

Grounded and Abandoned Vessels
Ocean Studies Board
Corvallis, Oregon

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Abandoned Vessel Challenges

- **Legal**
 - Admiralty Law
 - Abandonment
- **Technical**
 - Engineering Feasibility
 - Disposal
- **Scientific**
 - Fate and effects
 - Recovery
- **Bureaucratic**
 - Agency roles and authorities
- **Financial**
 - Costs



Presentation Outline

- **Terminology**
- **Background**
- **Scope of Problem**
- **Threats**
- **Agency roles**
- **Legal authorities**
- **Case histories**
- **Research Needs**



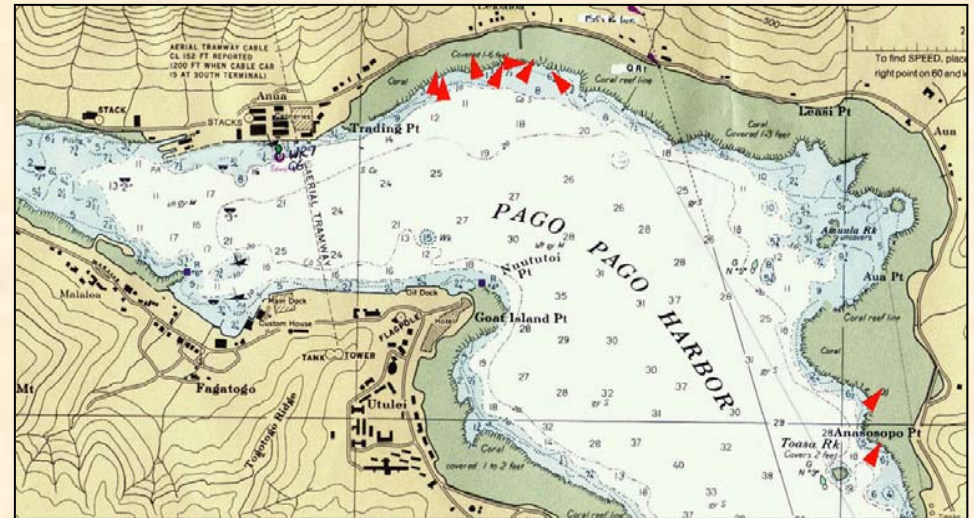
Terminology

