework.***

Optional videos to watch:

- [Video 1](#): Tagging Hawaii's humpback whales (4 minutes)
- [Video 2](#): Antarctica Expedition (4 minutes)
- Watch more on their [YouTube channel!](#)