

# American Samoa

American Samoa is the southernmost of all U.S. territories, located approximately 2,610 miles south of Hawaii in the South Pacific. It is comprised of seven islands, five of which are inhabited: Tutuila, Aunuu, Ofu, Olosega, and Tau (11). Politically, American Samoa is divided into five districts (or U.S. Census Bureau county equivalents): Eastern District, Western District, Manua District, Swains Island, and Rose Island.

The Eastern and Western Districts are located on the island of Tutuila, which is also the territory's center of government and business. Manua District comprises the islands of Ofu, Olosega, and Tau. Rose Island (a coral atoll) is uninhabited, and Swains Island has a population of approximately 50 people (49). Due to the minimal population on Swain's Island, it is not included as part of this summary. The administrative boundaries of Eastern, Western, and Manua districts are shown in Figure 14.

The coral reef habitats around American Samoa are rich with hundreds of species of Indo-Pacific corals, fishes, and invertebrates (11). The extent of coral habitat surrounding the populated islands is summarized in Table 15 and illustrated in Figure 14.

Habitat Type	Tutuila	Ofu and Olosega	Tau	Total
<i>Depth Curves (sq km)</i>				
18 Meter Line	35.8	3.6	3.8	43.1
180 Meter Line	353.2	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Mapped Coral Habitat<sup>1</sup> (sq km)</i>				
Coral Reef Hardbottom	35.3	10.5	7.1	52.9
Submerged Vegetation	0.6	0.1	0	<1
Unconsolidated Sediment	8.1	2.3	0.3	10.7
Other Delineations	2.0	0.7	1.0	3.8

Table 15. Approximate area (square kilometers) of coral habitat surrounding American Samoa.

Source: Rohmann et al., 2005.

## Key Facts

66,447	Population (2008)
354	Population Density (2008) (persons per sq km)
185 (Tutuila only)	Number of residents per square kilometer of potential coral reef habitat within the 180 meter depth curve. (2008)
9,349	Households (2000)
10,052	Housing Units (2000)

## Population

In 2000, the population of American Samoa reached 57,291 people; in 2008 it is estimated to be 66,447 (35, 49). American Samoa's population is concentrated on the island of Tutuila in the Western District. The Western District is home to the capital of American Samoa, Pago Pago, with a population of 4,128. From 1970 to 2008, the population of American Samoa increased by almost 40,000. The majority of this increase occurred in the Western District, which grew by over 31,000 people (49).

By 2015, the population is expected to increase by just over 37,000 people, with most of this growth occurring in the Western District (estimated at 33,000 people) (49). Figure 15 presents this expected change by district.

In 2008, the population density averaged 354 persons per square kilometer. The island of Tutuila has a population density of 460 persons per square kilometer. The most densely populated villages are found in the Eastern and Western Districts (49). Figure 14 illustrates the concentrations of population in relation to adjacent coral reef habitats.



White-spotted surgeonfish swim above table coral in the National Park near the village of Vatia. Credit: D. Paul Brown, National Park Service