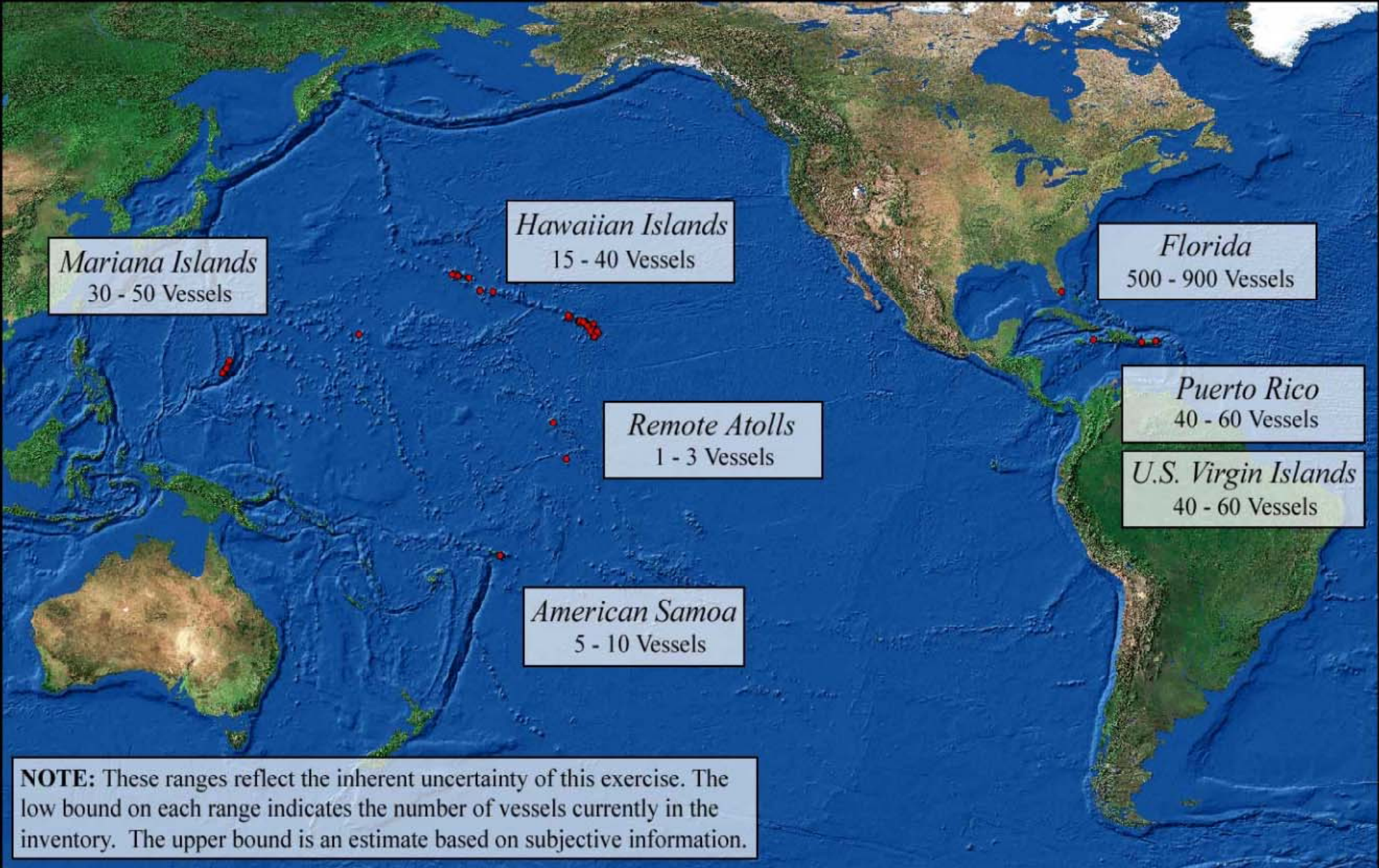
- **Salvage**
 - When a vessel or cargo has residual value.
 - Removal incentive
 - No cure no pay
- **Wreck Removal**
 - When vessel or debris has no significant value.
 - Contract removal
- **Abandonment**



Background

- **Pago Pago Longliner removal Project: 1999**
- **US Coral Reef Task Force Funding**
- **Database of abandoned vessels affecting corals**
- **Legal review**
- **White Paper**



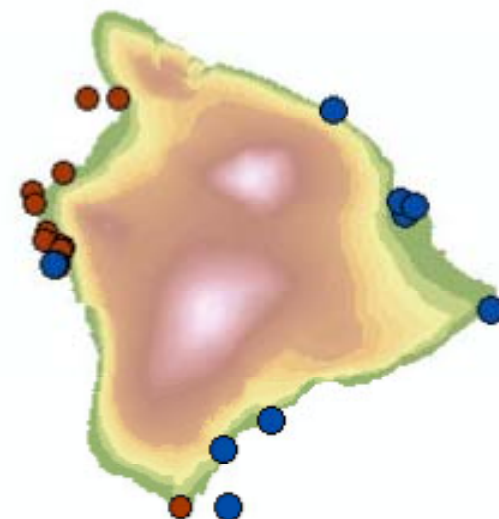
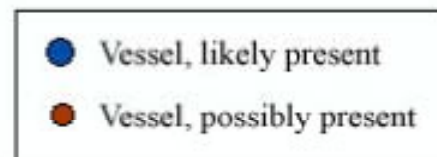
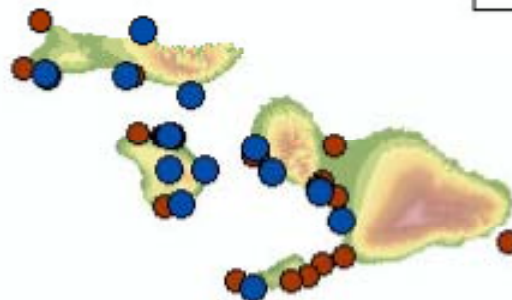
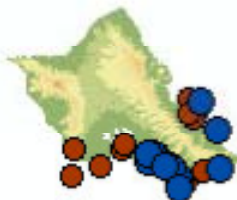


