

# NOAA Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Case Study



## S/V Kikimo

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### Vessel Overview

**Name:** Kikimo  
**Incident:** Vessel grounding and abandonment  
**Date reported:** 4/1/2015  
**Vessel type:** Sailboat (Ketch)  
**Vessel ID#:** HA6950G  
**Hull material:** Ferro cement construction  
**Length:** 55 feet  
**Beam:** unknown  
**Tonnage:** unknown



### Vessel Location

**Location:** Moloaa Bay, Kauai (Hawaii)  
**Site Name(s):** Moloaa Bay, Kauai  
**General description of location:** The vessel ran aground on a secluded reef NE of the Island of Kauai in the vicinity of Moloaa Bay.  
**Average Site Depth:** <10 feet  
**Habitat/Substrate Type Impacted:** Coral reef habitat  
**Jurisdictions:** The State of Hawaii had jurisdiction over this vessel because it ran aground in state waters and was not considered a hazardous pollution threat by the U.S. Coast Guard.

### Incident Narrative

**History:** The owner of the 55 foot sailing vessel Kikimo, who had been moored illegally in the Keehi small boat harbor on Molokai for not paying the fees, was moving his vessel to another location around the middle of March in 2015, when he experienced difficulties with the vessels new rigging. After switching to the motor for propulsion he ended up running out of fuel a few miles east of Hale o Lono harbor on Molokai, which forced him to anchor the vessel. The owner left the vessel unattended for a few days before returning with fuel at which point he found that it had apparently broken free or dragged its anchor and was now adrift somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. It's believed that the vessel drifted for about a week before running aground on a secluded coral reef in the vicinity of Moloaa Bay, off the Island of Kauai. The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) was notified of the grounding and immediately conducted an initial assessment of the vessels condition and began working with the U.S. Coast Guard to remove all hazardous materials from the vessel and get it ready for removal. DLNR was forced to take custody of the vessel after unsuccessfully trying to contact the owner and determining that the vessel was uninsured.

After taking custody DLNR solicited bids for a marine salvage contractor to remove and dispose of the vessel, which was awarded to the lowest bid contractor, and started to proceed with the removal process. The initial plan for removal was to re-float the vessel and tow it to a nearby harbor, but after another inspection by the salvage contractor it was determined that the existing damage to the vessel was so severe that attempting to move it would most likely cause it to break apart on the reef. A new removal plan was quickly implemented that consisted of cutting the vessel into pieces on the reef



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then using a helicopter to transport the sections of vessel to a shore side location for transport and disposal. The vessel was successfully removed from the reef without any major problems or damage to the environment and properly disposed of.

**Lead agency or organization:** State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR)

**Other collaborators/stakeholders involved:** State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)

**Funding source(s):** Funding for the removal of this vessel was provided by the DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation Special Fund

### Threats from ADV

**Environmental:** The spread of marine debris, pollution from fuel and oil, and additional coral damage were the primary environmental threats identified.

**Critical habitats involved:** Coral reef habitat was the primary habitat impacted by the grounding.

**Public safety and health:** Grounding of the vessel caused serious damage to the vessel which resulted in marine debris washing ashore on the surrounding beaches that could have posed a safety risk.

**Aesthetic:** The vessel grounded just offshore on an isolated stretch of Kauai coastline that was within view of an upscale residential area.

### Vessel Removal Actions:

**Start date:** 4/15/2015

**End date:** 4/15/2015

**Authorities used to take Possession of Vessel:** Possession of the vessel was acquired under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) § 200-41, which addresses abandoned vessels on public and private property.

**Removal options considered:** The first option that was considered was to re-float the vessel and tow it into port, but due to the vessels condition this method was not feasible. The second option was to dismantle the vessel and remove it in pieces.

**Environmental Considerations:** Limiting damage to the live corals under the vessel and in the immediate area around the vessel during the removal process was a high priority.

**Permits Required:** No permits were required by the State.

**Removal Methods:** The removal methods that were used consisted of cutting the vessel apart on the reef and removing it in pieces to a shore side location for transport to a disposal facility.

**Salvage Contractor(s):** A marine salvage contractor was hired to remove and dispose of the vessel.

**Contractor Selection Process:** The contractor with the lowest bid was selected.

**Vessel Disposal Process/Issues:** None

**Approximate removal costs:** \$185,600

**Other cost information:** The cost of this removal project was extremely high due to the remote location and the removal methods that were necessary due to the damage sustained by the vessel during grounding, which required the use of specialized cutting tools and a helicopter.



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**Additional types of debris removed:** During the time the vessel was grounded on the reef debris was breaking free from the vessel. Local residents in the area were integral in finding and removing any marine debris that washed ashore prior to the vessel's removal.

**Vessel removal summary:** Because of the extensive damage to the hull of the vessel and the remote location where it came aground the removal methods chosen by the marine salvage contractor involved cutting the vessel apart on the reef where it was grounded and using a helicopter to air lift sections cut from the vessel to a shore side location where it could be loaded and transported to a disposal facility. The removal process was further complicated because the hull of the vessel was constructed out of ferro cement, which required the use of special cutting tools and equipment. No major problems were encountered during the removal process which was completed in a day.

### Project Challenges

**Environmental:** The vessel was grounded on a coral reef off the coast of Kauai making it susceptible to wave action and tidal fluctuations which could disrupt the vessel during the removal process and increase risks to the workers.

**Geographical:** The remote location of the abandoned vessel posed substantial challenges during the removal process and significantly increased the costs.

**Weather/Seasonal:** Weather did not present a problem during the removal.

**Funding:** Funding for the removal was provided by the State, but due to the remote location and the removal methods required the costs were much higher than anticipated, which reduces the funding available to remove other abandoned or derelict vessel in the state.

### Lessons Learned

Due to the high costs of this removal, which were covered by the state, it has become a priority to develop regulations that require vessel owners and operators to carry appropriate insurance coverage. Currently, Hawaii DLNR requires all vessels housed in its facilities to be covered by a \$500k insurance policy; however, trailered boats and vessels coming from other locations are not yet required to carry vessel insurance.

### Contact Information

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