

THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY PROGRAM PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

The National Marine Sanctuary Program

The United States consists of thirteen individual sites, from Stellwagen Banks in New England to Fagatele Bay in American Samoa. A fourteenth site in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands will complete the design. In process by 2008.

The program forms a network comprising fourteen distinct marine "hotspots" sites, ranging in size from 28 square nautical miles (Fagatele Bay) to over 99,000 sq. nautical miles (Northwestern Hawaiian Islands). Several sites have active indigenous cultures and programs, including Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary with the four Native American tribes that live along the Western State of Washington coastline—and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary's Chumash tribe.

The three sanctuary sites in the Pacific Island Region (Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale, Fagatele Bay and the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands) manage through marine education and research, particularly as they relate to humpback whales and coral reefs. They also focus on awareness of the unique Polynesian culture of the South Pacific.

The three sites of the Pacific Islands Region work with our native cultures to ensure the programs we deliver to protect our marine environment such as educational, and enforcement are conducted in an appropriate manner.

Additionally, native cultural and archiving rights have often been mandated by either Congressional designation language, State partnership agreements or in sanctuary final management plans. This makes for a unique examination of the new US Federal government overlays marine protection with a way of life that has used the oceans for commerce, recreation and subsistence for thousands of years. Each Pacific Island Region site has at least one native Hawaiian cultural expert on the advisory council. These council members provide advice, guidance, and ensure that native indigenous issues are fully reflected in various discussions or planning scenarios.



Greenland Shark, Fagatele Bay, Photo: NOAA NMSP



Community Meeting, Fagatele Bay, Photo: NOAA NMSP

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary

<http://fagatelebay.noaa.gov>



Children on Beach, Photo: NOAA NMSP

Created in 1982, Fagatele Bay is the smallest site in the National Marine Sanctuary system, yet embodies some of the finest biological and cultural components of any sanctuary site. The Sanctuary is co-managed by the Territory of American Samoa, and lies completely within Territorial marine waters. The Samoan culture dominates the island life and various "traditions" fishing and collecting methods are permitted within the Sanctuary. Prohibited traditional practices include spear fishing (which has been considered "traditional" long before the Sanctuary was designated) and poison fishing (partly extinct). The taking of invertebrates is prohibited. A cultural inventory for customary or cultural uses of the study may be one of the first steps for the sanctuary site, and a recent archeological study detailed an abandoned village site adjacent to the bay.

Education programs and materials, NOAA coloring books, parent/ classroom programs, summer camps. As much as possible, materials are produced bilingually (English and Samoan).

The Fagatele Bay NMS is currently undergoing a management plan review, which will address many issues including habitat rehabilitation for wetland and an added enforcement presence.



Community Meeting, Fagatele Bay, Photo: NOAA NMSP



Children on Beach, Fagatele Bay, Photo: NOAA NMSP

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

<http://www.hawaiiireef.noaa.gov>

Native Hawaiians are intimately connected to the entire Hawaiian Archipelago on genealogical, cultural and spiritual levels. Considered ancestors of the Native Hawaiian people, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are celebrated in traditional songs, chants, and stories. These traditions remind us of the time honored value of *Aloha* (responsibility) for care for this unique, fragile place and its many resources through strong conservation and protection principles.

In 2000, the creation of the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve by then President Clinton (Executive Orders 13178 and 13198) set a standard for recognition and the ability of Native Hawaiians in determining the future management of the NWHI. The executive orders, coupled with the sanctuary program's mandate to protect both biological and cultural resources have led the Reserve to work to include Native Hawaiian perspectives in management of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. In continuing this work, the proposed national marine sanctuary in the NWHI may have the largest and strongest indigenous presence of any national marine sanctuary in the region.

One of the Reserve's major activities has been preparing a draft management plan for the proposed national marine sanctuary in the NWHI. Several Native Hawaiian concerns will be addressed in the plan, including cultural resource education and outreach, cultural access to the NWHI, and Native Hawaiian community involvement in management. Steps of the Reserve's current activities are described below.

Native Hawaiian Community Involvement
One of the ways Native Hawaiians are involved is through the Reserve Advisory Council (RAC). Three Native Hawaiians, including one *Aloha* (guardian), sit on the Reserve's Advisory Council. The RAC's Native Hawaiian members and Native Hawaiian working group have been active in developing the Reserve Operations Plan as well as criteria and protocols for cultural access to the NWHI.

The Reserve has also sought input from the broader Native Hawaiian community through workshops with *Aloha* and other cultural experts. In August 2004, the Kamehameha Center for Hawaiian Studies held a two-day workshop to discuss Native Hawaiian issues and concerns about the NWHI. In addition, the Reserve has also participated in a number of conferences sponsored for the Native Hawaiian community including the Annual Native Hawaiian Conference and the Native Hawaiian Education/Recreation Conference. In these forums, the Reserve is able to continue developing partnerships with organizations and institutions serving the Native Hawaiian community.