Abandoned Vessel Inventory: Overview of Contents



Abandoned Vessel Program
NOAA - Damage Assessment Center
June, 2002

Doug Helton, (206) 526-4563 / Andy Smith (206) 526-4599



Abandoned Vessel Inventory

Overview of Vessels in the Main Hawaiian Islands

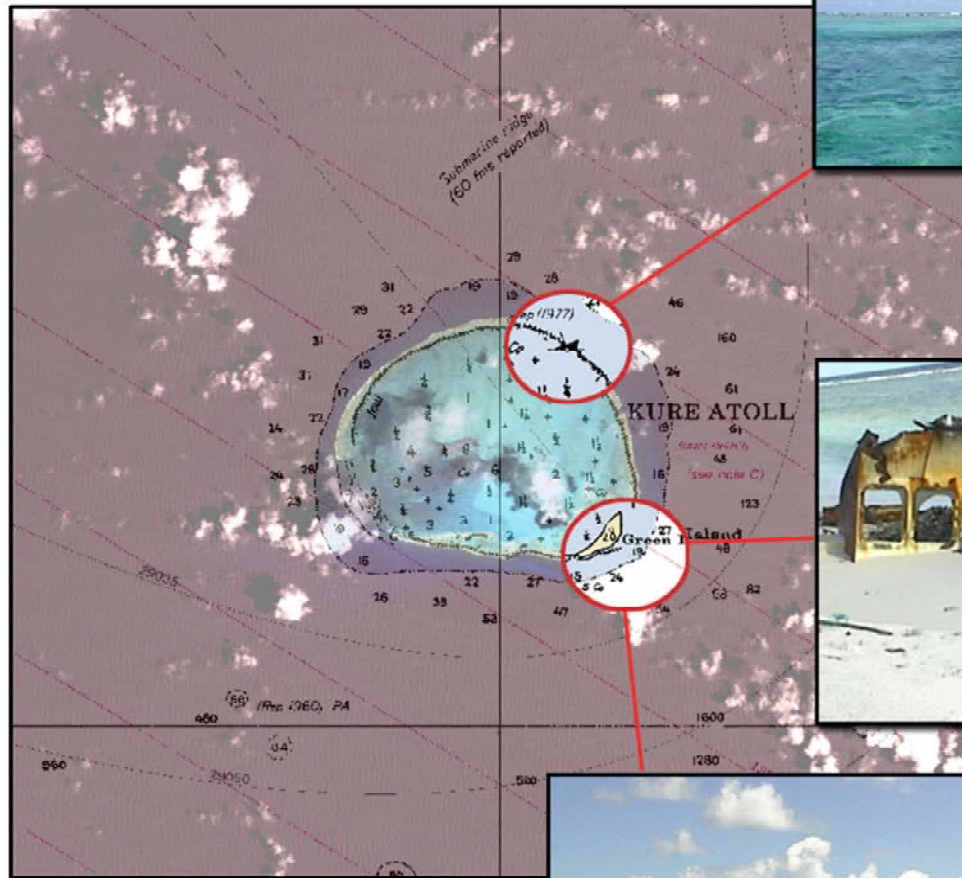


Abandoned Vessel Inventory
NOAA - Damage Assessment Center
December, 2001

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Kure Atoll

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands



Unknown Vessel
reported in 1977,
hull piece still on reef



Paradise Queen II
ran aground in October, 1998,
hull pieces and gear scattered
on reef and shore

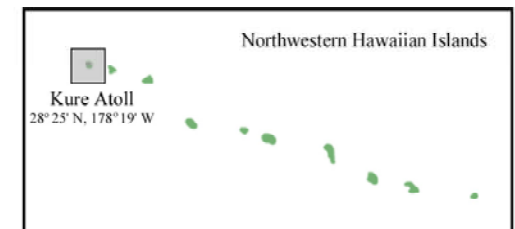


Abandoned Vessel Program
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Image credits

Center map: LANDSAT 7 image (courtesy of NOAA Sanctuaries) overlaid with NOAA Chart 19480, 7th ed.
Unknown Vessel: Photo taken by David Canny, used with permission of NOS, NMFS, USFWS, and Hawaii's DLNR
Paradise Queen II: NOWRAMP Expedition 2000 and Bernice P. Bishop Museum



Database prioritization

- **Vessel survey**
- **Habitat characterization of each site**
- **Remote sensing**
- **Coral mapping**
- **ESI mapping**