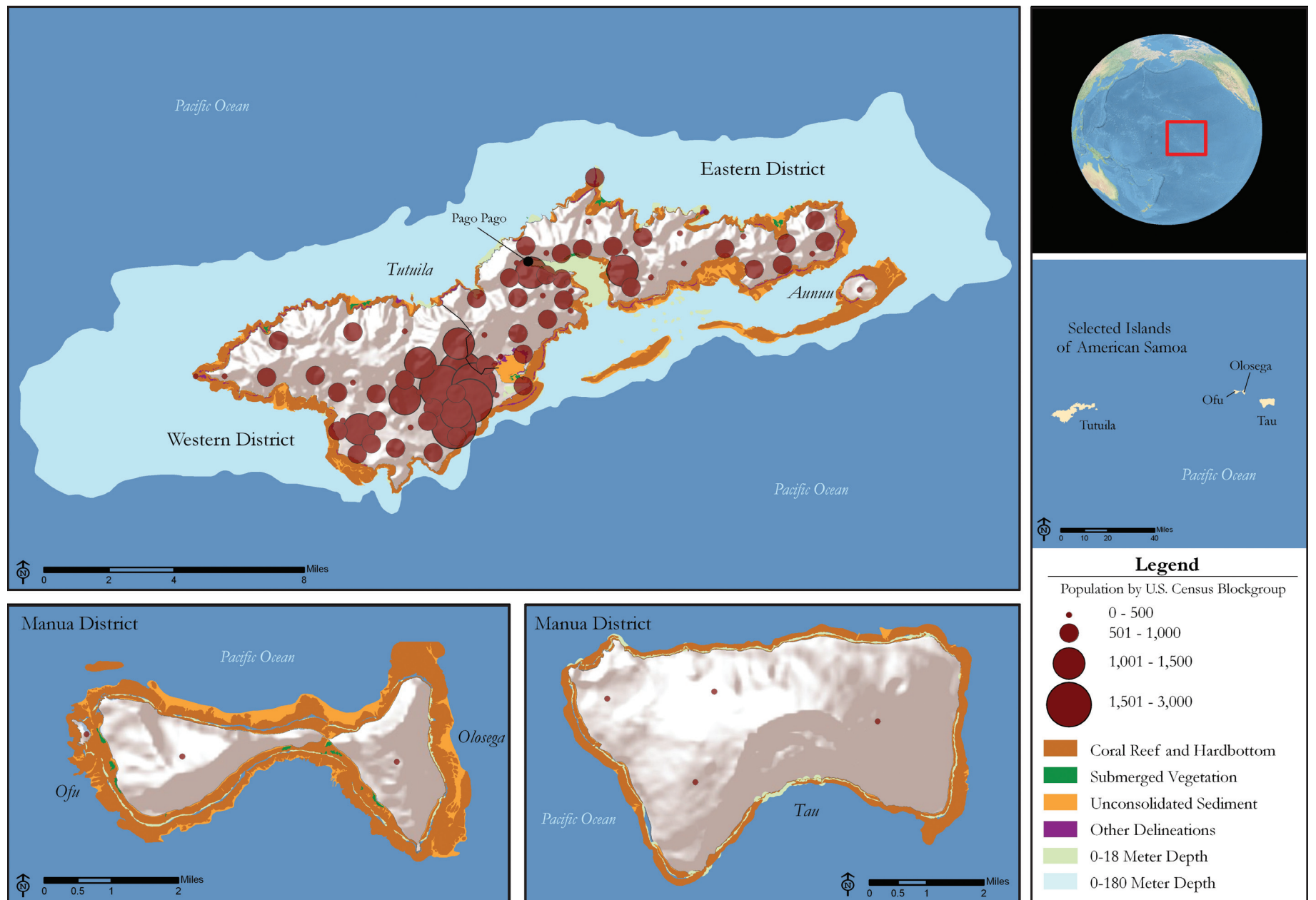


Figure 14. Population of American Samoa by U.S. Census blockgroup adjacent to coral reef habitat. Population is marked at the center of each blockgroup and should not be interpreted as exactly where population resides. In fact, for American Samoa, virtually the entire population resides along the coast. Also note that when 180-meter delineations were developed for American Samoa, 180-meter depth curves for the islands of Tau, Ofu, and Olosega did not exist on nautical charts used. Therefore, they are not depicted on this map. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Rohmann et al., 2005.

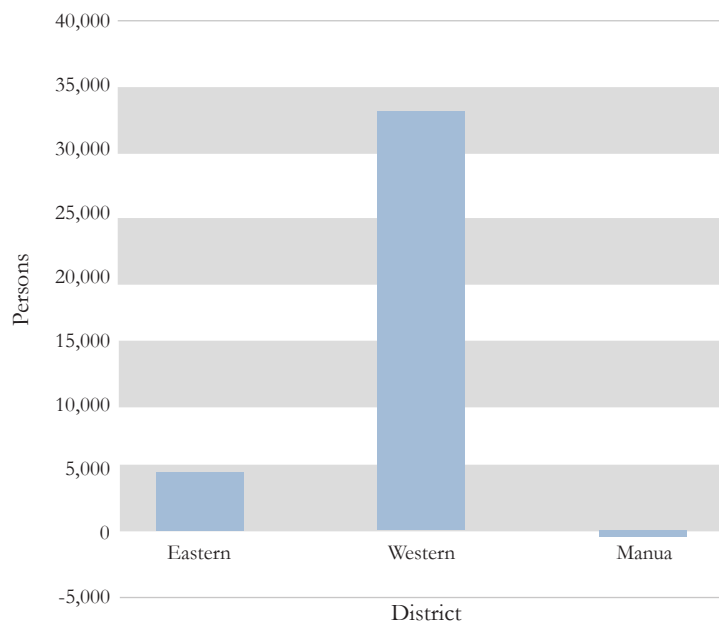


Figure 15. Expected population change in American Samoa from 2008 to 2015 by district.  
Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2007.