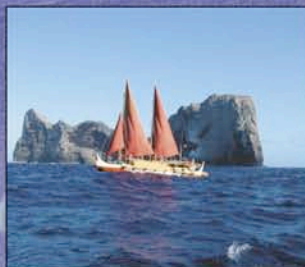
Small Figurines, Fagatele Bay, Photo: NOAA NMSP

Of the islands and surrounding waters for approximately 700 years. In recent years, Native Hawaiians have returned to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to perform ceremonies and reconnect culturally with the place. The Reserve has been active in facilitating access for such Native Hawaiian practices which are characterized by a familial relationship of respect in which Native Hawaiians honor a creature for and eat from the island and the sea. The Reserve has partnered with the Polynesian Voyaging Society and aims to sail the traditional voyaging canoe, *Hokule'a* to the NWHI.

Understanding and Interpreting the NWHI
The Reserve is also worked to increase understanding of Native Hawaiian histories and cultural practices related to the NWHI as well as Native Hawaiian traditional ecological knowledge and management. Through the Reserve's partnership with the Kamehameha Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, researchers have brought together cultural information on the NWHI, including archival data and oral histories. The Center has also developed a University-level course on the NWHI and an informational video that portrays the NWHI from an indigenous perspective.

At the Reserve's Mokapu Point Discovery Center for Hawaii's Remote Communities, an interpretive program in both English and Old Hawaiian (the Hawaiian language). Native Hawaiian values and histories are integrated into the displays, and the Reserve works to recruit Hawaiian-speaking volunteers to act as docents.

The *Aloha* Change educational program, which includes classroom outreach and docent, utilizes Native Hawaiian voyaging traditions and cultural values to engage students and the public in learning about and caring for the NWHI as well as the main Hawaiian Islands. Native Hawaiian culture and history lessons have participated in the Reserve's research and education similar to the NWHI. Cultural lessons learned to students in the main Hawaiian Islands. Additionally, the Reserve helped in sponsoring trips by the *Hokule'a*, the traditional double-hulled voyaging canoe, to the NWHI and associated outreach efforts.



Hokule'a, Photo: NOAA NMSP

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

<http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>



Humpback Whale, Photo: NOAA NMSP

In 1992, the U.S. Congress designated the HWHNMS around the main Hawaiian Islands (including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands). In 1997, the State of Hawaii approved state waters to be added to the sanctuary's boundaries. This sanctuary is unique in that it is the only national marine sanctuary dedicated solely to the protection of a single species, the humpback whale.



Community Meeting, Photo: NOAA NMSP

The US Congress designation of the HWHNMS included language to mandate NOAA to "facilitate uses of Hawaiian native customary and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes consistent with the primary objective of the protection of humpback whales and their habitat."

HWHNMS works to increase awareness and understanding of Native Hawaiian traditions, values, and practices related to ocean use and conservation. In 1997, HWHNMS hired a cultural resource and education specialist to investigate the cultural significance of whales in Hawaii. *The Mystery of the Kanaka (Humpback Whales)* - It unknown whether humpback whales maintained a similar presence in Hawaii during ancient times as they do today. Within Hawaii's oral and written history there is limited evidence in the form of petroglyphs, legends, place names, and artifacts indicating ancient Hawaiians were aware of the presence of the *Kohola*. However, because there is such limited evidence that has been found some believe that the humpback whale is a more recent migrant to the islands occurring only within the past two centuries. Humpback whales are not known to have been hunted or eaten by Native Hawaiians. Today, HWHNMS is fostering a strong partnership with *Aloha O Maui* (The Fishpond Association of Maui) to help restore and rehabilitate one of the largest remaining native Hawaiian fishponds on Maui. (<http://www.mauifishpond.com>) This fishpond is located in front of the Maui Sanctuary office and affords an excellent integration of Native Hawaiian education with the NMSP's outreach effort.



Community Meeting, Photo: NOAA NMSP

With the current renaissance of the Native Hawaiian language and culture it is appropriate for the HWHNMS to embrace the knowledge provided by early Hawaiians who developed a way of life closely connected to Hawaii's ocean environment. The HWHNMS works to affirm these unique ocean based traditions and beliefs of Hawaiian culture by supporting education and outreach initiatives that promote an ocean stewardship message for Hawaii's humpback whales and marine environment.

Pacific Islands Region

The Pacific Islands Region (PIR) will be hosting a native Hawaiian cultural workshop next year (2006) which will call together leaders, educators and others in the Native Hawaiian community to begin to discuss what the intent of the federal cultural language means and how do we move forward from this point towards education, research and implementation of cultural management strategies.

The FIR is poised to lead the NMSP in cultural awareness. In the case both Hawaii and American Samoa have federal NFA programs that overlay an existing and of times forgotten indigenous system of protecting and utilizing the marine environment. Research and the development of programs for marine awareness, opportunity and care, are a major goal of the FIR. Research initiatives also in the NMSP does this research and possibility of partnering between a federal, state and indigenous culture exist. The FIR intend to seek the over time years to make cultural programs a priority in funding and implementation.

In conclusion, the Islands of the Pacific are linked by a vastity of cultural and biological processes. No matter what current political frag our islands carry, underneath we are all island people and cultures that have existed for centuries and form complex relationships with the ocean.

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Community Meeting, Photo: NOAA NMSP



Community Meeting, Photo: NOAA NMSP