**Abandoned Vessel Inventory
Culebra Island, Puerto Rico
June 2002**

Threat from abandoned vessels

- **Physical destruction**
- **Wildlife entrapment**
- **Threat of oil spills and other pollutants**
- **Impediment to navigation**
- **Illegal dump site**
- **Nutrient enrichment and invasive species**
- **Visual eyesore**
- **Human Health and Safety**



Physical destruction of habitat



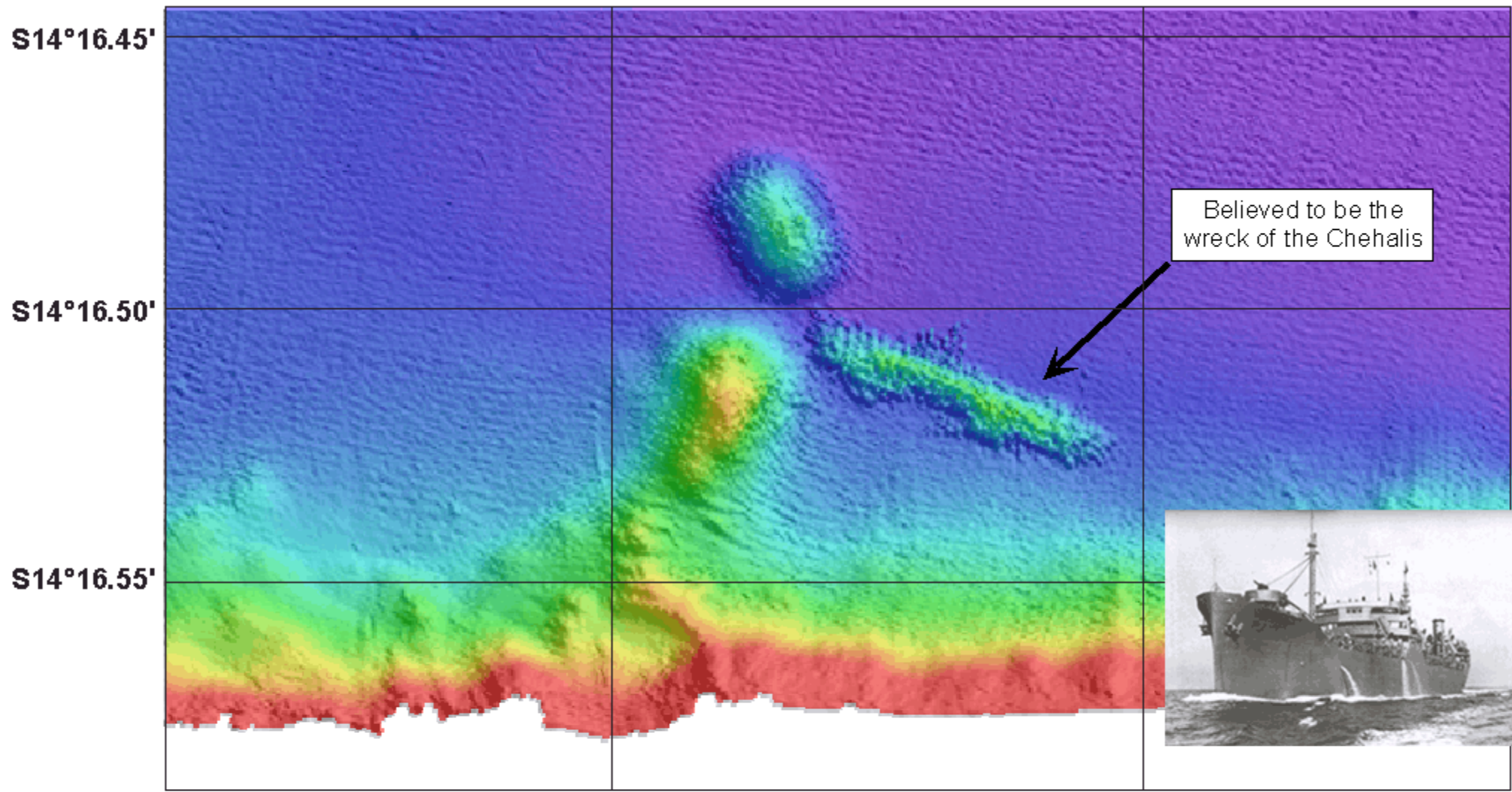
Wildlife Entrapment

- F/V Paradise Queen, Kure Atoll, NWHI
- Entrapment of endangered monk seals



Spills of oil and other pollutants

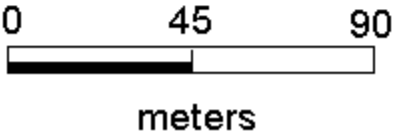




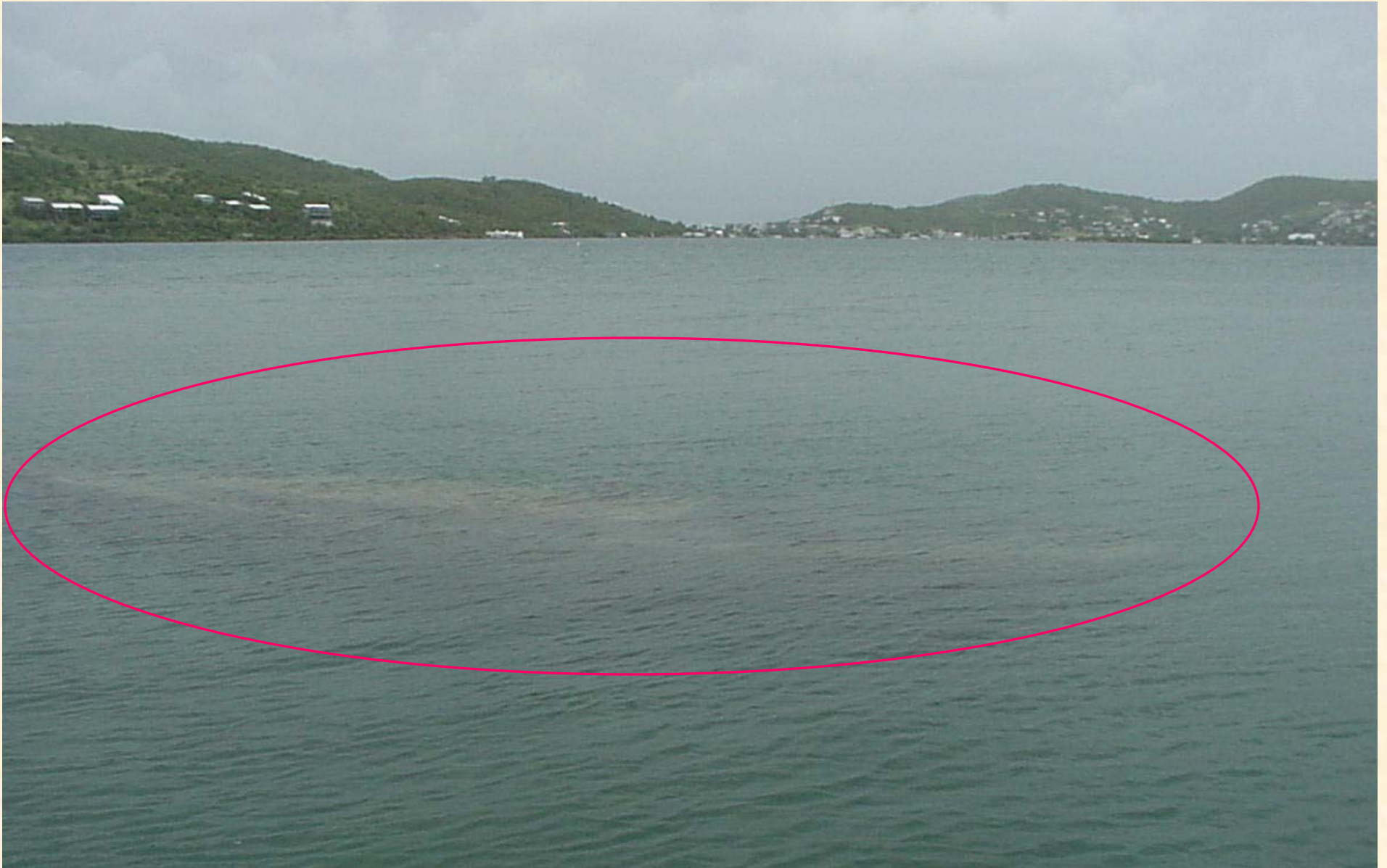
Believed to be the wreck of the Chehalis



