

Cheryl King, MSc.

Cheryl King has a Bachelor's of Science degree in biology/psychology from Southampton College of Long Island University and a Master's of Science degree in marine biology from Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center (her master's research was a comprehensive study of Kaho'olawe's sea turtle population). In addition to being on research teams around the world, as a 17-year Maui resident she has gained a vast amount of experience in ocean conservation and marine animal rescue and management while working for the State, tourism and non-profit sectors. Cheryl has been fascinated by marine debris and passionate about cleaning coastlines since witnessing, for the first time in 2002, the tons that had accumulated at Kanapou Bay, Kaho'olawe from Hawai'i and all over the Pacific. Conducting annual cleanups there wasn't enough, so through a NOAA Marine Debris Program grant to the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, Cheryl spearheaded the removal of 31 tons of debris in 10 cleanup campouts (2010-2011). They sent 6.6 of these tons of marine debris (what filled a 40-ft container) to the Museum fur Gestaltung in Zurich, Switzerland for an exhibit that has since been traveling all around Europe and Asia (it is currently in Stockholm, Sweden). Cheryl has observed seabirds dying from ingesting marine debris in the remote Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and started a marine debris accumulation study on the even more remote Palmyra Atoll. She created www.SHARKastics.org in 2010 to spread the word about the harmful impacts of marine debris on multiple marine species. She is a member of the NOAA Hawai'i Marine Debris Hui and the Hawai'i Environmental Cleanup Coalition, and she regularly reports on the data she and her trash team collects during the community-based marine debris cleanups on the 4th Sunday of every month at Ka'ehu, Waiehu (since July 2012). She also plays key roles in NOAA's South Maui Marine Turtle Strandings Response Team, the Hawaiian Islands Large Whale Entanglement Response Network and Maui Nui's Marine Mammal Health and Strandings Response Team. She runs the statewide Hawaiian hawksbill photo-ID catalog that showcases research and recovery efforts for the critically endangered Hawaiian hawksbill sea turtle (one of the most endangered populations on the planet, that she has been working closely with since the year 2000): www.HIhawksbills.org. Cheryl is currently on the Board of Directors for the Hawai'i Association of Marine Education and Research, whose mission is to conduct sound research to better understand the health and status of our marine resources and how to conserve them: www.HAMERinHawaii.org. She appreciates the opportunity and looks forward to discussing the important topic of marine debris with the council to find solutions!