Table 16 presents the ratio of the area of potential coral reef habitat and mapped coral reef habitat to the number of residents on American Samoa. When compared to the other study areas in this report, the island of Tutuila

Habitat Type	Area of Coral Reef Habitat in American Samoa	Persons Per Sq Km of Coral Reef Habitat in 2008
<i>Depth Curves (sq km)</i>		
18 Meter Line	43.1	1,542
180 Meter Line (Tutuila only)	353.2	185
<i>Mapped Coral Habitat<sup>1</sup> (sq km)</i>		
Coral Reef Hardbottom	52.9	...
Submerged Vegetation	<1	6,224
Unconsolidated Sediment	10.7	17,638
Other Delineations	3.8	

Table 16. Ratio of the area of potential coral reef habitat and mapped coral reef habitat to population in American Samoa.  
Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2007; Rohmann et al., 2005.



Beach in front of hotel in Pago Pago.  
Credit: Nicole Haynes-Bell, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program

has the third-lowest number of residents per square kilometer of potential coral reef habitat adjacent to the 0-180 meter depth curve.

#### Gender

In 2000, American Samoa's population was 49% females and 51% males (35). Although this ratio did not fluctuate beyond a percent or two among districts, it fluctuated among villages, where it ranged from 56% female to 44% male in Luma Village in the Manua District and 14% female to 86% male in Anua Village in the Eastern District. Of all individuals greater than 15 years of age, 57% were currently married and less than 5% had been divorced (35).

#### Race/Ethnicity

In 2000, the American Samoan population was comprised primarily of individuals of solely Native Hawaiian or Pacific Island descent, who made up approximately 93% of the population. Most of the remaining population (i.e. Asian, white, black, other, and 2 or more races) were found in the Western District (35).

### Age

Forty-five percent of the total population of American Samoa in 2000 ranged in age from 0-18, followed by the age groups 25-34 (15%), 35-44 (13%), 18-24 (11%), 45-49 (11%), 60-70 (3%), and 70+ (<2%). This was generally consistent across the Western, Eastern, and Manua Districts (35).

### Households

In 2000, the number of households in American Samoa was 9,349. Ninety-three percent were family households; of these, 40% contained seven or more persons. This trend was generally true for the top 10 most populated villages across districts. Most of the non-family households contained only two people (35)

### Language

The primary language spoken in the home was Samoan (90%), followed by other languages (8%) and English (2%) (35).

### Place of Birth

Of the total population, 57% were born in American Samoa, 31% were born in neighboring Samoa, and 6% were born in the United States. The remaining population was born in Tonga, other Pacific Islands, and Asia. The villages having the highest percentage of American Samoa-born individuals were Leusoalii (91%) and Sili (90%) in the Manua District (35).

### Income

In 2000, the average median household income across the districts was approximately \$17,018 per year. This is shown in Figure 16. In 2000, 61% of the population had income below the poverty level (35).

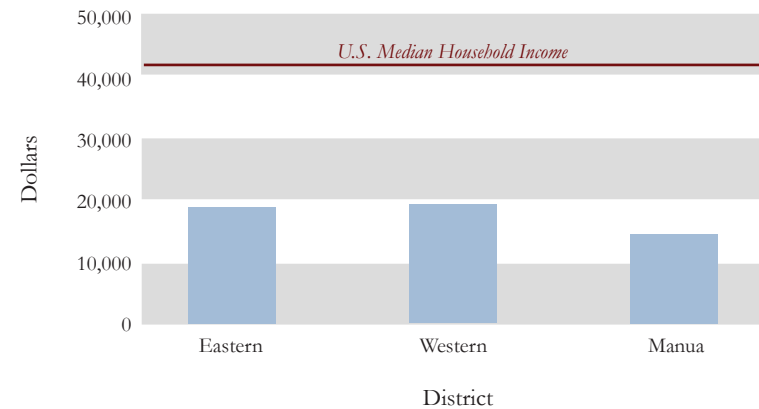


Figure 16. Median household income in American Samoa in 2000 by district. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.



Recreational uses and activities are an important component of managing coral resources. Credit: Fran Castro

*Highlighted Issue:*  
**Coastal Development and Population Density**

The most populated island of American Samoa, Tutuila, has seen a considerable amount of population growth and rapid development in recent years. Considering that only approximately 30% of the land area is suitable for human habitation, and most of that is along the coastline, there is great concern about the effects that increasing population density may have on American Samoa's coastal areas (32). When including the entire area of the island, the population density is approximately 460 persons per square kilometer (49). However, when only including those areas that are inhabitable (i.e. <30% slope) the population density increases to approximately 1,081 persons per square kilometer. This density is located primarily in coastal areas as these areas are most favorable for development (32).