Mean depth in Meters



Navigation Hazards



Illegal Dump Sites

- **M/V Kimton, Fajardo, Puerto Rico**
- **Vessel used for illegal dumping of waste oils and explosives**

- **Abandoned Barge, Louisiana. Potential dumping site**



Nutrient Enrichment and Invasive Species

- **M/V Milos Reefer, St. Mathews Island, AK**
- **Concern about introduced rodents**

- **F/V Jin Shiang Fa, Rose Atoll, Samoa**
- **Concern about iron enrichment**



Visual eyesore and loss of tourism

- **F/V Van Loi, Kauai**
- **Oil, debris, and fishing gear spread along hotel beach**



Human Health and Safety



Federal Agency Responsibilities

- **No single agency has clear authority and funding to address abandoned vessels in all circumstances**
- Coast Guard
- Army Corps of Engineers
- NOAA
- DOI
- EPA
- Navy



Federal Legal Authorities

- **Admiralty Law**
- **The Oil Pollution Act and Clean Water Act**
- **The National Marine Sanctuary Act**
- **The Rivers and Harbors Act**
- **Abandoned Barge Act of 1992**
- **The Abandoned Shipwreck Act**
- **Intervention on the High Seas Act**
- **The Park System Resource Protection Act**
- **The Endangered Species Act**

Admiralty Law

- Incidents involving vessels generally fall under admiralty law
- Historical focus on commerce and protection of shipowners rights rather than the environment



Admiralty Law (cont.)

- States cannot alter the “characteristic features” of admiralty law
- Sunken, grounded vessels assumed not abandoned by owner
- Liability not strict, based on fault



Case Histories



- Jin Shiang Fa
- Swordman I
- S/V Karma

F/V Jin Shiang Fa

- American Samoa: Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, October 1993
- 100,000 gallons diesel spilled; Salvage effort ceased after insurance ceiling reached
- Vessel broke apart spreading debris over 175,000 m² of reef and causing chronic reef impacts



