



# Climate Connections

Dependent upon their environment, early Hawaiians were great and careful observers of weather and climate. Understanding seasonal patterns of temperature, wind, and rainfall, linked with lunar cycles, helped Hawaiians know when to plant and harvest different crops, when and where to fish, and even where and how to build their homes.

In Hawaiian society, *kilo lani* were the seers who were able to predict the future by looking at the sky. Among their powers was the ability to look at the stars and moon, the atmosphere, the ocean, and what was happening on land and tie it all together.

*Kilo lani* and their students (*haumana*) were astute observers of the heavens and the weather, and over time built up personal storehouses of knowledge and experience about the connection between the two. They also relied on, and added to, the body of local weather knowledge that was passed on orally from generation to generation. Unlike the modern-day weather forecaster who can consult computers and satellite images, the *kilo lani* drew their knowledge from their surroundings and carried it in their heads.

Many Hawaiians were regional experts in the folklore and weather patterns of their home place. If you know someone who fishes a lot or farms or surfs, you probably know a modern-day regional weather expert. You may even be one yourself! Some people are good at observing weather patterns and knowing what those signs mean for weather conditions in the coming days.

Hawaiians have many names for the wind and rain, depending on characteristics such as temperature, how steady it is, where it comes from, and so forth. From ancient times, Hawaiians have given names to each variety of rain and wind that is particular to each part of the islands. If you live on Ukiu Street in Makawao, for example, you have personal experience with the cold, wet *ukiu* wind that is unique to Makawao.

Weather and water were important elements in the lives of early Hawaiians. This is reflected in the names of many places on the Hawaiian Islands. *Mauna Kea*, for example, means “white mountain.” It is named for the snow that often caps the summit, especially in winter. *Waikamoi*, the name of a stream that flows out of the rain forest on Haleakalā is interpreted by many people to mean, “water of the *mōi taro*.”

## For fun...

Hawaiian words often have more than one meaning.

- Look up *kilo lani* in the Hawaiian dictionary, as well as *kilo* and *lani* separately. What different possible meanings of *kilo lani* can you come up with using the definitions offered in the dictionary?
- Talk to your parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles to find out how they define *kilo lani*.
- What words have similar meanings in the English language?