*In less developed regions of the globe, a lack of proper trash disposal and recycling coupled with an exponential increase in product packaging has led to more trash and ultimately illegal dumping as shown on Ta'u Island in American Samoa.  
 Credit: Ryan Binns/Marine Photobank*

**Education**

In 2000, 39% of the adult population (25 years of age and over) had a high school diploma. Approximately 19% had some college or an associate's degree and 7% held a bachelor's degree or higher. This distribution is broken down by gender in Figure 17. Males with no high school diploma and those that held a bachelor's degree or higher outnumbered females in these categories. The number of women with some college or an associate's degree was greater than the number of men in these categories (35).

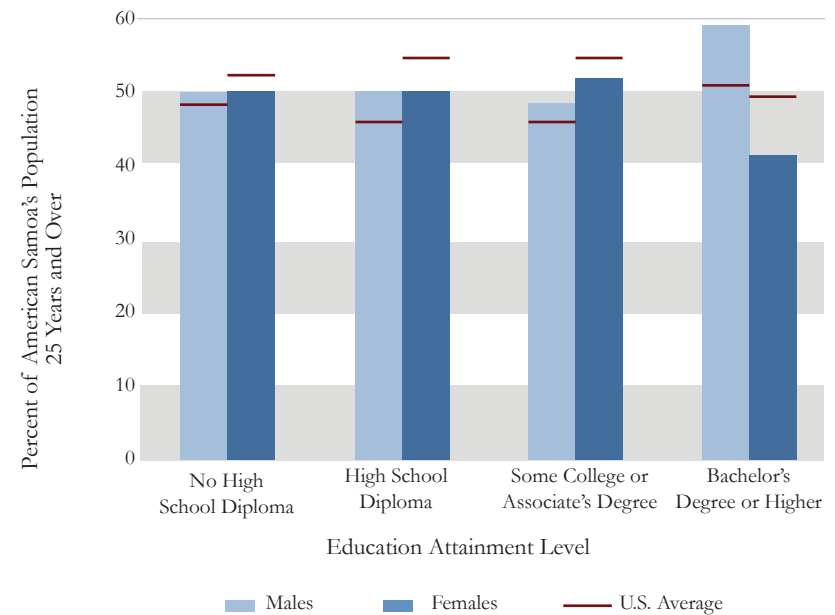


Figure 17. Education attainment by gender for the population 25 years and over in American Samoa in 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

**Employment**

*Industry*

In 2000, 29% of the civilian population 16 years of age and over was employed. This percentage represent 16,000 people. The industries that employed the most individuals are listed in Table 17. Canned tuna processing is a major private-sector employer in American Samoa, including

*StarKist* and *Chicken of the Sea*, each of which operates major processing plants employing over 4,700 people. This is reflected in the 35% of jobs that are considered to be manufacturing jobs (2, 41). In fact, cannery and government employees account for over 60% of total employment in American Samoa (2).

Industry	Percent Employed
Manufacturing	35
Educational; health and social services	17
Public Administration	9
Construction	6
Transportation, Warehouse and Utilities	6
Arts; entertainment; recreation; accommodation and food services	4
Agriculture, etc.	3
Other Services	3
Information	2
Finance; insurance; real estate and rental and leasing	2
Professional; scientific; management; administrative and waste management services	1

Table 17. Percent of the population 16 years of age and over employed by industry in American Samoa in 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

## Housing and Development

### *Housing Units*

There were a total of 10,052 housing units in American Samoa in 2000. The great majority were located in the Western and Eastern Districts (5,610 and 4,111, respectively). Of the total housing units, 72% were owner occupied, 21% were renter occupied, and 7% were reported as vacant (35).

### *Plumbing Facilities*

In 2000, 17% of the housing units lacked complete plumbing facilities (35).

### *Source of Water*

In 2000, 9,748 housing units (97%) were connected to either public or village water systems. Of those, 518 units also used catchments. A small number, 58, were on individual wells, and 109 used catchments, tanks, or drums for water. In addition, 134 units used standpipes, springs, and rivers or creeks as a source of water (35).

### *Sewage Disposal*

In 2000, 3,792 housing units (38%) were reported to have public sewer connections, and 5,737 (57%) were either on septic tank or cesspool systems. The remaining 523 units (5%) were reported as using “other means” of sewage disposal (35).

### *Building Permits*<sup>2</sup>

Between 1980 and 2006, an average of 247 building permits were issued per year for new structures. Since 2000, the average has been 162 permits per year. New structures include both commercial and housing (1, 2).

## Tourism

From 2000 to 2005, an average of 34,888 tourists per year (excluding same-day visitors) visited American Samoa (based on 2000, 2001 and 2005 data). Over 75% of them came from Asia, East and Southeast/Oceania (34).



*A dusky clownfish amongst coral and anemone in the National Park of American Samoa. Credit: D. Paul Brown*