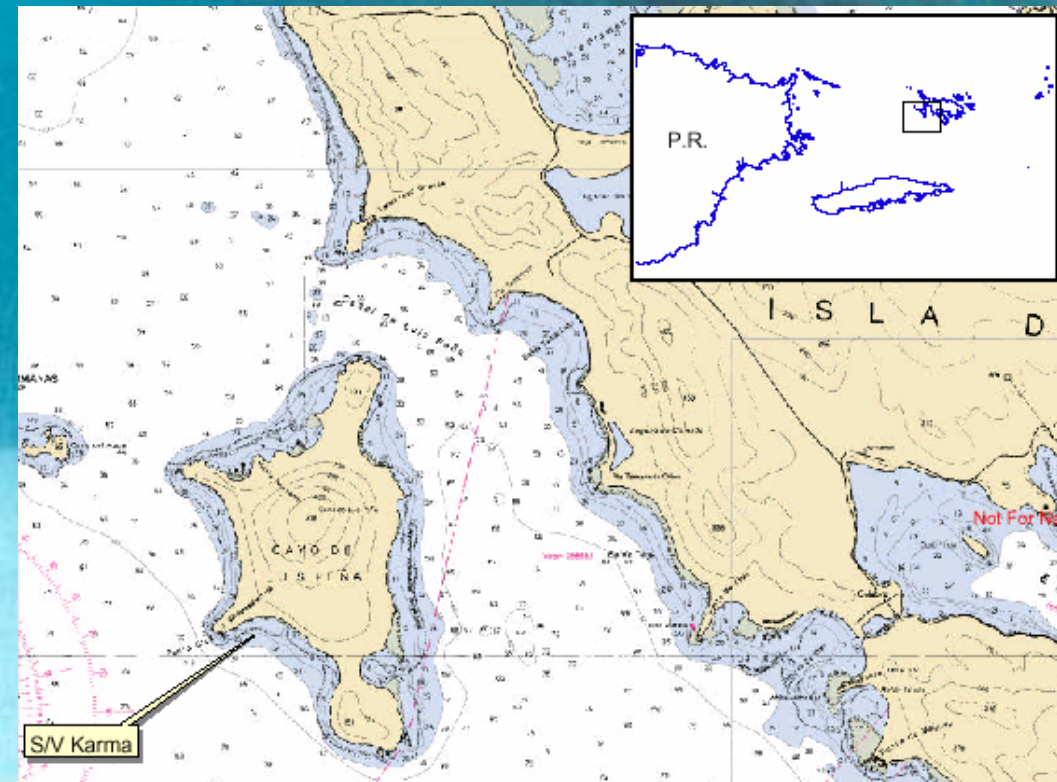
F/V Swordman I



- Pearl and Hermes Reef, NWHI
- June 5, 2000
- 10,000 gallons of diesel, 70 miles of longline gear
- Removed and scuttled in 6,000 feet of water
- Response covered by OPA trust fund

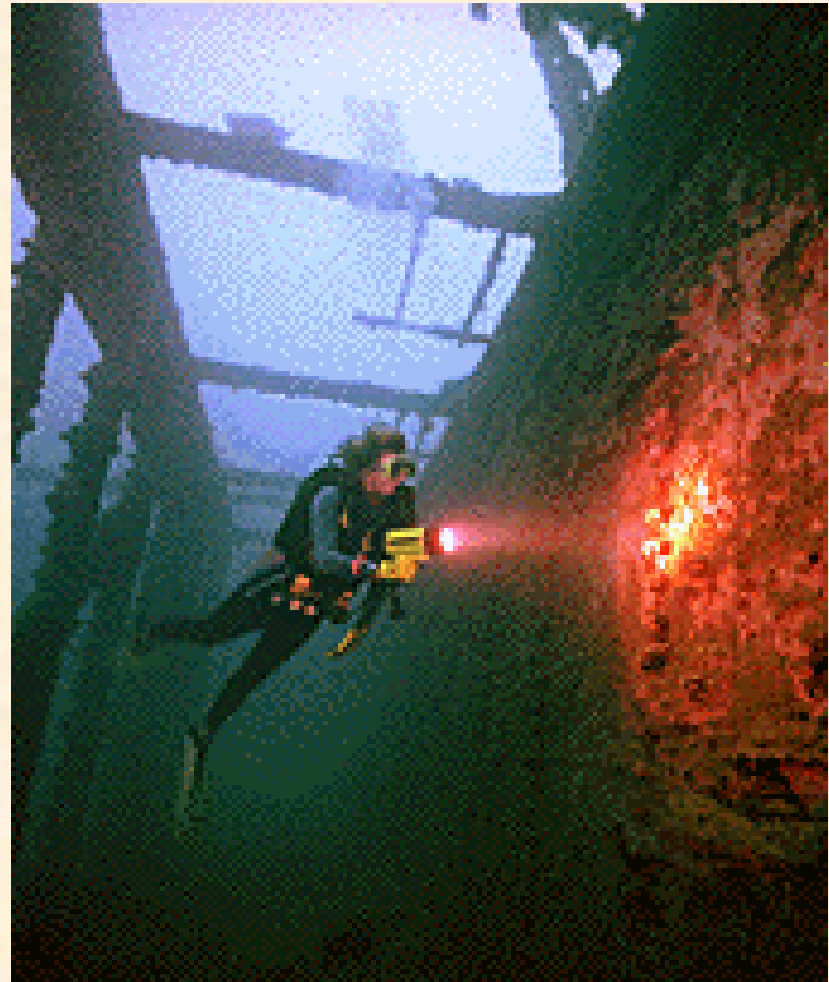
S/V Karma

- Fajardo, Puerto Rico, Summer 2000
- Intentionally scuttled w/o permits to create an “eco-tourism” venue
- Seagrass and coral habitats at risk
- Vessel remains
 - no pollution threat
 - no threat to navigation
 - abandoned?



Potential Solutions

- Increase Prevention Measures
- Increase removal and restoration authorities, create liability disincentives, and dedicated funding
- Seek funding to remove high risk vessels



Research Needs

- Broader understanding of the scope of problem and vessel locations
- Fuel and Cargo impacts
- Nutrient Enrichment
- Fate and longevity of sites
- Salvage technology
- Disposal and ship-breaking issues
- Historic values
- Habitat creation vs. pollution risks