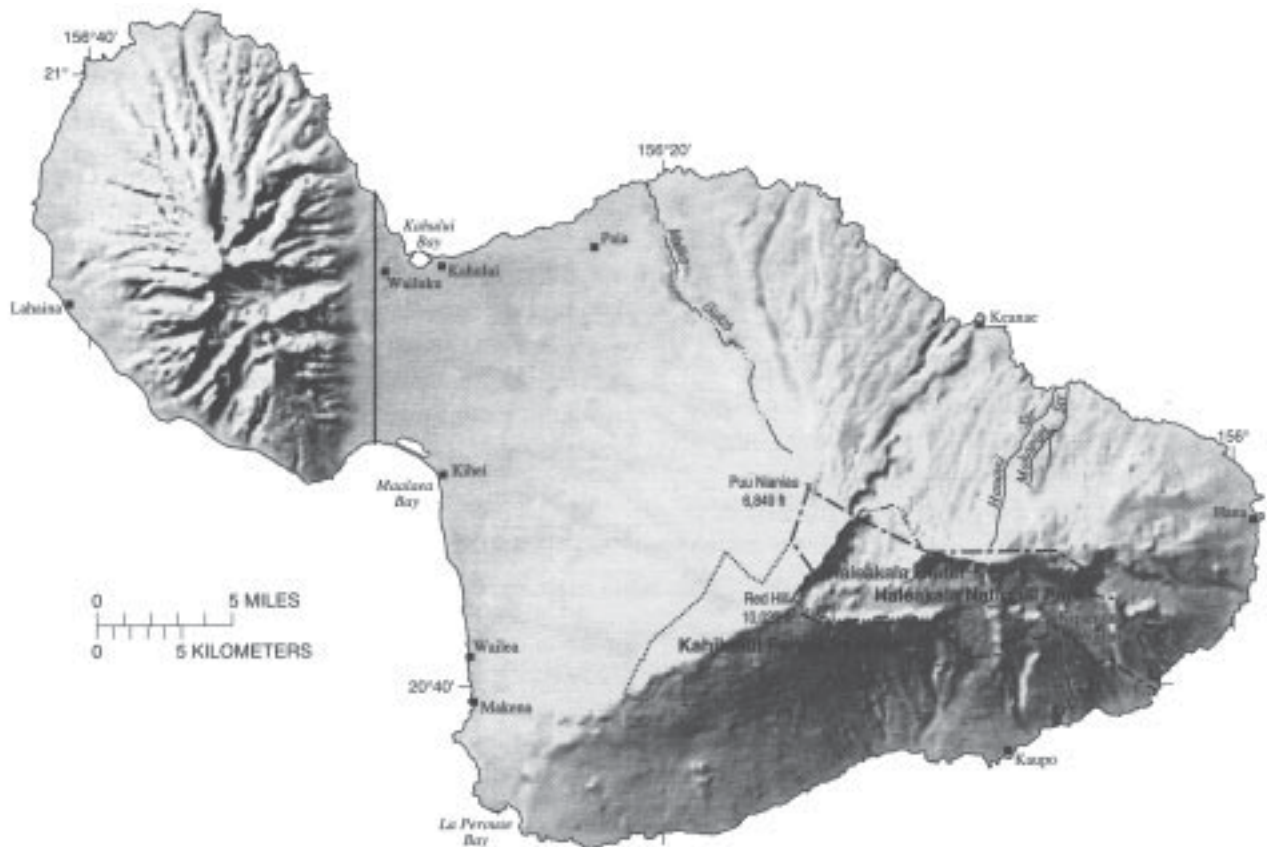


In order to answer some of the questions below, you will need a map of Maui or Haleakalā National Park and a Hawaiian dictionary.

- 1) Using a map of Maui or Haleakalā National Park, find at least one place that is named for water or something associated with weather such as wind or clouds. You can use the Hawaiian dictionary to help you. Your school library may have helpful books such as:
  - Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1974, and
  - Kert, Harold Winfield, *Treasury of Hawaiian Words in One Hundred and One Categories*, Honolulu, Masonic Public Library of Hawai‘i, 1986.

What is the name of the place? What does it mean?

- 2) On this map of Maui, place a dot where this place is located. Does the name of the place seem to tell you anything about that part of Maui? If so, what?



Shade, P. J., Water Budget of East Maui, Hawaii, U.S. Geological Survey, Honolulu, 1999.



- 3) Think of a place that you are familiar with or that is near where you live. Write a paragraph, poem, or chant describing the rain that typically falls there. Include how hard the rain is, what direction it usually comes from, the time of day it generally falls, its temperature, or other characteristics that help to identify it. In your writing, incorporate at least one rain name in Hawaiian from the glossary below or another source.

## Hawaiian Rain Names

*'awa* — Fine rain or mist

*'awa'awa* — Fine, misty rain that frequently can be cold

*hau* — Snow, ice, frost

*he ua lanipali* — Shower reaching to heaven, i.e., a very heavy shower

*ho'okili* — Fine, gentle rain, a form much beloved

*ililani* — Unexpected rain; rain from a seemingly clear sky

*kahakiki* — To pour down violently with a roar, as rain or rushing water

*kēhau* — Mist; cold, fine rain floating in the air, usually in the mountains

*kēwai* — Mist merging with rain some distance off

*kili* — Fine, light rain; peal of thunder; raindrops

*kili hau* — To fall gently, as a cold, soft shower; to stop falling and fade away, as rain at the end of a shower

*ki'o wao* — Cool, mountain rain accompanied by wind and fog

*ko'iawe* — Light moving shower

*koko* — Falling rain with light looking reddish as it shines through

*lihau* — Gentle, cool rain believed to bring luck to fishermen

*ma'au* — Rain in the upland forest; rain forest

*nākikiki'i* — Slanting rain

*nāulu* — Sudden shower of fine rain without seeming benefit of cloud or clouds

*noe* — Mist or fine rain, spray or fog; to sprinkle a little, as fine rain; to be damp, as fog; to rain, yet be scarcely discernible

*pākakū* — Rain falling in large drops

*pakapaka* — Heavy shower of large rain drops; spattering noise that such drops make on a hollow or dry substance, as on dry leaves

*pāki'o* — Showery rain

*pāki'oki'o* — Showery rain; to rain in short showers and often

*pīpinoke* — To rain continuously

*pulepe, pulu pē* — To rain heavily; to be drenched

*ua 'awa* — Chilly rain, cold and bitter

*ua hānai* — Rain that nurtures the earth

*ua hō'okina* — Continuous rainfall

*ua lanipili* — Several-days downpour; heavy rain, cloudburst

*ua poko* — Short rain

*ua po'o nui* — Light, steady rain (literally, big-head rain)

— *Kert, Harold Winfield, Treasury of Hawaiian Words in One Hundred and One Categories, Honolulu, Masonic Public Library of Hawai'i, 1986, pp. 380-382.*

