




The clean, clear waters of Manini'owali/Kua Bay.

off to the right (north) is interesting not for its coral, but for the underwater relief. **Boogie boarding** is excellent during moderate surf, but the waves can be strong and deserve respect. There is sand here most of the time, but it is most abundant during the summer months. During the winter, high surf sometimes shifts the sand offshore for a time, leaving the area rocky and undesirable. Many residents consider this one of the best swimming beaches near Kona when calm, and on weekends they sometimes make their presence known. Crowds are less common during the week. From Hwy 19 take the paved access road between the 88 and 89 mile markers. Open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., **closed Wednesdays**. Note that the waves here have a lot of power, so if the surf's up, don't go in. No shade *at the beach*, but restrooms and shaded picnic tables are available behind it.

❖ Makalawena

 To many, this is the choicest beach on the island...if you don't mind walking to it. In fact, Makalawena is as idyllic a beach as you will find anywhere in the islands. Gobs of superfine, clean white sand, plentiful shade and no crowds. The setting is utterly beautiful. Consisting of a

number of coves and rocky points united by a long, curving stretch of beach, the best swimming is in the largest inlet backed by high sand dunes. **Boogie boarding** can be great here. There's a freshwater pond (see map on previous page) where we like to rinse off the salt-water before walking back. A herd of wild goats visits this area often, so keep an eye out for them.

Backed by private (Bishop Estate) land, you get there over the trail from the red houses behind Mahai'ula Beach (about a 20-minute walk). It's a lava trail through an 'a'a field, and the footing is fairly annoying. As you walk this trail, try to imagine how ridiculously difficult it would be to walk through the field itself without the trail. Then imagine doing it *barefoot*, as the ancient Hawaiians did. As you approach Makalawena from the Kekaha Kai side, the 'a'a trail suddenly gives way to sand dunes. But if you climb the dunes to the left, rather than finding ocean, you find more 'a'a, indicating that this had been shoreline until a lava flow of 'a'a came along and added more real estate, cutting off the dunes from the sea.

If you have a 4WD (and your fillings are tight), you can take the nasty and intimidating road from the highway between the 88 and 89 mile marker. Locals do in their

stock pick-ups and JEEPS all the time without even blinking, but readers constantly write to us saying it's impassable in their rental JEEPS. It'll take you just north of the beach before a gate forces you to walk like the rest of us dogs. By the way, because it's so isolated, people sometimes travel light to this beach, omitting such extraneous things as their bathing suits. (Yeah, *that* must be the reason.)

❖ Kekaha Kai State Park; Also Mahai'ula/Ka'elehuluhulu



A REAL GEM

This beach is outside of Kona town and pretty. It's usually not too crowded. **Mahai'ula Beach** (which you access after a 5-minute walk to the north from the first parking area) offers good swimming and interesting strolling. Just around the southern corner is a pocket of sand called **Ka'elehuluhulu Beach** (park at the second parking area at end of the lava road), not as good as the northern beach. The entire area was once owned by a promi-

nent part-Hawaiian family called the Magoons. They sold the land to a Japanese investor who had visions of a resort. When the state refused permission, the investor sold it to the state, which turned it into a park. The abandoned Magoon house is still located at the northern end of Mahai'ula Beach. This area abounds with freshwater springs that bubble to the surface, occasionally forming ponds. At the farthest northern part of the beach near some palm trees and a rock wall, you may see strange indentations in the sand at low tide. Here, freshwater gurgles right out of the sand and into the ocean. The snorkeling is only fair because the water can be a bit cloudy, especially during spring, and wild goats are common here. This is a good beach to get away from it all, yet still have fairly easy access. There's plenty of shade at the backshore. Access is via a bumpy, but *usually* driveable, semi-paved 1½-mile road halfway between the 90 and 91 mile markers on Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway north of



Isolated and unknown, Makalawena is one of the finest beaches on the island. Access requires a 15–20 minute walk or a 4WD.