



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

News Release

For Immediate Release: March 9, 2022

COUNTY OF KAUA'I
KAUA'I POLICE DEPARTMENT
TODD G. RAYBUCK, CHIEF
(808) 241-1600

Search suspended for New Jersey man who went missing in waters off Lumaha'i

LUMAHA'I – The active search for 25-year-old Matthew Preziose of New Jersey, who went missing Saturday in waters off Lumaha'i, has been suspended pending any new information.

Rescuers were dispatched around 1 p.m. on Saturday, after Kaua'i Police Department (KPD) Dispatch received a report that two swimmers were in distress in waters off Lumaha'i Beach, near Lumaha'i River. Bystanders reported that one swimmer made it safely to shore while the second swimmer, Preziose, was last seen being swept out to sea.

Lifeguards with the North Roving Patrol Unit, Hanalei firefighters, Rescue 3 aboard Air 1, East Roving Patrol lifeguards on Jet Ski, and the on-duty Battalion Chief responded to the scene and began an extensive search for the missing man – focusing from the reefs off Hā'ena point to Hanalei Bay, with an emphasis on the Lumaha'i Beach area. Officials from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) also joined the search, utilizing their water and air assets.

The search resumed Sunday morning and was led by KPD, KFD and the USCG, with assistance from lifeguards and firefighters on Jet Ski, Rescue 3 aboard Air 1, assets from the state Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), along with air and water assets from the USCG.

KPD, KFD and USCG personnel continued to lead search efforts by land, sea and air on Monday, which included scuba divers, Ocean Safety Bureau, Hawai'i DLNR and Rescue 3 aboard Air 1.

The active search was suspended on Tuesday afternoon.

“I am sincerely grateful to all of the agencies and individuals who assisted in this operation. It is never easy conducting extensive search operations for missing swimmers during the winter season with dangerous surf conditions and strong currents, especially on Kaua‘i’s North Shore. This was an incredible effort, and we are appreciative of everyone who was involved,” said KPD’s Investigative Services Bureau Assistant Chief Bryson Ponce. “But most importantly, our hearts go out to Matthew’s family and friends during this difficult time. We also are humbled and grateful to a close friend of Matthew’s and a few of Matthew’s family members who flew to the island to observe the operation efforts conducted by the respective agencies’ search teams. We thank them for their kindness and thoughtful expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the team effort in attempting to locate Matthew.”



Photos of search efforts courtesy of KPD.

###