

# Researchers: Polynesians got to California

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Two scientists say they have found proof that Polynesians sailed to Southern California, sharing boat-building techniques with Native Americans.

Katherine Klar of the University of California at Berkeley and Terry Jones of Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo compared words used by the Chumash tribe in southern California and the Hawaiians, the San Francisco Chronicle reports. The Chumash and the neighboring Gabrielino were the only North American groups to make boats from hand-sewn planks, a technique used by all Polynesians.

Klar and Jones argue that the Chumash word for hand-sewn canoe, tomolo'o, is essentially the same word as the Hawaiian one for "useful tree" or redwood, kumulaa'au. Polynesians used redwood logs that had drifted across the Pacific from North America to build their boats.

In recent years, anthropologists have believed that the Polynesians could not have visited California because the winds and currents would have been against them.

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