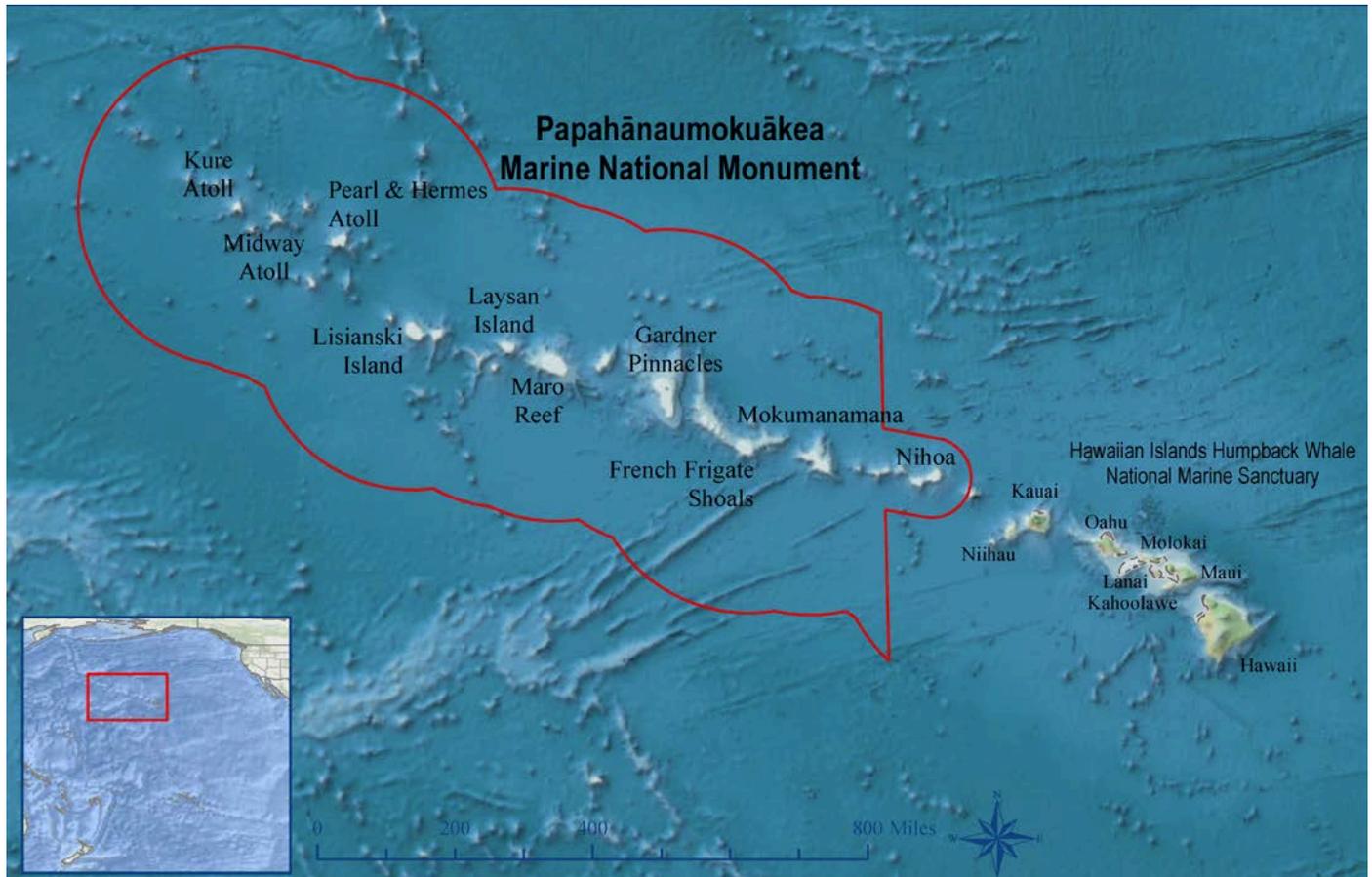


FY16 Accomplishments



BACKGROUND

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is one of the largest conservation area in the world, protecting 582,578 square miles of the Pacific Ocean. The extensive coral reefs found in Papahānaumokuākea are home to more than 7,000 marine species, one-quarter of which are found only in the Hawaiian Archipelago. Many of the islands and shallow water environments are important habitats for rare species such as the threatened green turtle and the endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is part of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries are managed for the conservation of their natural and cultural resources, while supporting sustainable recreation, tourism and compatible commercial activities. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.



Photo: Dan Clark

Nearly two million birds, composing 19 species, nest on Midway Atoll.



Photo: NOAA and Richard Pyle-Bishop Museum

A high-endemism reef fish community at 300 feet lives on Kure Atoll inside the monument.



Photo: Mark Sullivan, NOAA

The Hawaiian monk seal is endemic to the 1,500-mile-long Hawaiian Islands archipelago.

Hawaii is now home to an ocean conservation area twice the size of Texas. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was significantly enlarged to nearly 600,000 square miles. The occasion was marked by a precedent-setting agreement formally adding the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to the management board, giving this indigenous organization equal say in monument management. This is the first such formal partnership between federal, state, and indigenous groups for conservation in the U.S. The monument is one of the largest conservation areas on the planet, home to an incredible array of wildlife and habitats, as well as areas of Native Hawaiian cultural significance.

World's largest sponge, world's oldest marine organism, and new species discovered on monument research expeditions

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument has the highest level of endemism recorded for any marine ecosystem, where many species in the monument are found nowhere else on Earth. About 95% of our ocean remains unexplored, and in 2016, researchers discovered several new species in the monument. Both the world's largest sponge (the size of a minivan) and the world's oldest marine organism (a deep-water black coral tree over 4,000 years old) were described to science, as well as several other new species including a deep-water octopus, a butterflyfish, and a deepwater basslet.

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument featured at World Conservation Congress

In September 2016, for the first time, the U.S. hosted the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Ten thousand people from around the globe representing 192 nations convened in Hawai'i. The 2016 expansion of the monument, making it the (then) largest marine protected area in the world, set the scene for plenary discussions and presentations. The event was the result of an extensive partnership among NOAA, the State of Hawai'i, other federal agencies, and NGOs. With a OneNOAA booth, monument staff and NOAA personnel interacted with approximately 15,000 delegates and members of the public.

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Looking Ahead to FY17

- To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway, staff will conduct maritime heritage surveys, participate in creation of new exhibits at Pacific Aviation Museum and Mokupāpapa Discovery Center, and will assist U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to live-stream the ceremony at Midway Atoll.
- The monument will co-host a science symposium on archipelagic-scale management and large-scale marine protected areas. Topics will include research and monitoring conducted in all of the large marine national monuments of the U.S. and other large MPAs.
- The Monument Management Board will develop a joint management plan to cover the original and expansion areas, and add the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as a fourth Co-Trustee. The site will also consider sanctuary designation under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.