

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA



For Immediate Release

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Monument Agencies Release Papahānaumokuākea Management Plan

HONOLULU, HI – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the state of Hawai'i today released the completed management plan and associated environmental assessments for Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, the nation's largest marine protected area. Developed with extensive public input, the comprehensive plan will guide the monument's resource protection and conservation efforts during the next 15 years.

"When President Bush first designated the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in June 2006, his goal was to move beyond just thinking about conservation to carefully managing this important area," said James L. Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "Through a lot of hard work, creative thought, and cooperation, state and federal agencies succeeded in turning the President's vision into sound management."

Developed in collaboration with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the plan is a multi-agency blueprint that addresses a range of monument resource conservation, interpretation and human use issues. It also describes actions that will be taken to:

- increase understanding of cultural, historic and biological resources in the monument
- protect, conserve and, where feasible, restore wildlife and their habitats in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
- reduce threats to monument resources such as alien species, marine debris and vessel groundings
- establish a "Monument Alliance" advisory group to obtain individual public input on issues affecting the monument
- maintain a permit and evaluation program to manage human uses allowed by the Presidential Proclamation that established the monument
- increase understanding and appreciation of Native Hawaiian histories and cultural practices in the NWHI and actively engage the Native Hawaiian community in monument management
- establish a visitor services program at Midway Atoll to allow opportunities for the public to visit this national treasure
- coordinate operations across seven management agencies in the field and in Honolulu to increase efficiency and collaborations

"Over the past four months, we have been reviewing and carefully considering the more than 6,400 comments we received on the draft plan," said Susan White, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service superintendent for the monument. "We truly appreciate the valuable information and suggestions provided by the public."



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The co-trustees will carry out the plan, and the final regulations published in August 2006, with the larger vision of forever protecting and perpetuating ecosystem health and diversity and Native Hawaiian cultural significance of Papahānaumokuākea.

"This management plan is the result of years of planning and development, public participation and involvement at many levels, and a commitment to effective management," said 'Aulani Wilhelm, NOAA superintendent for the monument. "We look forward to implementing the important and innovative activities outlined in this plan to protect the monument's incredible and diverse natural, cultural and historic resources."

"This plan represents a federal-state partnership that details how the monument management agencies will cooperatively conserve and protect the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands," said Athline Clark, monument superintendent for the state of Hawai'i. "It will also help to facilitate and enhance cultural connections."

The draft management plan was released in April 2008 and was followed by a 90-day public review period during which ten public meetings were held in Hawai'i and Washington, D.C. Summarized comments on the draft plan and agency responses to those comments are included as a volume of the plan released today.

The five-volume plan will be available at all Hawai'i public libraries and on the Monument website at <http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov>. A limited number of copies on compact disk or in printed form will be available at NOAA's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument office by emailing Keeley.Belva@noaa.gov or calling 808-694-3939.

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is administered jointly by three co-trustees – the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior and the State of Hawai'i – and represents a cooperative conservation approach to protecting the entire ecosystem. Co-trustee agencies in cooperation with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs manage the monument through the Monument Management Board. The Monument area includes the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge/Battle of Midway National Memorial, Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Kure Atoll Seabird Sanctuary, and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands State Marine Refuge. For more information, please go to www.papahanaumokuakea.gov.

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