03/20/20-ALL COMMERCIAL OCEAN & TRAIL TOURS AND ALL HAWAI'I STATE PARKS NOW CLOSED

Posted on Mar 20, 2020 in Alert, Boating, Closure: Trail, DOCARE, Forestry & Wildlife, Main, Media, News Releases, State Parks, Trail, Trails

DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
News Release

DAVID Y. IGE **GOVERNOR**	**SUZANNE D. CASE** **CHAIRPERSON**

For Immediate News Release: March 20, 2020

ALL COMMERCIAL OCEAN & TRAIL TOURS AND ALL HAWAI'I STATE PARKS NOW CLOSED

(Honolulu) – With today's announcement that community spread of COVID-19 is likely happening in Hawai'i, the DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) has suspended all commercial operator permits until further notice. The suspension is consistent with Governor Ige's supplemental emergency proclamation, Hawai'i Dept. of Health (DOH) and Center's for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. This covers hundreds of tour operators, surf and SUP schools, sight-seeing, whale-watching and dinner cruises and any commercial operation operating in state ocean waters.

DLNR Chair Suzanne Case said, "Many people are not practicing the recommended social distancing protocols, so it's become necessary for us to take these extraordinary steps to help encourage the six-foot separation between people recommended by Gov. Ige, the CDC and our experts at the DOH. It is hoped that every commercial permit holder and all local residents and visitors will abide by these closures in the spirit of flattening the spread of the corona virus."

Many state parks were closed four days ago, but the DLNR Division of State Parks announced this afternoon that it is shuttering all parks, statewide. “Unfortunately,” Curt Cottrell, State Parks Administrator said, “many, many people are simply ignoring gates and signs and choosing to put themselves and any others close-by at risk of contracting COVID-19. This unprecedented step is being taken in the interest of public health and safety and we really encourage people to find alternate activities that do not expose themselves and others to the virus.”

The DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) has closed all commercial tours on State trails and wildlife sanctuaries. Any vendors with tours already booked will be refunded.

The DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) is receiving reports of people continuing to enter Diamond Head State Monument and other closed parks. This is not only dangerous in places like the outer slopes and crater rim of Diamond Head, but violators are subject to being cited or arrested.

Case said, “We are all in this together. It is an enormous inconvenience and upsetting to the kind of lifestyle we enjoy in Hawai‘i. The faster we stop the spread of COVID-19 by everyone practicing social distancing, the quicker we’re likely to see our lives return to normal.”

# #

Media Contact:

Dan Dennison
Senior Communications Manager
(808) 587-0396
Dlnr.comms@hawaii.gov