

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa



Photo: Wendy Cover, NOAA

The sanctuary protects some of the largest *Porites* coral heads in the world.



Photo: NOAA

Samoan culture and traditions are highly valued in the sanctuary.



Photo: Veronika M. Mortenson, NOAA

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center celebrates the importance of American Samoa's natural and cultural resources.

National Marine Sanctuary of

American Samoa is located in the cradle of Polynesia's oldest culture and thought to support the greatest diversity of marine life in the National Marine Sanctuary System. The sanctuary is comprised of six protected areas, covering 13,581 square miles of nearshore coral reef and offshore open ocean waters across the Samoan archipelago. The sanctuary protects extensive coral reefs, including some of the oldest and largest *Porites* coral heads in the world, deep water reefs, hydrothermal vent communities and rare marine archaeological resources. Additionally, the sanctuary encompasses important fishing grounds, the southernmost point in the United States and waters surrounding one of the world's smallest atolls. The sanctuary contains the only true tropical reef within the National Marine Sanctuary System, and is the most remote location within that system. NOAA co-manages the sanctuary with the Government of American Samoa and works closely with communities adjacent to the sanctuary, all within the context of Samoan cultural traditions and practices.

Research and Monitoring

The sanctuary's mission requires a rigorous, objective, scientific foundation to understand ecosystem structure and function, evaluate the

status of sanctuary resources, examine the socioeconomic impacts of management actions and implement effective, sustainable and adaptive management strategies. The sanctuary prioritizes the establishment of baseline conditions, the development of long-term monitoring programs and ecosystem-based management. Issues currently facing the sanctuary include crown-of-thorns starfish removal, introduced (alien and invasive) species, marine debris and climate change.

Education and Outreach

Education and outreach at the sanctuary promote awareness of and appreciation for this special place in Polynesia for present and future generations. The sanctuary provides programs and holds events that reach out to the local, regional, national and international communities. For instance, the Citizen Science program engages volunteers in scientific study to inform the research and monitoring of and management at the sanctuary. Moreover, the two separate summer programs, Ocean Swimming/Ocean Science, for high school students, in partnership with the American Samoa Aquatics Agency, and Ocean Star, for children ages 8-12, consist of marine science curriculum, ocean safety (swimming) lessons, field trips and a series of guest speakers.

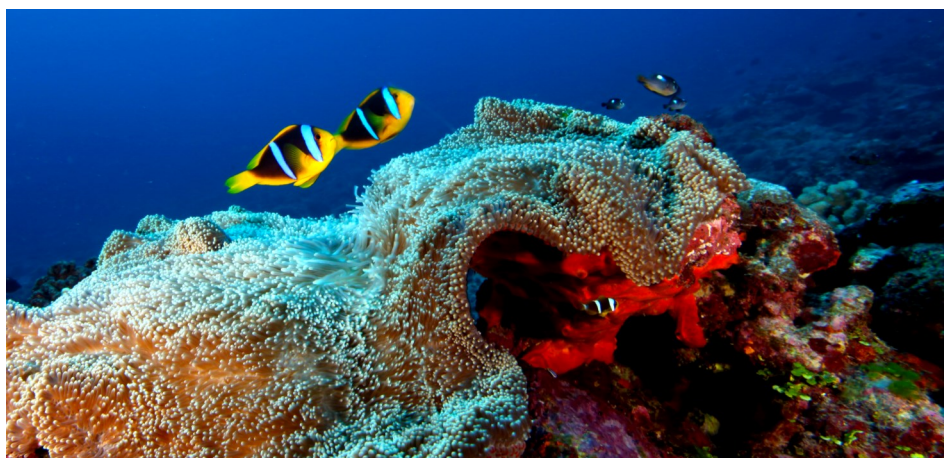


Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa contains the only true tropical reef in the National Marine Sanctuary System.



National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa

Location

6 national marine sanctuary protected areas in the Samoan Archipelago

Protected Area

13,581 square miles

Designation

Fagatele Bay, April 1986
American Samoa, October 2012

Habitats

Coral reef
Deep reef slope
Open ocean
Shallow reef flat

Key Species

Anemonefish
Butterflyfish
Coral and coralline algae
Crab and lobster
Dolphin
Giant clam
Grouper
Hawksbill sea turtle
Octopus
Parrotfish
Shark
Southern humpback whale
Sponge
Surgeonfish

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Find Us

P.O. Box 4318
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
684-633-6500
Fax: 684-633-6511

On the Web

<http://americansamoa.noaa.gov>
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Marine-Sanctuary-of-American-Samoa/517901871554731>

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Network of marine protected areas
Encompasses more than 170,000 square miles
Established October 1972

On the Web

sanctuaries.noaa.gov
www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarineSanctuaries
Instagram: @noaasanctuaries
Twitter: @sanctuaries
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Traditionally, giant clams are a favorite food in the Samoan culture.



Photo: Veronika M. Mortenson, NOAA

Samoans perform a cultural dance to introduce visitors to Samoan culture and the sanctuary.



Photo: Wendy Cover, NOAA

Rose Atoll's fringing reef has a pink hue due to the dominance of coralline algae.

<http://americansamoa.noaa.gov/>